

## **Main Set of Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 20 September 2018 at 17.00 hours**

**Those Present:** Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Andrew Wallace (AW), Addy Balogun (AB), Lee Redmond (LR) and Fiona Bauermeister (FB).

**In attendance:** Sarah Hextall (SHx – school business manager) and David Harvey (DH – clerk).

**Quorum:** 7 out of 13 governors present – meeting was quorate throughout.

### **0. Welcome.**

### **1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2018-2019**

1.1. DH noted the nominations made for PS and AB for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair respectively, which were approved unanimously by the FBG.

### **2. Apologies for Absence.**

2.1. Richard Goodsell (RG), Janet Such (JS), Gareth Chan (GC), Richard Mills (RM), John Barker (JB), and Michael Bedingfield (MB) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

### **3. Urgent business**

3.1. None.

4. **Declarations of interest** – None.

### **5. Minutes**

5.1. The minutes of the meetings of 12 July and 5 September 2018 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

### **6. Matters Arising**

*12 July 2018*

- Contact with local authority to advertise vacancies for co-opted governor candidates for the Board to succeed PG and SHu – done.
- Circulation of NGA skills audit form to governors, for completion by 15 August – done.
- Circulation of revised governors' meetings dates list for 2018/2019 – to be done.

- Circulation of suggested dates for meeting of the GRC in September to review co-opted governor applications – done; the GRC met on 5 September 2018
- Production of data protection and school trips policies – to be done.

*5 September 2018*

- Consideration of purchase of SLA legal advice cover – done. SHx added that the school was in the process of preparing a brief for the legal adviser.
- Enquiry of NGA over its legal advice cover provision – to be done.
- Review of FBG and Finance Committee meeting minutes (2015-2018) for H&S discussions and actions taken – LR confirmed that he and RM had completed this task (LR on the FBG; RM the Committee); with only a cross reference against follow up action in the school to check. AH stated that the school would carry out a timeline exercise and invited LR to visit the school to participate in this process.

**7. Any matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda – None.**

## **8. Governing Board Code of Conduct 2018/2019**

8.1. The Chair noted the unanimous approval of the FBG for this document and duly signed it on governors' behalf.

## **9. Outcomes of extraordinary meeting of the FBG of 5 September**

9.1. (**Note** – text on this agenda item appears in a separate confidential annex to these minutes).

## **10. IT strategy report**

10.1. AH gave the background of this item, signalling a change to the level of IT provision in the school. AH noted that the Finance Committee were already aware that investment in the school facilities had been limited recently in order to balance the deficit; with the effect of allocating relatively low expenditure on IT. AH put forward that the IT hardware now urgently needed replacing.

10.2. AH recalled that the school IT system had been put in place in 2000, with succeeding changes built on top of the existing structure. AH commented that, although technologically advanced, the foundations were very old with Windows versions of software now no longer supported.

10.3. AH informed governors that a review had been held by the school's network services on the state of the IT provision. AH stated that the school had decided on a step change, to move the majority of work to the Cloud. AH confirmed that the school had carried out due diligence on this move, choosing to go for Google Suite and Classroom, which had achieved a large cost reduction.

- 10.4. AH commented that many schools now used Google, with the added benefit of securing low hardware costs. AH stated that buying chromebooks were a more cost effective way of upgrading equipment and also educationally sound. AH stated that this would be launched by way of a trial this year, with the replacement of IT rooms with standard classrooms equipped with chromebooks; in the two areas of modern foreign languages (MFL) and geography.
- 10.5. AH stated that a decision had been taken to restrict the use by students of IT to not more than 10% daily of curriculum time. AH commented that the main reason was the desire not to force a change in teaching and learning into an exclusively IT format; and to preserve methods of teaching that were effective and based on evidence-informed pedagogy but also to address the argument about students spending too much on screen time.
- 10.6. AH stated that the music department would still use Apple Macs, but noted the benefit of chromebooks which contained a number of collaborative tools. AH acknowledged that the overall proposal amounted to a big shift in working; with an anticipated gradual move to G Suite entirely by 2020.
- 10.7. Governors asked about the impact on the budget of this strategy. AH stated that the school would trial the use of chromebooks, by taking out a three year lease on them – this would fit into the existing IT budget. AH added that the trial would involve start with six classrooms for the first year.
- 10.8. Governors asked how this would be planned. AH stated that it would be tied into the closure of the Sixth form and how the school site was used thereafter. AH believed that the chromebooks would come in at a low cost, with students able to access them quickly if needed to support learning, e.g. geography and Google maps.
- 10.9. Governors asked how the figure of 10% usage had been arrived at. AH noted that students still had to write for their GCSEs and it was good for them to interact with each other, to use peer support, and to have opportunities for discussion.
- 10.10. Governors asked if the 10% limit would be reviewed. AH stated that in reality students were not using IT any more than this at the moment - but in a less considered way. AH added that IT would become more a part of teaching and learning, but would not dominate how lessons were given. AH stated that in the long term, this proposed system would replace Firefly (which presently cost the school £12K a year – Google Classroom was free).

