

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
8th November 2021
4.15pm for 4.30pm start Via Zoom**

AGENDA

Governors Present :	Mick Baker(Chair), Philip Brown, Lara Coleman, Jane Dickson, Alison Frost, Les Gunbie, Vanessa Hickey, Matt Hillier, Reg Hook, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Bronagh Shevlin, Haydn Stride, Derek Swindells, Bridget Taylor
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Richard Baker, Andrea Cumming, Roshan Dias-Jayasinghe, Giles Ward

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Vice Chair of Governors opened the meeting with a welcome, particularly to two new Co-opted Governors joining for their first meeting.</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Governing Board confirmed the appointment of Philip Brown and Bridget Taylor as Co-opted Governors.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for possible absence received from Alison Frost.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The declarations register was circulated with the meeting papers. Lara Coleman declared an interest in item 5a due to her family personal experience. There was no reason identified why she could not take part in the discussions under this item.</p>	
2	<p>Chair's Update The Vice Chair provided an update on key issues and business conducted on behalf of the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to Jane Dickson and Millie McDevitt the outgoing Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and Co-Chairs from the previous academic year. Both were to remain on the Board as Governors. • It was noted that the Vice Chair of Governors could not be appointed as Chair of Governors due to potential conflicts of interest. He had stepped in as acting chair until an election process had been held. 	
3	<p>Last Meeting Dated 27th September 2021</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved seven pages of minutes from the meeting held on 27th September subject to an amendment to item 7b (see 3b below) .</p> <p>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee structure – There was a query regards the decision to not move to a committee structure as proposed at a previous planning meeting. It was explained that the Chair , Vice Chair and Headteacher along with the Clerk had decision to not proceed with a change in governance structure at the current time. This was in part due to some challenge at the planning meeting regards delegation of powers 	

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	<p>to small groups of Governors. The Clerk advised that as the committee structure had not been agreed by the Board there was no need to seek approval to not proceed to a committee structure and that noting in the previous minutes was sufficient. There was a question on the timing of a review process to reconsider a committee structure and whilst none had been agreed this was something that had been left open for the Board to decide. A change to the minutes was requested and accepted in section 7b to reflect that the decision had been made and presented to the Board to not proceed to committees at the current stage.</p> <p>ACTION – Model of Governance to be an agenda item at the next Board meeting, to include the benefits and disadvantages of committee and non-committee structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument of Government <p>AGREEMENT – The Governing Board approved the instrument of Government as presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning walks – Governors requested a schedule of the planned learning walks. 	
4	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to Governors on an assumed read basis highlighting some key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data reports had been populated before the year mocks which were currently underway. The gender gap was still there as was the gap for disadvantaged students and those with special education needs. <p>4.48pm – Giles Ward joined the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress 8 scores were based on 2019 national data being the most recent available. Indications were that the school had a positive progress 8 score. • The school’s improvement partner had reviewed the data commenting on the high numbers of students at the school entered for EBacc, 77% of cohort. Data suggested that those with a standard pass at grade 4 or above within the Ebacc pathway was at 63% and 42% for a strong pass (grade 5 or above). • The grades 4+ and 5+ were holding up in both English and maths, though 42% for grade 7+ in English looked a bit optimistic. A more accurate picture would be seen after mock exam results were in. • Gender gap was a key school improvement item with focus on boys engagement in learning during learning walks. • The disadvantaged gap was better than the previous year, a number of students in this group were not attending school adversely affecting their progress. A separate set of data would be maintained demonstrating progress made of those attending school. • Covid vaccinations completed at school with about a50% take up in line with local authority levels. There had been some antivax activity locally in advance of vaccination day. Hygiene and ventilation protocols continuing and all recommendations around testing and self-isolation being adhered to. • All schools had noted that test and trace was not working as well since process taken out of school. • Covid levels relatively low though uncertain whether this was because not all students testing regularly. Staffing wise there was one member off with long covid and one on a phased return, no other staff members off with covid. 	

