

## Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 16 May 2019 at 17.00 hours

**Those Present:** Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AsH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), Richard Mills (RM), Gareth Chan (GC), Lee Redmond (LR), Judith Mackenzie (JMa), Deborah Hillier (DHi) and Addy Balogun (AB).

**In attendance:** Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager), Lindsey Thompson (LT – staff) and David Harvey (DHa – clerk).

**Quorum:** 11 out of 15 governors present – meeting was quorate throughout.

### 1. Apologies for Absence.

Ruth King (RK – staff), John Barker (JB), Adam Harvey (AdH), James Moncrieff (JMo) and Michael Bedingfield (MBe) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

The Chair welcomed DHi to the meeting, noting that she had been elected as a new parent governor (in succession to Andrew Wallace), for a four year term with effect from 8 April 2019.

### 2. Declarations of interest – None.

### 3. Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting of 28 March and 9 May 2019 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

### 4. Matters Arising

- Arrangement of external audit visit – to be done, on completion of the health and safety process.
- Arrangement of external H&S training for governors on 16 May – done, to be carried out at the end of the meeting.
- Convening of school H&S committee meeting for link governors to attend – SH confirmed that this had taken place on 13 May and attended by AdH.

### 5. School Budget

*Budget (2018-2019; 2019-2020; 2020-2021; and 2021-2022).*

- 5.1. SH pointed to the deficit figure of £49K for 2018-2019 (the actual figure was £42K); for 2019-2020 a surplus of £80K was predicted; 2020-2021 ££13K and a

deficit of £194K for 2021-2022. SH highlighted the fact that salaries were the largest part of the budget, ranging from 85 to 90% as a proportion and would increase as well as pension contributions. SH confirmed that the budget already took account of the government's compensation payment for the first year of the pay increase and pension contribution. Finally, SH informed governors that the Sixth Form income for last year would be the last money coming in, as it would close this summer.

- 5.2. Governors asked about the carry forward surplus for 2019-2020. SH stated that the local authority cap was 8% of the budget for this purpose, this surplus was within this limit and would therefore be permitted.
- 5.3. Governors asked about the pension compensation promised by the government for 2019-2020. SH stated that this was likely to be 75%, but was not guaranteed. SH added that the budget was calculated on the basis that all staff paid pension contributions; however not everyone actually did so, e.g. members of the non-teaching staff.
- 5.4. Governors noted that the situation would be much worse, if the government did not maintain funding for these pay and pension increases. AsH commented that there needed to be change on how schools were funded.
- 5.5. The Chair asked when the budget had to be submitted to the LA and if it would be balanced for this year. SH confirmed that the deadline was 24 May and the expectation was that the budget would be balanced this year and the next. SH acknowledged that the third year would be a challenge and difficult to predict at this stage. AsH added that the priority was to submit as accurate a budget as possible to the LA.
- 5.6. SH pointed to agency supply costs being higher last year, due to staffing needed for the Sixth Form; but as this had meant not committing to long term staffing, costs in this respect would be reduced once it closed.
- 5.7. Governors asked about anticipated income. AsH explained that the additional extra class for Year 7, once it started working through the school system would be part of the income dynamic; however the Pupil Premium (PP) cohort number had dropped, making the school the lowest in the city in this regard.
- 5.8. The Chair asked about numbers and management of vacancies in all the Year groups. AsH stated that there was a waiting list for each Year group, but because of the slowness of the LA admissions process (a time lag of 4 to 6 weeks in placing students); the school always seemed to suffer from having vacant places. AsH drew the example of Year 7, where there had been originally 307 admissions for 330 places; now this Year group was full.
- 5.9. Governors asked how this compared to other schools in the city. AsH stated that Blatchington Mill enjoyed three times as many first preferences as its closest peer school; but was minded not to apply for an increase to the Published Admission Number (PAN) as this might do more harm than good.
- 5.10. SH drew attention to the additional capital funding made available by the LA, to

whom the school was making project bids, e.g. to upgrade the IT infrastructure.

