

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
13th March 2023
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Rachel Borland, Philip Brown, Matt Hillier, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Bridget Taylor (Chair)
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Sara Bailey, Andrea Cumming,

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	Pre-Meeting Presentation - Nepal Trip Tamsyn East the trip convenor and two students gave a presentation to Governors on the Nepal Trip.	
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the business part of the meeting with a welcome.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Emma Grose and Hiba Nour. It was noted that Lara Coleman had stepped down as a Co-opted Governor.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The register of governors' declarations was included within meeting papers. There were no declarations made relating to agenda items.</p>	
2	<p>Last Meeting Dated 30th January 2023</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved seven pages of minutes (one page of confidential) from the meeting held on 30th January 2023. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) Actions and Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor representatives had attended the science learning walks. <p>ACTION - Dates for the curriculum learning walks to be recirculated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair provided a verbal update on what had happened at a stage 2 collective dispute with GMB union. 	TD
3	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>a) Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy The supporting students with medical conditions policy was presented for reapproval by the Board. Noting the liability and indemnity section within the policy there was a question regards the level of insurance in place and whether it presented the current level of risk.</p>	

	<p>ACTION - Review insurance arrangement to ensure that an appropriate level was in place to reflect the level of risk presented by students with medical conditions.</p> <p>Governors did not feel fully confident with approving the policy as presented due to the amount of medical information within it and not having the relevant experience on the board. The changes (if any) to policy had also not been highlighted.</p> <p>ACTION - Supporting students with medical conditions policy to come back to the Board for approval with some further guidance on best practice and any changes to policy highlighted. The Clerk agreed to circulate the DfE statutory information relating to this area.</p> <p>b) Equalities Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT/ACTION - The Full Governing Board approved the equalities policy as presented subject to the removal of the word “criminal” to page 12 under the indirect age discrimination section.</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>PW/TD</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Chair’s Update</p> <p>The Chair advised that she and the Headteacher had attended two meetings with the Local Authority about student numbers in the city falling and seeking a joint agreement on the way forward. Four possible models had been delivered by the Local Authority which Governors were asked to consider alongside a set of questions. The models were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to current catchment areas but reduced pupil admission numbers (PAN) to reflect falling numbers in each catchment. • Reduce Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment areas. • Revise catchment from city outwards. • Single school catchment areas. <p>The impact of falling student numbers for Dorothy Stringer was that Year 7 children in the catchment would have reduced to 300 by September 2025 and 270 by September 270. The current PAN was 330 , structured on that number with a wide curriculum offer. Noting the funding attached to each student the drop in numbers would result in a significant reduction in income, impacting the school’s ability to operate on the current structure.</p> <p>Individual views and thinking were expressed about balancing the school’s current offer with the impact on other schools and students’ options whilst supporting the “city child” and in particular the disadvantaged group.</p> <p>In summary governors did not feel that they currently had sufficient information on the impact of various options to reach a clear position for the school.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Head’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"> • Student progress continued to be positive at +0.09 in year 11. There were still a number of students that were not attending school putting a limit on overall progress. • Girls progress stronger than the boys linking to literacy. • Year 10 attainment levels on entry had been lower than the usual intake , therefore the same level of attainment was not expected for this year group. • Student attendance was just above national averages, there were some issues with internal truancy. Disadvantaged children were below national for attendance. • School budgets were tight following the increases in support staff salaries by overall 7.9% without any pre indications from the Local Authority. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current rounds of industrial action by teachers, any savings on salary from this were going back into school budget. The teachers that were in attendance during strike days were delivering live lessons but were not always core subject specialists. • From basic schools funding there were some remaining funds, the possibility for creating covered areas for recreation times was being explored. • There were a few changes to staffing including the appointment of a new head of music. • The regular safeguarding data was included within the report. 	
6	<p>Business Group Update - Meeting of 24th February</p> <p>Notes from the most recent Business Group meeting were included within the board meeting pack. Both the budget monitoring report for January 2023 and first draft budget for 2023/24 were also included The Business Manager highlighted a few key points and answered questions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first draft budget had been reviewed and submitted to the Local Authority, an end of year surplus was projected from the current to take forward despite an in-year deficit position. The end of year projected budget for 2023/24 was a just balanced position. • Subsequent to submission of the draft budget schools were advised of an uplift to support staff salaries of 7% not the 4% previously advised. With the 7% applied the school would go into deficit around £100k at the end of 2023/4. • Budgeting had been very cautious , with any income not confirmed being excluded and inflation added to non-staffing costs. Some further revisions to make as the position become clearer on what could be expected in terms of grants and inflation and what the final end year position was. • Utility costs included within the budget had been based on Local Authority estimates. • Teachers’ salaries had been assumed to rise by 4% a figure set by the Local Authority , this rate had been incorporated into the budget. • The school was funded on the student numbers as at census day in October, these were reducing. • Ongoing decisions were being made as staff were leaving the school regards their replacement with savings being made where possible. • Next business group meeting schedule for May at which time a revised budget would be presented along with indications for the following two years. <p>Governors received an update on the interactive TV tender process noting that agreement had been reached.</p>	
7	<p>Other Reports - Governors and School</p> <p>a) Challenge Partners</p> <p>A Challenge Partners review had been received following the review carried out on 1st February. The overall evaluation was that the school was “effective”. The chair advised that within the leadership training she had completed there was a session on preparing for Ofsted, the challenge partners report was a useful document for governors.</p> <p>The Headteacher provided an overview of the review process acknowledging that the reviewers had identified well the school’s strength and areas for development.</p> <p>b) Staff Survey</p> <p>The outcomes from the staff survey were presented in graph format comparing with the previous year and split into teaching and non-teaching staff. There had been</p>	

	<p>around 100 responses to the survey with the questions the same as previously. A number of lower scored questions were discussed with Governors interested in the actions that would be arising from these responses.</p> <p>The Headteacher advised that following the previous year's survey more money had been allocated to staff wellbeing initiatives.</p> <p>It was noted that student behaviour in some of the year groups was an area for discontent from staff members. More support would be directed to these groups, in term of intervention and training. The tone of communication from parents was also an area that had created some upset for staff.</p> <p>A focus group was suggested for any areas of concern once the survey outcomes had been fully analysed.</p>	
8	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Nominations - Governing Board Constitution</p> <p>The Nominations Panel had revisited the discussions to reduce the Governing Board to 12 members and noting that the board would shortly be at that level proposed that changes be made to the constitution with effect from 1st April 2023.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed to reduce the number of parent governor positions from four to three and the number of co-opted governors from nine to six. Other categories of governors would remain the same.</p> <p>With changes to the board membership the lead roles were reviewed , it was agreed that Catherine Packham would take on sole lead role for SEND and that Philip Brown would be equalities lead and additionally the nominated governor for looked after children. Both effective until the next academic year.</p> <p>The Headteacher requested a governor to become a trustee on the school's Diamond Fund. Dick Knight agreed to take on the role.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Vote of Thanks</p> <p>Millie McDevitt was thanked for her contribution as a governor including a period of Chairing over the difficult covid times.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.43pm Date of next meeting - 22nd May 2023</p>	

Minutes ApprovedDate.....