- Above pupil admission numbers (PAN) in all year groups apart from year 11 where two students had been transferred to school places at The Connected Hub.
- The school had agreed to admit a fifth refugee in year 10 bringing that year group to go over PAN. School budget based on 1675 students.
- Inset training recently on appraisals, evidence based research and instructional coaching.
- Literacy was a high priority on the school improvement plan, reciprocal reading scheme started with year 7 groups.
- Not a lot of progress with building works , in particular the science lab was going back to tender and the school was no further forward with installation of additional toilets which was a concern.
- The school open evenings for prospective families had gone well using Eventbrite for booking slots.
- There were a few staff vacancies , recruitment for head of science underway with a temporary placement to boost capacity in that department. English being covered by a retired staff member who had returned to support and a staff member returning from sabbatical.
- Head's PA leaving in January due to a relocation, advert out with a closing date shortly. Request to Governors to support with interviewing.
- Safeguarding concerns recorded on CPOMS, the statistics from this were available for Governors noting a spike on return after lockdown, averaging around 450 incidents a month.
- Behaviour points data provided with breakdown on types of incidents noting that lack of equipment was the highest.

Governor comments and questions

- How did the toilet provision stack up against student numbers currently and predicted numbers in the future? Would a temporary solution like portaloos resolve the current issues?
- What learning had the school taken from the behaviour data and what actions were proposed?
- There there been a recommendation for special educational needs (SEN) training at inset, had it happened?
- In the previous year warning had been received in the spring term about increased students from the year 6 cohort, had something similar been received in the current year?
- The Governors were very keen that the toilet capacity was increased as a matter of urgency.
- An update on training for teachers around students with ADHD requested at next meeting along with breakdown of data for students with SEN further into categories of need.
- Ofsted might be expecting a breakdown of data within the SEN group, even if there were just a few students it would be useful.

Responses to Governor comments and questions

- The school were not keen on a portaloos option, a block of new toilets external to current buildings was the best option to provide for basic needs. The required ratio was 1:20 therefore 82.5 toilets were required for the current school cohort.
- The Heads of Year would analyse their own data ensuring students were on the correct wave. High levels of being unprepared for learning was a surprise, there was work to be done by the tutors to reinforce expectations though it was noted that tutor time was limited. Assemblies in half years had returned providing opportunities to give key messages.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the inset training coming up emotional coaching was planned which tied in with SEN needs. There had not been a specific session on SEN recently, there was a session on knowing individual needs and planning for those needs in September. • The Local Authority had written about student numbers in the catchment area to enquire about capacity at the schools in catchment should they be oversubscribed. The response provided was that with increased toilet facilities Stringer would be willing to take a certain number over PAN with hindsight of the amount of work needed to deal with high levels of correspondence relating to admissions with the school coming in at just 330 in any case , together with a background of the current year being the last bulge year coming through. <p>5.18pm – Alison Frost arrived at the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current research groups for categories of needs set up, it could be done but the individual groups would be very small and thereby not provide useful data. • Qualitative data alongside the research groups for SEN with an analysis of students involved could be provided. 	
5	<p>School Development Plan /Deep Dive</p> <p>a) Safeguarding</p> <p>The school’s safeguarding lead gave a presentation on updates on the statutory document “Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and resulting updates on school policy and practice including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently all staff have to read section one of the KCSIE document, an annex was available for staff members with no direct contact with students to read as an alternative. • Whilst both genders were vulnerable to exploitation boys were more vulnerable to criminal exploitation and girls to sexual exploitation. • Recording of all concerns including low level concerns on CPOMS with escalation to appropriate person in the school. • Development of a positive safeguarding culture within the school to enable students to raise concerns in the confidence that they would be taken seriously. • Safeguarding audit completed annually by the safeguarding team. Areas for development arising from the recent audit were to do with low level concerns reporting about staff , nominated governor for children in care, strategy for peer on peer abuse. • Four areas of work being preventive and reactive reporting systems, student voice and staff training. • Student safe at school survey to be released for completion from late November during PSHE lessons. • All new staff had safeguarding induction training on 5th July with a follow session for more recently engaged staff on 20th October. This training covered identification and reporting of concerns. • The main message to staff during update training was about developing a positive safeguarding culture, taking all concerns seriously and acting upon them. • Zero tolerance approach at school to harmful sexual behaviours. • External interventions used for additional support and to guide practices. The police had been in on 19th October to talk to students , to share videos and hand out leaflets. Focus groups were held with the alternative curriculum students focussing on the impact and consequences of knife crime. • Wise a local charitable group had been in to support with the PSHE curriculum around issues of harmful sexual behaviours and consent and Allsorts had been in for one to one support. 	

