

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
20th June 2022
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Philip Brown, Jane Dickson, Emma Grose, Les Gunbie, Matt Hillier, Reg Hook, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Derek Swindells, Bridget Taylor (Chair)
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
Senior Leadership Team:	Richard Baker, Roshan Dias-Jayasinghe, Paul Watson

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Lara Coleman.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The declarations register was included within meeting papers , there were no declarations relating to items on the agenda.</p>	
2	<p>Chair's Update The Chair provided governors with an update on current matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair being new to role had started to meet with governors on a one to one basis in advance of planning out the business for the forthcoming academic year. • Last meeting of the year scheduled for 18th July , all outstanding issues from current year to be wrapped up then. • Early September planning meeting proposed to discuss structure and operation along with priority areas for the board and year. • Dates for the usual seven board meetings had been scheduled in with the school calendar. <p>ACTION - Circulate board meeting dates for 2022-23.</p>	TD
3	<p>Last Meeting Dated 9th May 2022</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved seven pages of minutes from the meeting held on 9th May 2022. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Education - Initial group meeting to look at an overall audit for the school. Four day course advised which school representatives would be attending for two days only due to clash with planned enrichment week. The lead governor for climate education recommended a sustainability group be set up with representatives from the whole school community noting that as he would be 	

	<p>coming to the end of his term a replacement lead governor was required. Other sustainability groups that had been discussed were the Headteachers' steering group and a surrenden campus group. On the school newsletter there had been a link to the "Our City our World" survey for parents and carers and governors to complete.</p> <p>ACTION - Recirculate link to "Our city our world survey".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School meal prices - Current meal deal price £2.40 with recommendation to increase to £2.45 from September. This increment would not fully reflect the food inflationary impact which Governors felt parents and carers should be made aware of. <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved an increase in the school meal deal price to £2.45 from September with a further review of pricing ahead of the start of the next financial year.</p>	TD
4	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to Governors on an assumed read basis highlighting the following points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With less than a week to the end of the GCSE exam season the process had been managed well with an expectation that the Progress 8 score would be +0.32. The differentiation between boys and girls outcomes were still apparent within the data Some students had been absent or late to exams which would result in zero marks. For the more anxious students the environment centre had been opened for them to sit their exams in smaller groups without having to go through the main school. The planned building works had commenced early with knocking through of the Nexus office to accommodate the new toilet block. One further teacher resignation before the May 31st cut off, this was within the maths department. An appointment had been made on a fixed term contract of one year. One outstanding vacancy to fill in food technology. There were reports that teacher unions were to ballot for strike action, the impact of which was something to be mindful of. Term by term cumulative safeguarding information had revealed an area of concern around race and ethnicity. A governor had agreed to pick up a BAME group for parents and carers with first meeting later in the week. Anonymous reporting tool made available on the stringer learning gateway for students to make disclosures. <p><u>Comment and questions from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastoral manager system had been in place a year across the whole school, what outcomes had been seen from this and what plans were ahead for next year? One or two year groups appeared to have more racial incidents recorded, was there any evidence that this was due to incitement? The statistics record the number of incidents, each of which would have its own dimensions. In terms of governors supporting the parents group would go some way to help as would a potential increase in the pastoral team. Governors should ensure that antibullying policy covers an anti-racism dimension. <p>ACTION - Anti racism an area for Governor focus in its work plan for 2022/23.</p>	TD/BT