## **11. Headteacher report**

### *Staffing*

- 11.1. AH confirmed that the school was fully staffed in all teaching areas, including mitigating the effect of late resignations.

### *School Development Plan (SDP)*

- 11.2. AH drew attention to the top level aspects, which were covered by:-
- three ethos statements (for ways of working, including aspects of learning, inclusivity and continued improvement);
  - eight high level objectives (with three categories, to be covered over three years – student personal development & outcomes; staff professional development);
  - ten operational development plans (to include areas such as teaching & learning, leadership and attendance).

Governors asked if this was now the replacement SDP. AH confirmed this was the case.

#### *Student Numbers*

- 11.3. AH stated that there was a waiting list of students wishing to attend the school (55 for Year 7); the hope was that these would be processed before the census was taken in October to ensure maximum funding allocation. AH commented that it took LA admissions four weeks to process arrivals.
- 11.4. Governors asked where students went, who were on the waiting list. AH stated that they would go to their other preference allocation; noting that the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Year 7 was 330.

#### *Attendance*

- 11.5. AH pointed to these figures as being a snapshot. Governors noted that the figure for the first week back was 97%, which was a good start (in comparison to the July figure of 95.4%).

#### *Modern Foreign Languages Hub*

- 11.6. AH stated that, on the basis of its results, Blatchington Mill had been chosen as eligible to receive funding to help other schools in Brighton & Hove to help them with languages tuition. AH commented that this would allow Blatchington Mill to recruit additional teachers for the languages department, to go out to other schools and provide assistance. AH believed that this recognition was a very positive development for the school's reputation; with its teachers now enjoying a greater career progression opportunity.

#### *Capital Funding*

- 11.7. The Chair noted that, as a result of the LA not going forward with the project of opening a new free school, the allocated funding had instead been divided up amongst the existing schools in Brighton & Hove, with Blatchington Mill's figure initially set at £0.5M. AH expressed gratitude for this allocation (which was for buildings and infrastructure expenditure) but stated it did not fully address the school's needs.
- 11.8. AH informed governors that accordingly he had taken this up with the LA

and following an internal process, had been advised the allocation had been increased to £2M (**Embargo – this information not to be publicised until 5 October**).

- 11.9. Governors asked if the school had planned how to spend this funding. SHx stated that the school would prioritise its plans in this regard.

## **12. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) restructure**

- 12.1. AH reported that this process had now concluded, with the new team in place making a positive start. AH acknowledged that there was work to be done, in terms of where the school wanted the SEND provision to be. AH stated that, from a technical perspective, all remaining aspects, such as issue of letters to affected staff, were concluded. AH stated that, overall, he was very pleased with the restructure outcome.

## **13. School cleaning contract 2018/2019 update**

- 13.1. SHx confirmed that the school had considered the outsourcing proposal and had held discussions with the LA on the subject, which had been a difficult process. SHx stated that an insurmountable problem had been identified, namely addressing pension rights, with the new company not being able to offer the same provision.
- 13.2. SHx stated that, nevertheless, this company had been engaged to carry out a deep clean of the school premises over the summer and had done a good job. SHx commented that, once an existing cleaner employee left the school, a successor could be appointed from the company (who would supervise this person, not the school).
- 13.3. SHx confirmed that the consultation with regard to reducing the overtime provision would be revisited – the timeline originally envisaged would be moved by three weeks.

## **14. Safeguarding**

- 14.1. AH stated that revising the school policy on this issue was a key aim. AH highlighted key changes, which included new topics of child protection; e.g. modern slavery, breast ironing, county lines, child criminal exploitation and Operation Encompass (improving police contact with schools in relation to young people involved in domestic incidents).
- 14.2. The Chair noted that account had to be taken with regard to policy on Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE). AH stated that staff had undertaken refresher training on their first day back in this regard, using this new guidance and in advance of governor approval (to avoid drawing on out of date information). The Chair drew the FBG's attention to Part 1 of the KCSIE, which governors should read.
- 14.3. The Chair asked that note be taken of the FBG's thanks to Ruth King (RK) for her work and time taken on the safeguarding policy.