- The Local Authority partnership adviser for health and wellbeing was supporting the school with development of an approach towards harmful sexual behaviours.
- Digital safeguarding application launch to the whole school community , a good tool for young people and parents to access current information.
- Supervision for staff dealing with safeguarding issues with monthly meetings as a supportive measure.
- Devoted time in RSE lessons to talk about all aspects of relationships and sexual education.
- Limitations on what the school could do in relation to harmful sexual behaviours in eth wider community, focus therefore on equipping young people to deal with issues and raise concerns.
- Data recording for first half term included 22 peer on peer bullying incidents for whole year with the majority in year 9. That year group had also the highest number of prejudiced bullying incidents recorded at 10 out of a total of 32. The highest type of concern was gender identity. All information shared with heads of year and head of PSHE with a view to adjustment of the curriculum to address the concerns arising.
- Information about the PSHE curriculum content being shared with parents.

Questions and comments from Governors

- There was a safeguarding concern that had been flagged up in relation to school uniform which had not been reflected in earlier discussions.
- How would information about safeguarding concerns relating to staff be recorded and how might it affect their future employment?
- Has there been any analysis of behaviour data relevant to staff , i.e., one staff member recording significantly more than others?
- With a cohort of over 1600 students there were very few incidents recorded as a percentage. Was their scope to have systems where students would feel comfortable to talk about their experiences before an incident was reported?

Response to Governor comment and questions

- No decision had been made about reporting low level staff concerns about other staff. Case managers , being the Headteacher and Deputy Head tended to deal with issues currently being raised. Staff members had a role in developing a positive safeguarding culture and as professionals should model exemplary behaviour. Nothing has been agreed but it was an area that came about from the audit to explore.
- Behaviour incident recording had been analysed at individual staff level, raising some areas for further exploration by school leaders to satisfy themselves that there were no underlying issues, such as behaviour management.
- Development of student voice was an area being developed; every student had a form tutor whose role was to build a positive relationship with students to enable them to feel comfortable in raising any concerns. Each year group also had a pastoral manager for students to speak to. There were posters throughout the school with reminders on who to contact with an online reporting system for students.

AGREEMENT – The Board approved the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy as presented subject to the change in the name of the Chair of Governors.

b) Pastoral

The Headteacher reminded Governors that within the school development plan attendance was a key area that senior leaders were concerned about. The Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance provided an overview.

- Currently attendance around 90.7% considerably lower than the target of 95%, Brighton & Hove attendance 86.3% for first half term.
- The majority of absence related to illness (6.5%).
- Covid related absence not included, though some families were keeping their children at home in case minor coughs and colds were covid.
- Two attendance officers at the school plus two days a week of education welfare officer (EWO) support focussing on proactive contact and building relationships with families. Data handling process had been adapted to enable more time to be proactive with support. Automation of reporting and data using study bugs.
- Remote learners group for those students that had been finding it difficult attending school with good success in bring them back in.

Comment and questions from Governors

- Where was the school regards analysis of attendance data for students with SEND?
- What provision was in place for students away from school due to covid related issues?
- Was the curriculum accessible for the serial non-attenders?
- How was ventilation of classrooms to reduce the spread of covid being managed?
- What does the attendance data look like compared with historic data?
- Encouraged by the schools stance of building on positive relationships to encourage attendance.
- Have staff had training on how disclosure can be incremental and how to coax out more if a child signals that they have something to disclose?
- What is being done to support staff wellbeing for those dealing with distressing situations as part of their role?

Response to Governor comment and questions

- The school analysis covers all groups including SEND a lower attending group. The pastoral team were aware of the individuals and their specific issues affecting their attendance. The group of students admitted mid-year had the lowest attendance which was not surprising given some of the reasons why they had moved schools. Year 11 were the lowest attending group with long term absentees affecting the average.
- Every subject had online learning available, the numbers were small, so the school had not moved to teams learning.
- The online learning was accessible to all students, a separate programme for non-attenders was being explored, there was a balance between providing learning opportunities whilst not encouraging students to stay at home more.
- Ventilation was a key covid preventative measure with doors open as much as possible, students were permitted to wear outdoor clothing during cold weather.
- Attendance was lower than previous years , it tends to be worse in autumn with improvement in the summer term.
- The best way to improve attendance is to make sure everyone wants to be at school and understanding the reasons behind non-attendance. Form tutors have a key role in creating a sense of belonging by welcoming children back into school after an absence. Covid had impacted on the sense of community and belonging.
- All safeguarding training covers how to deal with disclosure from a young person, staff are told not to use leading questions and not promise confidentiality. Once a concern is raised there will be someone from the safeguarding team who will take up the case and speak with the student to try and tease out more information.
- The Local Authority had offered supervision as a reflective process for individuals to discuss instances and approaches in a supportive manner. Safeguarding staff at schoolwork in proximity to each other and regularly check in on each other.