- 5.11. The Chair, on behalf of the FBG, offered congratulations to SH in producing such a well-managed budget. SH emphasised that this reflected a whole school effort, representing a huge commitment from all staff to reduce costs. The Chair noted the unanimous approval of the FBG for this budget.

## **6. Restructure consultations**

### *Senior Leadership Team (SLT)*

- 6.1. AsH noted that there were two aspects to this restructure, the shape and size of the SLT; and the applicable pay ranges – both of which had an impact on the budget. With regard to the SLT shape, AsH stated that a loss of two posts and creation of one senior was proposed; on the pay ranges, the headteacher one would be reduced (a result of the school dropping a Group level, from 8 to 7), with the other SLT ranges moving down as well in sequence.
- 6.2. AsH emphasised the importance of adopting a consistent approach with regard to this consultation; the process had been run with responses being answered, union representations made; for governors to consider proposals made. AsH promised that a final conclusion paper would be issued shortly, for the new system to take effect by September.

### *Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR)*

- 6.3. AsH provided a background to TLR payments, allowances which were made to a large number of teachers who carried out additional activities on behalf of the school. AsH stated that the current model had a considerable number of inconsistencies and was a complex area to address, hence the additional consultation time period (48 not 30 days).
- 6.4. AsH itemised the action taken during this process, including one to one discussions with the staff affected (with more to be done) and dealing with summarised ideas and responses. As a result of work done so far, the proposed model had been adapted and changed; resulting in the estimated savings envisaged being cut from £18K to £5K. However, AsH stressed that this exercise was more to do with improving the school's performance by using resources more effectively and equitably, than to save money.
- 6.5. AsH drew attention to a number of appendix documents which illustrated current plans for posts, in the form of colour coding. For appendix 1, AsH explained that green showed those posts whose future had been resolved; yellow for vacant ones; blue for staff in posts that were ring-fenced (but where the TLR pay was different); and red for posts at risk.
- 6.6. For appendix 2, AsH stated that this was mapped on to the new structure, with purple indicating where interviews would be carried out; red for potential competitive interviews and yellow for vacant posts. AsH stated that, as more responses to the plans were coming in, this paper would be changed again.
- 6.7. Governors asked about the ring fenced posts. AsH recalled that, in the original

paper, for TLR 1 or 2 the issue was whether there were significant line management responsibilities or not. AsH stated that one aim of the exercise was trying to ensure an equivalent level of TLR responsibility across the school.

- 6.8. The Chair asked about interview plans. AsH stated that once a structure was agreed, an interview schedule would be devised. AsH added that, despite the sheer number of people involved in the process, all staff had showed a good professional attitude in engaging with it – this showed the school was building consensus in the right way.
- 6.9. The Chair asked if the union was likely to make representations to the FBG. AsH stated that this would depend on what the final model looked like; the possibility of representation might well happen.

## **7. Headteacher report**

- 7.1. AsH highlighted the sections on data, attendance, GCSE projections, current numbers on roll and a staffing update (not yet complete, as this was a period of significant turnover).

### *GCSE projections*

- 7.2. AsH pointed to the Year 11 predicted grades, with best guesses set out on achievements, highlighting Attainment 8 grades 1 – 9 and an overall figure of 54.61 (a combination of students' ten best grades); the school being half way between 5 and 6 (compared to the old system, being a solid 'B'). With regard to Progress 8, AsH explained that this showed how well students were doing in comparison to when they started. AsH highlighted English (+0.26), Mathematics (+0.18) and eBacc (0.62) in this regard – with an overall conservative prediction of 0.39 which was an improvement over last year (0.02).
- 7.3. AsH drew attention to the 'entries' box which showed the percentages of different grades (9-8 15% outstanding; 9-7 32% very strong; 9-5 72% strong pass; 9-4 low pass 86% - of all grades). AsH next highlighted a breakdown of this information, this time filtered for PP and Special Educational Needs (SEN) students; acknowledging that these two groups were doing less well (PP -0.2 and SEN -0.6).
- 7.4. Governors noted that not all students had entered for GCSE English. AsH commented that a group of students had been entered for 'Step Up To English' which was a level below GCSE; who would otherwise not score a GCSE grade. Governors asked if, nevertheless, these students could take GCSE English in Sixth Form. AsH confirmed that this option was open to them.
- 7.5. The Chair noted that attainment on mathematics was the weakest area for SEN and PP students. AsH acknowledged this fact and pointed out that mathematics was lower than English in Brighton and Hove.