	<p><u>Response to governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In term of structure the pastoral manager system was the right thing to do, providing capacity across the school. Retaining the pastoral staff had been more of a challenge than expected, due to pay scales that the roles had been benchmarked against. This was an area that had been discussed within the business group. • There was a core group of students that had an interest in race and talked about issues, though it was not deliberately done to influence others to create a situation. It was a complex subject on which the school was seeking all available support. 	
5	<p>School Development Plan - Student Attendance</p> <p>There was a presentation on student attendance with the following points included within discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole school attendance just under 90% which was not as high as pre covid years and quite a way off an ambitious target of 97%. It was however higher than national attendance levels. • Attendance remained a key priority for the school as absences impacted on outcomes, behaviour, and safety, it would feature highly in the next year's development plan with the target remaining at 97%. • The impact of covid was an obvious reason why attendance was lower, other impacting factors included less dedicated attendance officer hours and parental interventions. • Persistent absence rate where attendance less than 90% was at 30% of the whole student cohort compared with previous year level of 13%. • Following up parents on absence had to be sensitively handled during the pandemic. Fining had not always been imposed , guidance from governors welcomed on this. Increasing capacity of staff to deal with absence in term of recording to free up time for follow up contact. • Attendance a whole staff responsibility with children welcomed back from absence and given opportunities to catch up on missed learning. • Additional inclusion mentors attached to wave 4 students to support with attendance issues. <p><u>Comment and questions from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has done a lot on attendance including providing transport , involvement in pre and after school activities with a minibus ride home. • How do the students on part time timetable impact on the attendance data? • Has the school fined and if so, has it improved attendance? • Why does the school reward students with achievement points for coming into school for five consecutive days? • Were conversations being had with students about attending school to motivate them? • Did the behaviour points for lateness act as ab disincentive to students coming in at all? • Students would like to be welcomed even if late as they had made the effort. • It was not possible to relate the action plan for attendance to the 97% target. • With the intervention being put in place school leaders should make sure that they are putting in place processes for clear feedback on the success of individual interventions. • Were links being made with other issues such as children with ADHD who had more challenges getting ready for school. Data to show attendance for specific groups would be welcome. The increase in budget to cover breakfast club was to improve attendance , it would be good to see the impact of this. • There seemed to be no objection from governors to the approach taken by the school to fining. 	

A number of students in the case studies provided had mental health issues, this should be classified as illness.

Response to governor comment and questions

- There has to be a clear rationale why students are placed on a part time timetable. All their absence does count in the school's data. 2/3 students currently attending part time.
- Around ten fines had been imposed with improvement in attendance seen in three of those cases. Parent engagement had improved where fines had been imposed. For those families taking holidays the fines of £60 per child per parent were not prohibitive when taking in the cost of a holiday overall in term time compared to during school holiday periods. Fining for alter arrivals was a sensitive area for many families.
- Achievement points encourage attendance , the resetting after five days does not incentivise them in the future should they have an absence.
- There had been some student voice sessions on attendance, and it was apparent that there were a range of obstacles to good attendance for some. For some it was a struggle for them to get into school, though once in they enjoyed the day.
- There were some students that might be put off attending if they were going to be late. A few minutes late should not have an impact.
- Creating a positive experience for students when they did attend , even if late was encouraged.
- There were different levels of interventions based on % attendance to bring everyone up to 97% individually. The school partnership adviser had suggested that students targeted when they drop to 95% attendance (previously 90%), striving for 100% as individuals would be a shift in mindset.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the attendance policy as presented. Approving body to be Full Governing Board with reviews three yearly.

AGREEMENT/ACTION - Attendance to be kept under regular review by the Board as a school priority.

6 Other Reports & Recommendations

a) Business Group Report

The Business Group had met with detailed discussion held on finance issues, with assurances provided that financial management was robust and the financial health of the school in a good position. Some adjustments had been needed to the previously agreed budget ; a revised budget was recommended for approval. This included a reduction in. the available budget with no changes to planned budget spend. The effect of this change was a reduction in the amount expected to be carried forward to 2023/24.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved a revised budget for 2022/23 with an available budget of £10,287,707 and budgeted spend of £10,196,097.

The business group had additionally considered a rental deposit loan scheme to support with staff recruitment and retention. This was proposed for approval.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed to adopt the rental deposit loan scheme as presented.

b) Safe and Wellbeing at Schools Survey

- This agenda item opened with a viewing of a video made by year 8 students for students on how to log concerns on the stringer learning gateway. The video had been produced as part of the work to address areas within the source data from the most recent safe and wellbeing at schools survey (SAWSS).
- There had been good participation in the survey with 1300 students from Dorothy Stringer having submitted a response.
- Governors had been provided with full data from SAWSS in advance of the meeting, some of the slides were considered in more depth noting that there was a trend emerging that students within the LGBT+ and gender identity questioning groups did not feel as safe or enjoy school as much when compared with their peers.
- When looking at the data from a racial or ethnicity perspective the results were broadly in line with whole school.

