

**Meeting of Full Governing Body  
11<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
Training Room  
4.30pm**

**MINUTES**

<b>Governors Present:</b>	Martyn Allen, Mick Baker, Richard Bradford, Emma Farrell, Alison Frost, Les Gunbie, Jeremy Holtom, Reg Hook, Jennifer John, Dick Knight, Jenny Poore, Alan Sanders, Elaine Stoner, Derek Swindells (Chair), Sarah Windsor
<b>Associate Members Present:</b>	Sue Middleton
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Teresa Carter (Clerk)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Richard Baker, Ros Stephen

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>a) <b>Apologies for Absence</b> All Governors were present at the meeting.</p> <p>b) <b>Declarations of Interest</b> None</p>	
2	<p><b>Last meeting Dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b></p> <p>a) <b>Approval of Minutes</b> The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) <b>Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</b> Item 5a - The Schools Financial Value Standard had been signed and submitted to the Local Authority. The outcome of the DfE consultation on a national funding arrangement was expected later in the month. Until then it was difficult to measure the impact on the School. Item 7 - There had been a delay on completion of the Governing Body development plan. A meeting to review it was expected in September.</p>	
3	<p><b>Chair's Update</b></p> <p>The Chair of Governors provided a verbal update on governance business focusing on the various issues both locally and nationally that would require future action/consideration by Governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School catchment areas in Brighton and Hove and the opening of the additional secondary school.</li> <li>• Government white paper that included a drive for Schools to convert to academy and the subsequent update removing the compulsory element.</li> <li>• Strike action by the teachers' unions.</li> <li>• School forum and agreement regards money taken out of the dedicated schools grant for capital works.</li> <li>• Headteacher's interim review undertaken in June with final review due early autumn term once the GCSE results were known.</li> <li>• A letter from Chair of the Council's Children, Young People and Skills Committee which included a statement that the city secondary schools were failing to close the progress gap for disadvantaged students which had been a concern as factually it was incorrect. The Headteacher advised that in 6 of the 7 national measures local schools were closing the gap and that there may have been some misunderstanding on how the pupil premium gaps are measured.</li> </ul>	