## **15. Committees' membership for 2018-2019 (Finance, Pay & Personnel, Recruitment and Panels).**

- 15.1. The Chair noted that FB had decided to step down from her role as co-opted governor, with effect from 20 September. FB commented that she had spent six years as a governor and considered it was time to leave, to allow new people to come on to the Board. The Chair thanked FB for her work, valuing her contribution to the school and the Board over this time.
- 15.2. The Chair noted that membership of the Committees would remain as for the previous year, noting in particular that LR, RM, AB and himself would continue on the Headteacher Appraisal Panel. The Chair confirmed that he would take the safeguarding role on a temporary basis, pending a more permanent appointment.
- 15.3. CH agreed to continue with her membership of the Governor Recruitment Committee (GRC) and would become the Children In Care (CiC) link governor; AB agreed to cover CiC as well. The Chair asked that the Committee membership and roles table be recirculated for governors' information.

## **16. Governors' school visits**

- 16.1. The Chair agreed that it was a good idea to continue these visits. AH recalled that the last one had taken the form of a tour, with additional meetings arranged. AH suggested the same format again, perhaps this time with a single in depth theme. AH drew governors' attention to the forthcoming open evening (4 October, 18.00 to 21.00 hours) and open mornings (9 & 10 October), to which they were very welcome to attend.
- 16.2. The Chair suggested that two dates in the second half of the term could be identified in order to carry out a follow up visit with a likely focus on assessment and reporting – he would check availability with AH.

## **17. Renewal of co-opted governors' terms of office**

- 17.1. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval to renew the terms of office of Richard Goodsell (RG – due to finish 23 November 2018) and Gareth Chan (GC – 24 November 2018) for a further four years. The Chair noted in addition that RG was still considering whether to stay on and therefore this approval was provisional in nature and dependent on his final decision in this regard.

## **18. Deliberations taken by the Governor Recruitment Committee (GRC) on new appointments to the Board**

- 18.1. The Chair reported that the GRC had met on 5 September to consider eight applications for the co-opted governor vacancies on the Board. The Chair stated that the GRC had concluded four were strong enough to invite for interview and so was currently looking at appropriate dates to carry out this process. The Chair noted that since notice of FB's decision to stand down, there would be three vacancies to fill, not just two as previously the case.

18.2. Governors questioned whether there should be this additional layer of process, whereby candidates had to go through an interview with the Chair and AH, as well as be assessed by the GRC. The Chair noted that the GRC was delegated authority by the FBG to make new appointments and believed that the interview process was a good opportunity for candidates to meet him and the headteacher.

## **19. School policies**

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection*

AH pointed to two technical errors now rectified (staff photographs and a contact telephone number). The Chair noted the FBG's approval of this policy.

## **20. Governor training**

20.1. The Chair noted that MB had asked that his attendance at the following courses be entered in the minutes for the record:-

- 25 September 2018 - Strategic Leadership: Headteacher Appraisal & Objective Setting
- 27 September 2018 - Governor Strategy: Governance Briefing
- 4 October 2018 - School Finance Part 1
- 11 October 2018 - School Finance Part 2
- 23 March 2019 - Brighton & Hove Governance Conference

20.2. The Chair noted that there was a Governance Strategy and Briefing meeting on 27 September and encouraged FBG members to attend.

## **21. Actions taken by the Chair**

21.1. The Chair reported that he had signed off an order for IT equipment in the absence of there being a Chair of the Finance Committee in place; in his role as Chair of Governors.

## **22. Any Other Business**

22.1. AH drew attention to the circulation of a Health and Safety report, prepared by SHx, and delayed from July, which included information about activities of the H&S committee, training and a reference to the events of the summer. AH reminded governors of the importance of the yearly briefing on H&S.

22.2. AW confirmed that he would be attending a meeting of the school H&S committee with RG on 1 October.

### **Actions**

- Summer incident timeline and governor participation – AH/LR
- Reading of Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) Part 1 – all
- Recirculation of governors' roles and Committee membership table – DH

- Arrangement of governor visit date in second half of term – PS/AH
- Circulation of revised meeting dates for the year – DH

**Next meeting –**

- Thursday 13 December 2018 (to be confirmed) - Exam data (full picture)

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...