

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
10th July 2023
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, James Bennett, Rachel Borland (Chair) , Emma Grose, Matt Hillier, Dick Knight, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Andrea Cumming, Giles Ward

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
	Pre- Meeting Presentation Rob Sandercock gave a presentation on climate education followed by a questions and answers session.	
1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Welcome The meeting was chaired by Rachel Borland the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair of Governors. b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Philip Brown and Bridget Taylor. Hiba Nour was also absent from the meeting. c) Declarations of Interest Governors' declaration register was included within the meeting pack, there were no declarations relating to items on the agenda. 	
2	Last Meeting Dated 22nd May 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 22nd May 2023. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy. b) Actions and Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda School Uniform - Following consultation with the parental ADHD group an addition to the uniform policy was proposed around children's sensory issues. 	
3	Chairs Update The Chair of Governors had provided a written update, the contents of which were noted.	
4	Headteacher's Report The Headteacher presented his report to Governors on an assumed read basis highlighting some key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had completed their formal examinations , the process had gone well with just two non-attenders out of a year group of 334. The room that had been set aside for students who have challenges accessing school had worked very well. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 9 and 10 had completed their mock examinations and assessments, providing clarity on what future interventions top put in place. • Student attendance remained an issue for the school in line with schools across the country, it would carry forward as a school development priority for 2023/24. • Student numbers were currently around capacity of 1649. <p><u>Comment and questions from Governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there any evidence that the Department for Education (DfE) were doing anything on a national level to address school attendance? • 10% absence rate was significant , it was surprising that there was no public comment from the government , that joined up strategic thinking and financial support were both lacking. • Attendance was unlikely to return to pre pandemic levels unless active marketing is done to male children and parents aware that it was serious damaging the country. As a board of a large school in Brighton, Governors should make their voice heard on this issue. • Building works to be completed over summer included replacement of windows at the front of the school. • There had been no further information on the proposed resource provision, contact was expected before the end of the current term. • Could the school do some preplanning for examinations next year to increase the facilities available? • The school were fully staffed for September, less staff had been appointed than those leaving in partly for budgetary reasons. A head of computing was additionally starting at the end of September . <p><u>Response to Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DfE now had a live link to each school’s attendance data and were providing challenge to some of the absence codes used by schools. The school would likely go back to fining for absences. • It was hoped that the teachers’ pay award currently under negotiation would be funded which would help to support student mental health issues, one of the underlying reasons for student absence. A national attendance strategy would be helpful. The Local Authority were providing support for attendance through regular meetings. Getting back to pre-pandemic levels would likely take several years. • The Local Authority would be pleased to hear that the Board were interested in attendance as it is one of the authority’s main targets. • The school will use the room set aside for children in education other than in school (EOTAS) for examinations next year. 	
5	<p>School Development Plan - Priorities for 2023/24</p> <p>The Headteacher presented the proposed key priorities for school development during 2023/24 being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and develop behaviour/values and relationships in line with core values. • Improve student attendance (particularly in girls and disadvantaged groups) • Embed adaptive teaching and literacy. <p>The full school development plan was in its final preparation ready to present to staff and governors at the start of autumn term.</p>	