	6.20pm – Giles Ward and Richard Baker left the meeting.	
6	<p>School Finances</p> <p>a) Budget Monitoring Report The Business Manager provided an overview of school budget to end of September (month 5) , closer scrutiny had been undertaken by the business group of Governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in energy costs had been advised by the Local Authority, this did not include electricity as this was locked in on a fixed price contract. • Increase in cost of goods being seen. • The Let’s Dance event was to be held this year with covid mitigations in place. • Covid catch up recovery fund meeting had been held with a plan to spend the majority in the current year. • Swimming pool refurbishment was incomplete with issues regards the contract on which some financial compensation was expected. The pool had been handed back to the school. • Projected carried forward increased from £140k to £284K , with the significant increase from the reforecasting of the canteen income generation from an initial expected operational loss position, due to furlough contributions. <p><u>Comment and questions from Governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noting comments that income from the swimming pool was reducing this seemed to contradict with other comments about a surplus increase due to more income than expected. • Was the positive change of £140k on the canteen budget line a one off? <p><u>Response to Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position when setting the budget was conservative in terms of lettings income and assumed that the swimming pool would be handed back in September. Since then, availability of the pool had been higher than expected as covid restrictions were relaxed. The work had been delayed with handover two months later than anticipated. There had also been conservative budgeting around canteen income. • There were two budgets for the canteen , one with covid disruption which was the one incorporated into the budget. The disruption was not as great as anticipated. <p>b) Terms of Reference – Business Group The terms of reference were proposed for approval without any amendment. Governors were advised that there had been discussion about splitting the finance from buildings and having two separate groups but following discussion it was agreed to leave as it was.</p> <p>ACTION - There was a request for the governance structure to be documented and provided to Governors.</p> <p>c) Scheme of Delegation Carried forward until next meeting,</p> <p>d) Pay Panel Report The Headteacher advised that he had recommended one point pay increments for those teachers on main pay scale as well as upper pay scale one , two and three for those eligible. Two members of leadership further recommended for pay progression.</p>	TD

	<p>ACTION – Request for an overview of blue sky reporting for performance appraisal at the next Business Group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers Pay Policy including Terms of Reference for Pay Panel Updated teacher’s pay policy based on the local authority model presented for approval. The Clerk raised a potential issue regards the quorum for the pay panel as the terms of reference for both the pay panel and Headteacher review panel had the same people in their membership i.e., Chair and Vice Chair . It was agreed to change membership to any three governors in both the pay and appraisal policies. • Teachers Appraisal Policy Minor update to appraisal policy, to include the use of Blue Sky for performance management. <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board approved both the teachers’ pay policy and the appraisal policy subject to the amendment as detailed above.</p>	
7	<p>Other Reports & Recommendations</p> <p>a) Headteacher Review Group – Update Governors were advised that the Headteacher’s performance management and objective setting process had been completed with support of an independent school partnership adviser.</p> <p>b) Uniform Policy – Working Group Update Representatives of the uniform working group delegated with the task of drafting a uniform policy provided feedback on the group’s activities and recommendations to the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A provisional interim uniform policy had been circulated to Governors for consideration. • If the policy was agreed a letter would go out to parents with the policy to clarify communication around the school skirt that had caused some confusion , to reflect reasonable implementation of the policy and refer to a proposed consultation with stakeholders. The method of consultation had not been decided upon, various models including co-production were being considered. • Following consultation, feedback would be considered, and policy updated if required. • On 15th November staff training was proposed, delivered by two members of the uniform group, this training would include an outline of policy and reasonable implementation. • Legal advice would be taken on the final school uniform policy before it was issue. • The Education Bill of April 2021 had implications for school regards uniform policy. • A further revision of uniform policy would be undertaken by April 2022. <p>There was an additional proposal from two governors that an appreciative review be undertaken to review what had occurred and how the school community could move forward. A separate paper had been circulated outlining the four lines of enquiry for such a review. There was comment that an appreciative review should happen at the end of the process with the benefit of hindsight and as a separate issue</p> <p><u>Comment and questions from Governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be a degree of consultation that made the procedure better in view of negative response from a large number of parents and students. What had been outlined 	

was a possible solution to the feelings of negativity, however there was a large number of parents voicing concerns over the impact of the current policy on the relationships between school and students that had not yet been managed.

