

Main Set of Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 13 December 2018 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AsH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Andrew Wallace (AW), Addy Balogun (AB), Richard Mills (RM), John Barker (JB), Janet Such (JS), Gareth Chan (GC) and Michael Bedingfield (MB).

In attendance: Ellen Mulvihill (EM), Adam Harvey (AdH), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), James Moncrieff (JM), Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager) and David Harvey (DH – clerk).

Quorum: 10 out of 15 governors present – meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Welcome.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Ruth King (RK – staff), Lyndsey Thompson (Staff – LT) and Lee Redmond (LR) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

3. Introduction and confirmation of appointment of new co-opted governors; also notification of additional resignation

3.1. The Chair introduced AdH, MC and JM to the FBG, explaining that all three of these new co-opted governor applications had been agreed by the Governor Recruitment Committee at its meeting of 5 September 2018; and invited the FBG to approve these appointments formally – which was done unanimously. The Chair noted that all three governors would begin their four year terms of office from the date of this meeting, i.e. 13 December 2018.

3.2. The Chair also informed the FBG that Richard Goodsell (RG) had decided to step down from his role as co-opted governor at the end of his term of office, i.e. 23 November 2018. The Chair paid tribute to RG's hard work and dedication to the school, during his time of service as a member of the FBG over the past four years; noting too that as a result there would be a new vacancy on the board.

4. Urgent business - None.

5. Presentation on the work of Pavilion & Downs Teaching School Alliance (P&DTSA)

5.1. EM explained the background to the setting up of the P&DTSA as being part of a national strategy to set up an organisation tool to identify system leaders, with the purpose of supporting colleagues. EM recalled that the P&DTSA had been set up in 2016 by five local secondary schools – Blatchington Mill, Hove Park,

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Varndean, Dorothy Stringer and Steyning (joined later by Cardinal Newman) and subsequently designated as a teaching school alliance.

- 5.2. EM explained that the main purpose of the P&DTSA was to provide initial teacher training and school to school support, by means of deploying specialist leaders of education (SLEs). With regard to the former, EM provided details of two Blatchington Mill SLEs who were providing support to other schools on disadvantaged pupil outcomes and English; other staff were being considered for SLE status.
- 5.3. EM stated that SLEs would also be meeting Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to lay out Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and encouragement to take on research based projects. EM believed that the P&DTSA would become a powerful network, which would work alongside the two Brighton universities. Turning to school to school support, EM highlighted Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) projects which would intervene with five schools in Brighton and Hove.
- 5.4. Governors asked about the strategic priorities. EM stated that these lay with work planned on disadvantaged pupil outcomes and the use of Pupil Premium (PP), taking in aspects of assessment and moderation; also learning transition, attendance and parental engagement.
- 5.5. Governors asked more about the background to the setting up of the P&DTSA. AsH explained that usually a successful bid could only be made by a school rated as 'outstanding'; however a joint bid had been put in by the five original schools (all rated 'good') and accepted on this group basis. AsH added that a similar arrangement had been entered into by a number of primary schools in Brighton & Hove – the Sussex Coast Teaching School Alliance.
- 5.6. Governors asked if there was scope to link the P&DTSA with the independent sector. EM believed this was possible, although the P&DTSA was still in the process of developing its own infrastructure and foundations.
- 5.7. Governors asked if there was protection in place to help the SLEs manage this additional work, in the form of backfilling at schools. EM explained that it was the headteacher's task to identify likely candidates who were interested in acquiring SLE status; to make sure demands on them were at a minimum.
- 5.8. Governors expressed concern that such additional duties would put pressure on staff. AsH stated that the programme was outward looking and accessible to all; it was being promoted on an entirely voluntary basis and would not have a detrimental impact on the school.
- 5.9. Governors asked about the impact on the children. AsH stated that cover would be provided, but requirements in this regard were so far minimal in nature.
- 5.10. Governors asked about the broader impact of the P&DTSA as a whole. EM stated that this was too difficult at this early stage to quantify; possible areas to look at might be to measure staff access to CPD and their staying on in the profession.