	<p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the proposed school improvement priorities for 2023/24.</p> <p><u>Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the concerns around girl's attendance? • Are the groups of disruptive students impacting on others? • What realistically does a good level of improvement on attendance look like? • How much resource was needed to improve attendance? • Did managed moves work? • Will you put more resources into managing attendance? • If there was a way that reporting next year could include the impact of individual resources on attendance with the cost attached that would be very useful for governors <p><u>Response to Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a particular group of female students in year 8 that did not value education and provided the school with challenges in terms of behaviour and attendance. Timetabling arrangements for these students had been adapted with some off-site education. Generally girls do better on the curriculum than boys, they need to be in school. Current girls' attendance at 89.2% which was lower than national data. Disadvantaged student attendance currently at 81.8% was another area for focus , with many students from that group living in areas where two bus rides were necessary to get to school. • The disruptive group do bring in a few students but generally are not impacting on the wider cohort. In the city there is an agreement that permanent exclusion is a last resort with managed moves being the preferred alternative. This had resulted in a number of students having attended multiple schools in the city, creating disengagement with education. • Pre pandemic the school was at 95% attendance and 97% was considered a realistic target at that time. Now an increase to 93% would be significant progress. Getting children with anxieties back into school had impacted attendance in addition to the disengaged group. • Previously the school had attached education welfare officers that would visit homes to get children into school. Attendance starts at primary school , getting it right then with the support of learning mentors would help. • The success rate of managed moves is around 20% , some students were so high tariff that they would not be successful in any mainstream school. The Pupil Referral Unit was available as a temporary measure. Additionally the Connected Hub was available for year 11 students originally set up for students with anxiety with two spaces allocated to Dorothy Stringer, the allocation had not changed despite changing cohorts. • The forest school leader role was under evaluation with a view to using the school land with a forest school leader doing some outside work to build relationships and get children into school. This was not something that would be sustainable longer term. 	
6	<p>Finance Report</p> <p>a) Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>In the absence of the Business Manager the Headteacher presented the May 2023 budget monitoring report and commentary to the Board noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% had been budgeted for teaching staff pay rises, this was looking likely to be 6.5%. Any further increases above the 3% would need to be funded by central government, the extent of this was unknown. • 40 Headteachers from primary schools in the city had written about the impact on their school budgets with this story being run in national press. Dorothy 	

Stringer had some flexibility within the budget to retain a balanced budget in year 1.

- Recruitment decisions were being made as the school received advise of leavers, the only area of overstaffing was within the history department where future movement was anticipated.
- The canteen had been staffed with agency staff as a temporary measure. An assistant chef and two kitchen assistants were being recruited to enable the canteen to increase the amount of food that it could deliver.
- PFI costs had been higher than expected equating to a 13.84% increase, and on top of that there would be variation costs for building works that were not replacement like for like. The PFI contract had four years to run.
- A current risk to the school related to the school's ski trip that had to be cancelled due to significant delays to travel resulting in a decision to not continue with the trip to safeguard students. Cover was expected under insurance yet the claim had been refused. Legal advice was being obtained with a parents' meeting scheduled to discuss. The total sum at risk was £108k.
- A minibus had reached the end of its useful life and would need replacement.
- Examination fees increased with about £40 per exam entry being paid by the school.

Governor comment and questions

- What happened if the contract with PFI was broken?
- What exclusion did the insurance trip come under?

Response to Governor comment and questions

- It was not possible to break the PFI contract. It covered three schools in the city. In the final year of the contract the school would come back under Local Authority control.
- The insurance company considered that the ski trip had been cancelled by the school as the ferries were running. Travelling as a family was quite different to travelling with 80 young people with nowhere to stay , the decision to turn back was the right one to keep everyone safe.

b) Canteen Prices

Governors had previously considered a proposal to increase prices in the canteen resulting in a request for more detailed financial information. A summary written report had been provided from which it was noted that without any price increase the school would make a loss of around £40k 2023/24.

