

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
14th June 2021
4.15pm for 4.30pm start
Via Zoom**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Lara Coleman, Jane Dickson (Chair), Alison Frost, Les Gunbie, Vanessa Hickey, Matt Hillier, Reg Hook, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Bronagh Shevlin, Haydn Stride, Derek Swindells
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Roshan Dias, Paul Watson

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The meeting was opened with a welcome from the Chair.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Lydia Bower and Jenny Poore.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest None made in relation to agenda items. The declarations register was included within meeting papers.</p>	
2	<p>Chair's Update The Chair provided an update to governors on business conducted on behalf of the Governing Body and current issues and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated session on governance self-evaluation to be held directly after the meeting. Brighton & Hove City Council's children and young people's committee meeting at the same time as the full governing body including an agenda item on community consultation on catchment areas and pupil admission numbers (PAN) with potential impact for Dorothy Stringer School in the future. Headteacher performance review meeting held the previous week, completing the process for the current academic year. July meeting date to be changed to 19th July with 4.15pm for 4.30pm start. If able to hold an in person meeting the governors who had left would be invited for a social part/thank you at the end of the meeting. 	
3	<p>Last Meeting Dated 10th May 2021</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved nine pages of minutes from the meeting held on 10th May 2021.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda None</p> <p>4.37pm - Haydn Stride arrived at the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Headteacher Update The Headteacher provided an update on the current priorities for the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In compliance with current Covid 19 advice from Brighton & Hove City Council and the Department of Education the school had removed the requirement for face coverings on May 17th. Mitigations were in place around one way systems, ventilation and many journeys 	

between lessons being outside. The risk assessment outlined these mitigations in detail. However, students and staff were able to wear face coverings if they wished.

4.38pm - Dick Knight arrived at the meeting.

- The week before half term the school had an outbreak of the covid alpha variant with ten students testing positive on lateral flow testing confirmed by PCR tests. In response and following consultation with the Co-Chairs of Governors and Local Authority a decision was made to close down the whole year 10 bubble. 313 students transferred to remote learning on the Thursday and Friday. The sources of transmission for the outbreak remained unknown.
- The Headteacher has met with Public Health England officials during half term to discuss the school's response and risk management in relation to Covid19. The advice had been that a move back to lateral flow testing in school was not required and that reminders to families to regularly test was sufficient. Additionally, the advice had been that currently the school did not need to bring back mandatory face coverings in school.
- Large number of staff now vaccinated, there had been no case of a staff member testing positive for several weeks.
- There had been some contact from parents about vaccinating students in school if this was a possibility it would not be done without parental permission.

4.41pm Vanessa Hickey arrived at the meeting.

- Staggered starts and break times had been retained along with hand sanitization and washing had been retained. Ventilation was easier with the warmer weather. Outside spaces were being used where suitable.
- Contingency in place for new year 7 transition with PE lessons outside and limited group numbers.
- Disappointingly, work on the new toilet block (managed under the PFI contract and not directly by the school) was not on the summer works schedule, a drainage test had not yet been carried out. There might be a need to start the work in term time which was a concern due to vicinity and potential for noise and disruption. Current meeting/training room would need to be repurposed into offices.
- The science lab work was out to tender with a planned start in the summer. There were some concerns that availability of materials might impact on the ability to complete the work in time for the new academic year.
- Consideration being given to a full upgrade of the buildings in a way that reduced carbon footprint and environmental impact, including replacement of strip lighting throughout school.
- Nine students had been allocated to the school through admissions appeals bringing the number in year 7 from September to 339, this had since reduced by two students withdrawing to go to an independent school.
- The school curriculum model and financial planning was based on 330 students in each year group. This enabled the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with GCSEs such as advanced maths, Latin and 4 arts courses forming part of the offer. Discussions at Local Authority were being held on changes to the school admission numbers and catchment areas. The Headteacher was keen to keep the admission numbers at 330.
- Year 11 students had finished their formal education at the school at the end of half term with a leavers day at which the behaviour was impeccable. There was uncertainty on whether the year 11 prom could go ahead. Bridging work was on offer by school and the local college.