### *Attendance*

- 7.6. Governors asked about attendance. AsH stated that the national target was 95%; the school's aim was to reach 97%. AsH added that the school's figures

would improve a great deal from 17 May onwards, given that this was the start of Year 11 study leave. The Chair noted that PP attendance figures were much the same as last year. AsH agreed this point but added that persistent absence data was better than last year and lower than the national average.

## **8. Safeguarding**

- 8.1. In the absence of RK, AsH reported no new developments.

## **9. Health & Safety**

- 9.1. SH circulated the LA H&S newsletter, explaining that this was how it communicated on this issue with schools. SH confirmed that this was shown to all staff and kept in the common room. SH also drew attention to the accident/incident report book, which was kept under review by her to see if any actions were required. SH stated that this included accidents and incidents that were reportable to the Health & Safety Executive (H&SE), e.g. those who had to go to hospital for injury treatment.
- 9.2. SH reported that the school had held an H&S committee meeting this week, with the next scheduled for early June – this was to be a regular arrangement. SH added that the school was encouraging staff to do first aid training, to increase the numbers of first aiders on call on the premises – this on-site cover was less easy to arrange for weekends and holidays. SH confirmed that lone working or high risk activities had been stopped.

## **10. School policies**

### *Complaints*

- 10.1. AsH informed governors that the current proposed draft was based on the Department for Education (DfE) model, which had been adapted for the school's approach. AsH stated that having this policy in place was a statutory obligation for the school.
- 10.2. Governors asked about the right to privacy. AsH stated that this was set out in the beginning of the policy, adding that the outcome of the process was divulged only to the complainant and not more widely publicised.
- 10.3. The Chair appreciated references in the text to record keeping and the status of minutes – these were helpful, as well as the section on dealing with persistent complaints.
- 10.4. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval of this policy.

## **11. Governor training**

- 11.1. The Chair noted that the role of link training governor was not allocated; as soon as the overall list of responsibilities was reconsidered, this would be addressed.

- 11.2. JMa informed the FBG that she had undertaken the PP course recently. The Chair informed the FBG that the next Governance briefing session by the LA would take place on 22 May.

## **12. Governors' meetings dates for 2019/2020**

- 12.1. The Chair noted that a provisional list of dates, recently revised, had been circulated to all governors. AsH stated that this came with the caveat that the school had not yet decided on its calendar of important dates for 2019/2020; but would try to avoid clashes.
- 12.2. SH requested that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for 18 May 2020, be changed to 11 May 2020 to allow for review of the final budget proposal.

## **13. Actions taken by Chair**

- 13.1. The Chair offered thanks on behalf of the FBG to those governors who had assisted in the recent round of Deputy Headteacher interviews.
- 13.2. The Chair noted that this was RM's last meeting as a parent governor, whose term of office was to conclude on 31 May. On behalf of the FBG, the Chair thanked RM warmly for his service and contribution to the school, in the diligent undertaking of his duties as a member of the Board over the last four years.

**(Note –** There then followed an hour long H&S training session for governors given by the LA (Simon Lackner and Graeme Stimpson); attended by PS, LR, MC, GC, AB, JS, DHi, AsH, JMa, DHa and SH)

### **Actions**

- Submission of school budget to LA by 24 May - SH
- Review of link governor responsibilities table - all
- Change of May 2020 Finance Committee meeting date - DH

**Next meeting – 11 July 2019 (Development Plan)**

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...