Governor comment and questions

- When was the survey completed? What is the frequency of collection data?
- Adding a line in the student reporting system drop down menu about whether they have problems coming onto school would give some current information, particularly where they might have experienced bullying.
- There was a lot of information for Governors to take in.
- What was the school going to deal with the data?
- What was the timetable for detailed work on survey outcomes?
- Is there anything school leaders would like to make staff more accessible?
- It would be good to hear what impact the counselling service had , linked to behaviour and attendance.

Response to governor comment and questions

- Students completed the survey in November 2021 by questionnaire with results being received from the Local Authority in May 2022. It was three years since the previous survey when it would normally be two years.
- The data was collected after two lock downs and reflects how they were feeling then.
- An additional simplified report was expected that would assist with analysis.
- Meetings being held with Public Health Brighton and the PSE department that would inform some of the content for action.
- The insights about how the gender questioning and LGBT groups were feeling had led to the organisation of a group that presented to staff at the November inset.
- Relationships were key, the questions had been asked and what was clear was that students were unsure how to raise a problem or a situation that had occurred. Pre pandemic the response would be different. There was work to do to reconnect the school.
- The date for a meeting with public health had not yet been confirmed. School leaders had started to interrogate the data to see what we need to do.
- Mores pastoral staff would be useful. What has been out in place is more than one person, staff give up lunch break to cover the racial discrimination and LGBTQ+ drop in sessions. Access to CAHMS was an issue that the school had no control over, early intervention was critical. The school has five days counselling available and has an embedded primary mental health service in response to the impact of lockdowns being seen on young people's health.
- From initial assessment and starting mental health support the time was about two weeks, followed by a six week programme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the pastoral managers have completed primary mental health training. 	
7	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>a) Behaviour Policy The Headteacher presented an updated behaviour policy for approval. Governors appreciated the effort gone into rewriting the policy and the language used around recognising the different requirements of different young people.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the behaviour policy as presented. Three yearly review and ratification by Full Governing Board on recommendation of Headteacher.</p>	
8	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Nominations Panel Update An update on board membership and recruitment of governors was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four governors would reach the end of their current terms of office before the next scheduled full governing board meeting being Reg Hook, Derek Swindells, Les Gunbie and Mick Baker. One application for reappointment received from Mick Baker, his reappointment had been recommended by the nominations panel. <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed to reappointment of Mick Baker on a four year term of office as a Co-opted Governor from 1st July 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haydn Stride had stepped down as a parent governor, his term was due to expire in November. Hiba Nour had met with members of the nominations panel and her appointment as a Co-opted Governor had been proposed. Agreement to appointment had been sought by email in advance of the meeting. <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed the appointment of Hiba Nour on a four year term of office as a Co-opted Governor from 20th June 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nominations panel would need new members for 2022/23. <p>b) Governance Model for 2022/23 The Chair introduced this item reminding governors of a discussion earlier in the year when the board was reviewing its structure. The current model of governance was a “circle” one without committees using smaller groups and individual link responsibilities. Governor views were welcomed on whether the current model was the most appropriate going forward. Comments included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently the board meetings have gone on too long which was an imposition on presenting staff members. Certain areas such as curriculum take up a lot of time and might be better dealt with by a committee given closer consideration to. Different departments could be invited to committee meetings to present , taking off stress on school leaders. Buildings would become a priority as the school reaches the end of the PFI contract, this would take time and is currently not well covered under business group as finances takes up much of the allocated time. Committee models can cause a duplication of work and discussion as committees report to the Board, this can extend the meetings. If time is needed for PFI a specific task and finish group could be set up. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was useful at the board meetings was the conversations across various areas of the school, in smaller groups the discussions might lose some of the richness and connection across areas. • Having panels or task and finish groups seems a helpful compromise where an area needs to be looked at in greater depth. • Minutes of committee meetings were in the past presented to meeting and the chair of the committee would talk to them. • Neither system was perfect , an inclination towards a flexible model was a preference. • Populating committees might prove a challenge on a reduced number of governors. <p>AGREEMENT - By show of hands the Board agreed by a majority to maintain the current circle model of governance for 2022/23</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Governor Terms There was a discussion about the timing of expiry of governor terms of office which the clerk clarifying that terms were for a four year fixed term from appointment.</p> <p>b) School History Reg Hook would continue with writing up the history of the school, a suggestion was made that a launch event would be appropriate in recognising the amount of contribution that Reg Hook had made to the school.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.40pm Date of next meeting - 18th July 2022</p>	