Governors comments and questions

- Governors were impressed with how the Headteacher was running the school and very pleased with how things were going since his appointment.
- There were a number of priorities around school site that needed ongoing focus over next few years.
- With school places there was a balance to have with looking after the interests of the school alongside the collective interest of students across the city.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would the impact of losing the meeting room be and how would isolations be managed without that space? • Governors had ongoing concerns about the delays installation of additional toilet facilities and the wider impact on the school. • The need for a strategic discussion about school buildings would be needed , potentially within the buildings group. • The PFI contract had a few years to run, the government’s policy on expiring PFI contracts was unknown. <p><u>Responses to Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders were very mindful that the community is all students in the area. • The Nexus area had been cleared out and staff within that area would need to be relocated to the meeting room. Sectioning off the staff room being considered to provide a space for student internal isolation. The attendance room at the front of school and a head of year office were available for meetings with parents. Larger meeting such as governors could be accommodated in the library. • The smaller uniform shop was being used as a check in for students in isolation , no work would be done in there and it did not have natural light. 	
5	<p>Business Manager and Business Group Update</p> <p>The Business Manager provided a verbal update on the school financial situation and other business matters as reported in more depth to the Business Group of governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two additional amounts received from the Local Authority redistribution of funds held as contingency totalling £17k. • Pay awards for support staff of 1.5% (totalling £25k) that were unexpected and not included in the budget. • Surplus from the previous year was being allocated to support school development priorities and to top up the sinking fund for the artificial turf pitch in line with contractual obligations under the loan agreement. • Caretakers house was being refurbished , funded by the local authority. • As a PFI school premises management arrangements were a bit more complex regards responsibility. The business group had reviewed premises management documents , including the duty holder matrix which sets out the roles and responsibilities on site with regards to premises and facilities. The matrix was out of date and as a Local Authority owned document council officers would be contacted to update this. The business group were satisfied that all the documents taken together constituted the school premises management plan. 	
6	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Report</p> <p>The lead governor and school lead for SEND had provided a written report to Governors in advance of the meeting . Between them and with reference to the report they covered off the overall SEN strategy and the current in school SEND provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2019 Education Inspection Framework raises expectations for SEND and inclusion. An underlying principle was that every teacher was a teacher of SEND with the direction towards every school leader and governor having a SEND responsibility giving it the same priority as pupil premium. This was against a background of increasing complex needs amongst students , increased wait times for assessment with no additional funding available. • There were restrictions on what could be offered, a strategic approach needed about how best to make a difference to SEND students. • The school had an active parental group for ADHD with whom there had been engagement. Some of the issues raised by the group were outside of the schools remit though provided a good understanding of the experience of students with ADHD. • A conversation had commenced about a wider approach for the school to remove for students with SEND reducing reliance on individual support plans. The Equality Act an anticipatory duty of thinking about the needs of a range of people with disabilities. • Accessibility can cover a whole range of issues, barriers to accessibility can be significant but can be invisible. Reasonable adjustments must be made to any procedures or practice 	

	<p>that would disadvantage someone with a disability. Any adjustment needed to be a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When considering school policies Governors should be mindful of whether individuals might be substantially disadvantaged by decisions made. • Strategic and proactive consideration required to the sort of things that might represent an obstacle and to see what could be done. • The SEND policy was due for review in autumn, this would be reviewed alongside the new framework and increased expectations and how it linked with other school policy. • Some families were seeking private educational psychology assessments for their children creating potential inequity of provision based on ability to pay for an assessment. • Even with the best screening for SEND in place some students would slip through undiagnosed with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. • Various school policies were recommended for update with reference to SEND such as the more talented and able policy which had a list within it about why more able students might not be recognised but did not refer to SEND or unmet needs. • Creation of a more inclusive school in terms of physical environment and pedagogy would have a positive impact on areas such as attainment gaps and wellbeing , reducing the need to make individual assessments. The first steps for this work would be to refocus the heads of department on awareness and understanding of quality first teaching followed by an inset day on inclusive pedagogy. Ongoing conversations to be held on cost effective ways in which areas of practice might be adapted for optimal accessibility. • Looking into possibility for LED lighting throughout school as part of the anticipatory duty to meet needs. • The number of students with education, health, and care plans (EHCP)was currently at 45 at the school, an increase of 30% over the past five years. The complexity of needs of the children on EHCPs was also increasing. • Nationally mainstream secondary schools had 1.8% students with EHCPs , whilst at Dorothy Stringer it was 2.7%. Across all Brighton schools including special facilities there were 2.4% children on EHCPs. With the number of children on EHCPs it was like running a special facility within a mainstream but without the attached funding. This presented a big challenge for the school. • Work had started looking at the year groups for next year and what the profile of need would be like. Allocation of time and support staff to particular groups was to be done in the smartest way possible with effective timetabling and tutor grouping. • Encouragement being given to staff to refocus their energy and efforts on how they manage class, their teaching and learning to make it as accessible as possible. This approach would be beneficial to students and impact positively on them all. <p><u>Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private assessments might be based on two hours with a child, the school might be better placed in knowing the child and their needs. • A collective strategic approach to SEND was appropriate , governors responsibility would be to ensure that school policy provided the right operational framework for the school and to monitor effectiveness of implementation of policy. <p><u>Response to Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When private assessments came through, they created a difficult situation for the school team regards adjusting an individual provision based on the families ability to pay for the assessment. 	
7	<p>Other Reports and Recommendations</p> <p>a) Safeguarding The lead governor for safeguarding provided a brief verbal update advising that a written report would follow.</p> <p>b) Any training/ courses/ meetings that governors have attended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance briefing was scheduled for the next day (15th June). • Climate education and action briefing for governors on 24th June. • Equalities forum scheduled for 29th June. 	

8	Any Other Business None Meeting ended at 5.40pm Date of next meeting - 19 th July 2021	