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- 5.11. Governors asked if there was a formal review process planned for the P&DTSA. EM stated that data would be submitted on an annual basis to the Teaching School Council and Department for Education (DfE).
- 5.12. Governors asked if there was a formal role planned for the FBG to monitor the P&DTSA. EM stated that there was a role for the P&DTSA to help governors themselves carrying out their own monitoring duties; also that it would be happy to report to the FBGs. AsH added that the school had benefitted from its membership of the P&DTSA, drawing on its services when a developmental need was identified.
- 5.13. Governors asked if a sense of direction had been decided upon for the P&DTSA; e.g. on an issue such as attendance. EM stated that its strategic aims had been decided upon in September, including signposting and coordination; also disadvantaged pupil outcomes.
- 5.14. The Chair asked governors to consider how interaction on this subject might be arranged with other boards. Governors commented that they met their colleagues regularly when going on training courses and attending the Governance Strategy meetings.

(**Note** – EM left the meeting at 17.30 hours)

6. **Declarations of interest** – None.

7. Minutes

- 7.1. The minutes (main set and confidential annex) of the meeting of 20 September 2018 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

8. Matters Arising

- Summer incident timeline and governor participation – done.
- Reading of Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) Part 1 – done.
- Recirculation of governors' roles & Committee membership table – done.
- Arrangement of governor visit date in second half of term – to be done. The Chair added that this would be looked at in the Spring term, with options such as joining in with CPD sessions to be considered.
- Circulation of revised meeting dates for the year – done

Summer incident

(**Note** – the main part of the text under this item appears in a confidential annex to this main set of minutes)

Governors asked about the H&S link role. AdH explained that he had an H&S background and would succeed RG in the governor link role and work alongside AW in this regard.

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

10. IT strategy report update

- 10.1. AsH drew governors' attention to the presentation circulated earlier on this subject, highlighting the move from Microsoft to Google. AsH drew attention in particular to replacement of the Firefly system by the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) parent app – use of this had proved a better experience. AsH acknowledged the drawback of not being able to share student resources with this app; the school was now producing a guide for parents to access resources through their child's login.
- 10.2. Governors who were parents reported their own experiences of using the new system favourably; information on attendance, homework and behaviour were all very clear.

11. School Budget update and long-term financial strategy update

Budget

- 11.1. SH recalled that she had informed the Finance Committee at its meeting of 19 November that a surplus of £16K had been forecast for the end of the year. SH anticipated however that the final figure would balance out, as there were a number of payments yet to be made. Nevertheless, SH believed that the budget was in a healthy state, with savings achieved through staffing and the Sixth Form closure; decision making had been difficult, but not impacted on students.
- 11.2. AsH added that the school would still receive its Sixth Form funding in the next year, after its closure despite asking for this money to be paid earlier by the LA.
- 11.3. AsH drew attention to the preference numbers for admission to the school, specifying the first, second and third preferences made. AsH stated that, whilst there were less children applying across the city, the school had done well against its competitors and was therefore in a strong position.
- 11.4. Governors asked if the school was better off financially by closing the Sixth Form and opening a new form. AsH confirmed that this was the case, pointing out that Key Stage 4 students were better funded than Sixth Form ones; also as a result of the closure, staffing had been reduced. SH added that this would be the most difficult year financially, as the Sixth Form was still open with Year 13 students, causing greater agency costs to be incurred as new permanent staff were not being taken on.

Cleaning staff consultation process

- 11.5. SH stated that this process was due to end next week. SH commented that meetings had been held with the unions and affected staff; a report would be supplied to governors in January 2019.

Catering contract

- 11.6. SH reported the process of going out to tender on this contract had started and

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would be carried out by a consultant.

12. Headteacher report

Attendance

- 12.1. The Chair noted that the Autumn 1 & 2 attendance indicators were better than last year. AsH commented that the whole school figure was now over 96%, which was a good result.
- 12.2. Governors asked if 97% was still the target. AsH confirmed this was the case and statistics had steadily increased over the last three years.