- What would the staff training look like?
- Uniform policy was always a problematic area for schools, in this case there had been a sizeable negative impact on the relationships with parents. How could that need be met and assurance provided that the school was listening to the complaints and were doing something about it.
- There would always be students looking for the loopholes in policy and taking advantage of them, students would have picked up on the disharmony between what the school wished to do and its ability to implement what it saw as a reasonable implementation of a uniform policy. The positive relationship that empowers staff to be able to deal with young people reasonably had been negatively affected. How could this be overcome; this was an area for Governors to consider and agree some strategies around.
- Governors need to respect the view of parents, to advise them on what was planned and take their views.
- Thanks to the working group, there had been a lot of movement with a consultation welcomed. A fuller consultation of students beyond the junior leadership team was recommended.
- The relationship with smarter uniforms had not been included within the poverty proofing section of the uniform policy.
- A report that had come in from a group of parents was not statistically significant and it was right to get a wider range of views, however it was sufficient to indicate serious concerns. A more robust challenge from Governors should have taken place regards legality of policy back in the summer as concerns were emerging.
- The group of parents should be invited in to talk through their views to find a constructive solution together.
- Consultation was appreciated in the current situation, would any future plans to change things at the school require consultation, this could stall the school's future plans and activities which was a concern.
- It wasn't clear whether a uniform policy had been in place previously which was part of the confusion.
- Everyone wanted to resolve the issue but part of what had gone wrong was that in previous Board meetings there had not been sufficient discussion. The opportunity should be taken to do it properly this time.
- For a consultation to work, should the policy be held back until such time feedback from stakeholders was available on what they wanted to see in a uniform policy.
- The priority should be on resolving the issues in a positive way for the good of the school, a review can come later.
- It was important to communicate that the policy was interim and had already taken account of feedback received whilst providing assurance that it would be put to a much bigger audience for comment. There was a lot of pressure on Governors to consult.
- What did timeline look like, how would that be communicated?
- If not resolved the issue would be damaging to the school and children's education, the sooner a meeting was held with representatives of the parents group the better.

Response from Governor comment and questions

- The letter to parents and training of staff would pick up on some of the concerns.
- One of the issues had been lack of consistency of approach, parents had also picked up on the type of language being used around handling of non-compliance with uniform requirements. A major focus would be to explain to staff that there was a firm policy, and

	<p>that implementation should be reasonable, some background regards the types of concerns from parents and students would also be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had been written to before half term to outline some of the aspects referred to, and with a further letter other points would be picked up. There was a mismatch between what parents thought what was happening and what actually was happening. The letter would cover the issue of reasonable implementation and address the issue where skirts were purchased in line with a policy that had been incorrectly published. • Without a policy the school could not operate, teachers needed to be able to address the issues of students arriving at school with completely inappropriate dress. • Letter to parents could include a timeline on consultation. <p>AGREEMENT – A final proposal was outlined and approved by the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uniform policy be accepted incorporating the amendments suggested. • Letter to parents to be drafted for approval by uniform group and Headteacher to go out as a joint letter from the school and governors. • Message to the parent group inviting representatives in to talk with the uniform group representatives. 	
8	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>a) Code of Conduct Staff</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Board agreed to adopt the Local Authority updated code of conduct policy as presented.</p> <p>b) Early Career Teachers Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Board approved the Early Career Teachers Policy as presented.</p>	
9	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Nominations – Update Governors were advised that both co-opted governor positions had been filled and a parent/carer election was underway.</p> <p>b) Election of Chair of Governors The Clerk chaired for this agenda item. Prior to the meeting nominations had been sought for the election of Chair of Governors until the end of the academic year. Nominations had been received for Haydn Stride and Derek Swindells. Following Haydn Stride’s withdrawal from the process Derek Swindells left the meeting whilst a vote was taken,</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Board elected Derek Swindells as Chair of Governors until the end of the academic year.</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business None</p> <p>Meeting ended at 8.07pm Date of next meeting – 17th January 2022</p>	