Signature.....Date.....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equalities monitoring forms sent to Governors to complete.</li> <li>• Noted election of new officials to the City Labour Party at their annual general meeting</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Headteacher's Report to include:</b></p> <p><b>School Development Key Priorities 2015/16 - Ensuring Good Leadership and Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Self Evaluation 2015/16</li> <li>• School Development Plan Priorities 2016/17</li> </ul> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to Governors on an assumed read basis highlighting key issues and answering questions in each of the four sections.</p> <p><u>Student Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A slight improvement on GCSE 5 A* - C grades expected at 74.38%. The School's achievement forecasts had been historically accurate.</li> <li>• Progress measures looking good but it was not possible to accurately predict Progress 8 outcomes as this measure was based on a national performance that would not be known until the RAISE online data was released.</li> <li>• Progress on pupil premium students and closing the gap remained a priority area for the School.</li> </ul> <p><u>Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning and Appraisal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile of Student cohort changing with increasing numbers of children with special educational needs (SEN) joining the School in September, 44 SEN support and 8 on educational health and care plans (EHCP) being an increase of 84% since academic year 2014/15.</li> <li>• Dorothy Stringer provided a quality SEN provision and was becoming a first choice for families. This was impacting on resources, as the School was required to provide the first £6000 towards cost of provision for each student with an EHCP. A number of Learning Mentors had been appointed for 2016/17 supported by the Behaviour and Inclusive Learning Team.</li> </ul> <p><u>Behaviour and Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attendance was a bit of concern with a small decrease on previous year (94.24% /94.82%). Governors asked whether there was any relation between absence levels and the distance from School and were advised that there was no clear link but an analysis would be undertaken to identify any links. Martyn Allen offered to be involved as link governor for developing an attendance plan.</li> <li>• The student absences were mostly for sickness with no evidence of regular unauthorised absence for holidays.</li> <li>• As exclusions increased in house alternatives had been developed including seclusion. The School was also working with the parents of the children within the small at risk group. Governors were supportive of the creative collaborative work being undertaken to avoid exclusion of vulnerable students.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategic Priorities and Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Authority's engagement on admissions had been completed and views received on three possible catchment areas. It was clear that the majority of those that responded saw the priorities as minimal transport, going to school with friends and having local viable schools. Further proposals on catchment areas were expected more in line with the current arrangements including a shared area for Dorothy Stringer and Varndean. Governors commented that finalising of catchment areas was misguided until the final location of the new secondary school was known</li> </ul> <p>From Dorothy Stringer's evidence it was also clear that progress for students living in less advantaged areas was greater for those living nearer the School which was thought to be due to engagement opportunities. It was unlikely therefore that moving children around the city would solve any inequality.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School had renewed its membership of Challenge Partners with the next review due on 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October. Five of the local Schools had submitted an application to become teaching schools under a pilot scheme enabling schools not yet classified as outstanding to collaborate in a shared arrangement. The full application from Dorothy Stringer was provided to Governors for information.</li> <li>• The numbers of teachers leaving the School at the end of the year and turnover throughout the year had been minimal. Governors noted that Suzanne Lewis, Assistant Head was retiring after 35 years of employment at the School and requested that thanks and appreciation be passed to her along with a card and gift.</li> <li>• There had been a considerable reduction in teacher absence though the reasons were still notably weighted towards depression and anxiety (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all days missed through illness). Some long term absences had impacted on non teaching staffing attendance.</li> <li>• Governors acknowledged that despite the sharing of the Headteacher with Longhill School during the year school performance remained strong thanks to exceptional team work with all members taking on additional responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Governors were provided with a copy of the school’s self evaluation document and the proposed key school development priorities for 2016/17. A detailed plan would follow once the student outcomes had been analysed but in the meantime Governors were asked to consider and approve the key priority areas as detailed. These priority areas included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with pupil premium parents and students including fresher’s fairs to promote the extra curricular clubs.</li> <li>• Increased focus on tracking student progress.</li> <li>• Appointment of pupil premium champion.</li> <li>• Review of curriculum to ensure suitable fit for all students.</li> <li>• Promotion of positive behaviour through the Stringer Learning Culture.</li> <li>• Continue to raise consistency and quality of assessment and feedback.</li> <li>• Learning mentors to work with identified students to remove barriers to learning.</li> <li>• Creation of a Professional Learning Community.</li> <li>• Attendance plan to target students with attendance below 95%.</li> <li>• Alternative provisions to reduce exclusions.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the key development priorities for 2016/17 as detailed. Governors indicated which of the four main areas that they wished to be aligned to.</b></p>	
5	<p><b>Business Manager’s Report to Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proposed Budget 2016/17 for Approval</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial Benchmarking/Efficiency Tool</b></li> </ul> <p>The Business Manager presented her report to Governors on an assumed read basis highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finance Group of Governors had reviewed the proposed budget for 2016/17 in detail and was happy to propose it for Full Governing Body approval. A priority budget consideration had been to keep staffing costs below 80% of the overall available funding and had been achieved by not replacing staff at senior level.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the budget for 2016/17 as proposed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finance Group had also looked at financial benchmarking but noted that it was difficult to get a good match with sufficient other private finance initiative schools. A summary of local school budgets per student was provided as an indication of the levels received by each maintained school in the city.</li> <li>• Governors asked about the plans to develop further funding streams noting the engagement of a bid writer. The School advised that the service was being provided by an individual at a nominal fee to cover costs.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>ACTION - Dick Knight and Alan Sanders agreed to support with a fundraising plan and to meet with the Business Manager and bid writer.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The School had approached the cleaning contractors with a view of taking the cleaning in house similar to the arrangements made for in house catering. A detailed written proposal with financial implications had been provided for Governors consideration.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved in principle to bringing the cleaning in house and for negotiations to be taken forward with the cleaning contractors.</b></p>	DK, AS
6	<p><b>Reports and Recommendations from Governors</b></p> <p><b>a) Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting Checks</b> Governors received a written report on the findings following a Governor check of the central record of recruitment and vetting checks. There were no issues of concern.</p> <p><b>b) Equality Information and Objectives Statement</b> Governors received a written report on the findings following a Governor check of the School's published equalities information. There was a recommendation for the annual review to be moved to Spring term to enable a review of the safe and wellbeing survey outcomes and for one Governor to be responsible for all equality issues.</p> <p><b>c) Schools Information Published on Website - Check meets statutory requirements</b> Governors received verbal confirmation that the School's website currently met all statutory reporting requirements.</p>	
7	<p><b>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</b> The Governors responsible for reviewing policies provided updates and made recommendations for amendment and approval.</p> <p><b>a) Child Protection Policy</b></p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the current published child protection policy subject to minor amendments to named individuals.</b></p> <p><b>b) Staff Disciplinary Procedures - New Model Policy from B&amp;H</b> Further amendments to the Local Authority model disciplinary procedures had been released to Schools in the past few days.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body agreed to adopt the Local Authority model procedures as published on the Wave for staff disciplinary pending drafting and approval of the Schools own policy using the model.</b></p> <p><b>c) Charging and Remissions Policy</b></p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the charging policy as presented.</b></p> <p><b>d) Home School Agreement</b></p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the current home school agreement and noted the intention to retain it despite it no longer being a statutory requirement.</b></p> <p><b>e) Equality Policy</b></p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the equalities policy as presented.</b></p>	

<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>a) Celebrations</b> The Chair of Governors advised of several events to celebrate including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award to Dorothy Stringer School for the Argus School of the year.</li> <li>• Nomination of Richard Bradford for the Argus Headteacher of the year.</li> <li>• Award to Sue Middleton as teacher of the year.</li> <li>• Forthcoming marriage of Teresa Carter, Clerk to Governors.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Hardship Fund</b> Following the strategy meeting of Governors some discussion had taken place on setting up of a hardship fund with support of ex students and others associated with the School. Governors strongly supported this initiative and were invited to participate in fund raising activities.</p> <p><b>c) Governors</b> The Chair of Governors thanked colleagues for their commitment, investment of time and support throughout the 4 years of his period in office. He confirmed that he looked forward to continuing to work for the school into the future as a Local Authority Governor</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Chair of Governors and Vice Chairs of Governors</b> The Clerk chaired the meeting for this item and reminded Governors of the agreed process for nomination and election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. There had been nominations for the posts as follows: Jenny Poore as Chair of Governors Alan Sanders as Vice Chair of Governors Mick Baker as Vice Chair of Governors These three individuals left the room whilst a vote was taken on appointment.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body elected Jenny Poore as Chair of Governors and both Alan Sanders and Mick Baker as Vice Chairs of Governors. All appointments were immediate and until the last meeting of 2016/17.</b></p> <p>There was a vote of thanks to Derek Swindells for everything that he had achieved as Chair of Governors.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.58pm Date of next meeting - To be agreed</p>	