Numbers on Roll

- 12.3. AsH noted that student numbers were not full in any Year group. AsH reported that there was a waiting list for all Year groups, but there were delays in processing applicants. AsH noted that the exception was Year 11 where movements were discouraged, given the difficulties in matching options at this late stage.
- 12.4. Governors asked about the reasons for these delays. AsH explained that this was largely down to the LA, who took a minimum of four weeks to process an application. AsH acknowledged however that the school itself had to take time to carry out its own checks, e.g. for reasons of behaviour.
- 12.5. Governors noted that no work on securing a replacement could be done in advance, even when notice was given, as the school had to wait until the student in question was actually gone.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) development

- 12.6. The Chair commented that these updates were very useful and it would be good for the FBG to meet the staff concerned.
- 12.7. CH drew attention to the aspiring SLT course task she had carried out in the school with colleagues and the report circulated to governors. CH drew attention to the look taken at the ethos presented in the school environment, displays, culture and environment; also areas to improve upon, e.g. ownership of spaces.
- 12.8. The Chair congratulated SH on her new designation of executive business manager.

Options

- 12.9. Governors asked about the new courses being planned. AsH stated that these included Arabic and the Prince's Trust Certificate.

13. School's work towards Rainbow Flag status

- 13.1. AsH highlighted the work being done to achieve this status, drawing attention to presentations made to staff on LGBT inclusive language and challenges to

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prejudiced language.

- 13.2. Governors asked what support was available to students who reported incidents. AsH confirmed that this was available, recalling the school's core purpose which was to make sure all groups were welcome.

14. Safeguarding

- 14.1. The Chair reported that he had taken on this role on a temporary basis, having met with RK already and another meeting planned next term. The Chair described tasks started on a review of procedures and the need to ensure evaluation of processes such as the Single Central Record.

15. Governors' responsibilities and membership of Committees' for 2018-2019

- 15.1. JM offered to join the Pay and Personnel Committee (P&PC) and take on the specific roles of skills/training & CPD. MC also offered to join the P&PC and take on the role of Primary Liaison (e.g. the Hove Partnership of Schools)
- 15.2. AdH offered to join the Finance Committee (FC); the Chair noted JS decision to step down from the FC and join the P&PC.
- 15.3. AdH confirmed his offer to take on the link Health & Safety governor role.
- 15.4. CH offered to be the joint Safeguarding governor with PS.
- 15.5. GC confirmed that he would continue to work on the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) form with JB and LR.

16. School policies

- *Data protection*

SH explained that this policy was based on a template available on the 'Key'; adding that the school was now using a government template for its privacy notice. The Chair noted the FBG's approval of this policy.

- *Administration of Medicines*

SH stated that this was based on the LA model policy; the review had arisen from the Health and Safety audit which indicated it needed updating. SH drew attention to some of the changes including the tightening up of the paracetamol issuing procedure by the first aid lead. Governors commented that there needed to be a backup arrangement in place for the first aid designated key holder.

AsH drew attention to the read across from this policy to the one on attendance, with respect to students suffering from infectious illnesses – provision was in place to report these on 'study bugs'.

Governors recommended that a risk assessment be carried out on the administration of medicines – SH agreed that a first aid risk assessment would be carried out.

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With these considerations and amendments in mind, the Chair noted the FBG's approval of this policy.

17. Governor training

- 17.1. AB reported having attended a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) forum on the performance of underachieving students in Brighton and Hove.
- 17.2. AW reported having attended a recent Health & Safety course; MB that he would attend one on data in January 2019.

18. Any Other Business

- 18.1. AsH drew the FBG's attention to a categorisation letter received from the LA (10 December 2018), which rated the school as self-sustaining and improving. AsH noted that it was largely complimentary in nature, pointing out improvements that were needed on disadvantaged pupils. The Chair believed that this was a positive way to end the year and offered his congratulations to AsH.

Actions

Presentation by Alessandro Capozzi (Assistant Headteacher) to FBG at its next meeting – AsH

Next meeting –

- Thursday 31 January 2019 - Curriculum

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...