Governor comment and questions

- It was reported that when year 11 left there was no impact on sales, with 20% fewer students on site it could be argued that sales had increased from the remaining year groups. This seems to support the point about sales being limited due to capacity.
- What were the plans for the two additional spaces where food could be purchased?
- It was diasspointiong that detailed sales figures had not been provided to persuade Governors to approve price increases. It was hard as a group to find that the only option available for consideration was to put up prices of food in really difficult times, when additional facilities were on site that could be used to increase turnover.
- We are as Governors expected to ensure that the finances are managed.
- There are other ways to make the books balanced , we specifically asked questions about whether children had ease of access to buy food as we had heard stories of children going from school dinners to pack lunches due to overcrowding in the canteen whilst there were additional resources on site for the school to use.
- A small price increase in the general context of food inflation would be justified. What is the average purchase?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors had asked for more detailed information on types of purchases , specifically what items were making a loss. • If just volume is increased with increase in food costs it's likely that the loss is going to be bigger. <p><u>Response to Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were the same number of people in years 7, 8 , 9 and 10 coming though the canteen, there was no change when year 11 were not there. • The additional spaces could not be used without additional staff, at least two staff members needed for each unit. Moving one of the units to the AstroTurf was being considered to enable drinks to be served in that area. The canteen configuration was to be changed so that some internal seating could be provided. • It is not just the canteen staff that are needed, staff for queue management were also needed. • With the current staffing levels and limited funds what the school were able to do was exceptional in term of the number of people that were going through the canteen. Food inflation was 20% to 25%. <p>ACTION - Governors concluded that the information that had been provided was not sufficient to explore all alternatives to enable an informed decision to be made. This additional information would include what items were selling at a loss, where the wastage was and what the impact on sales had been when year 11 were not in school. Two Governors were asked to meet with the Business Manager to address the questions to enable prices to be finalised for September.</p> <p>c) Scheme of Delegation 2023/24</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the scheme of delegation for 2023/24 as presented.</p>	JB EG
8	<p>Other Reports - Governors and School</p> <p>a) Safeguarding - Overview of Year</p> <p>Giles Ward the school's main designated safeguarding lead (DSL) provided an overview of safeguarding at the school including the specific areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding training for all staff and governors carried out throughout the year at a level relating to their role in school. The five members of the school's safeguarding team were all fully trained DSLs with four of the members having completed additional safer recruitment training. • Child on child abuse including bullying and prejudice incidents were reported via CPOMS and reviewed by the DSL. A summary of the numbers and trends within each category were reported to governors regularly through the Headteacher's report. For serious incidents senior leaders carried out risk assessments putting in place appropriate safety measures for the students involved. Where there are serious concerns over mental health, risk assessments were also completed and safety plans put in place for students at risk of self-harm. • Safeguarding interventions and adaptations included the people of colour working party that had been developed in response to racist incidents which were the highest recorded type of incidents at the school. There was a wide range of outside of outside agencies that had provided external intervention alongside the schools own in house interventions. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi agency students was a term that covered the more vulnerable students , those that were in care, on child protection plans or were a child in need. Numbers on roll within these categories were higher than previously, 13 children in care, 19 children in need and 7 on child protection plan. • Keeping children safe in education updates for 2023 had just been published, a summary of the key changes was provided. • The safeguarding action plan for 2023/24 would cover the five areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prevent Duty. ○ Harmful sexual behaviours. ○ Safeguarding training. ○ Contextual safeguarding. ○ Child on child abuse. <p><u>Comment and questions from Governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do refugee children fall within a vulnerable category? • What safeguarding training did the DSL require Governors to complete next year? • The total of vulnerable children is 39 being over 2% of school role, is that average for schools? • There were more children that might ought to be on child protection , this was not a failing of the school but of external agencies. <p><u>Response to Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee children would be included within the child in care category. • Governors do go into school and should they see something that was a concern they need to know how to report it. Additionally with knowledge and understanding governors can provide challenge to school leaders. A session at the start of the first board meeting could cover this off. Governors would continue to receive the safeguarding data from CPOMS. • The school has a much higher level of children in care than other schools. Child protection was in line with other schools. • There were a lot of things going on in school with safeguarding concerns reported appropriately. 	
7	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>a) Exam Contingency Plan A minor change had been made to the exam contingency plan which were outlined for Governors. It was noted that representatives of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) had come in during school examinations and that they had been very complementary about the examination process and contingency planning in particular.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the exam contingency plan as presented with delegation for future approval to the Headteacher with three yearly reviews.</p>	
9	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2023/24 The Clerk chaired the meeting for this item. Nominations for the position of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors had been requested in advance of the meeting. Nominations had been received for Bridget Taylor as Chair of Governors and for Rachel Borland as Vice Chair of Governors. Rachel Borland left the meeting whilst a vote was taken on Vice Chair.</p>	

	<p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board appointed Bridget Taylor as Chair of Governors and Rachel Borland as Vice Chair of Governors for the academic year 2023/24.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Vote of Thanks Governors conveyed thanks to the Headteacher and his team for their work during the year and in turn the Headteacher thanked Governors for their contribution.</p> <p>b) Parental Fundraising The parent group for fundraising had been established with around 20 members with one group organising events and one putting in grant bids. The funds raised to date through crowd funding had been used to create a quiet space on the library mezzanine level. Dick Knight offered to be involved with the group in addition to the existing two Governors that were supporting.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.18pm Date of next meeting - 25th September 2023</p>	

Minutes Approved Date.....