

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
11th March 2024
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, James Bennett, Robin Bradshaw, Eleanor Fagan, Matt Hillier, Emma Morey, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Bridget Taylor (Chair)
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Sara Bailey, Richard Baker, Loretta Lloyd

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome – Confirm appointment of LA Governor (EF) The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome specifically to Eleanor Fagan who was attending her first meeting as newly appointed Local Authority Governor. The appointment that had been agreed by email was confirmed.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Sarah Bakhtiari.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The declarations register was included within meeting papers , there were no declarations made relating to agenda items.</p>	
3	<p>Last Meeting Dated 29th January 2024</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved seven pages, including two pages of confidential minutes from the meeting held on 29th January 2024. 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"> • 2 – A contact card was handed out to each Governor providing school contact details for urgent and/or safeguarding issues. • 4 – Nominations for Vice Chair of Governors had been requested before the meeting. The appointment of Emma Morey was proposed and seconded. A vote was taken whilst Emma Morey stepped out of the meeting. <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board elected Emma Morey as Vice Chair of Governors until the end of the current academic year.</p>	

<p>3</p>	<p>Chairs Update</p> <p>The Chair advised that there had been some negativity and parental concerns expressed about a new canteen queuing system and invited a discussion to enable the Board to reach an agreed position on the matter.</p> <p>The Headteacher described the challenges of managing student flow in the canteen, including safety concerns and disruptions. In response the school had implemented a new system dividing students into groups and staggering their entry to the canteen at break time, this had resulted in an improvement to the flow of students without creating any delay for individuals in accessing food.</p> <p>The concerns from parents had been around a perception that students were being denied food which was not the case. The schools partnership adviser and a governor who had seen the queuing system in operation had both confirmed that there had been plenty of food left after the queues had passed through and that no individual was denied food.</p> <p>The school had staggered canteen access based on Attitude to Learning scores as a way of providing equality of access to the canteen by allowing students to go through at a steady pace.</p> <p>There had been some conflicting information from students and parents regarding fast pass usage and access to the front of the queue. The Headteacher responded that students with a fast pass could go around the side and enter the queue that way , depending on their individual needs and circumstances.</p> <p>Governors were disappointed that the queuing system had been portrayed negatively in the press despite positive feedback from a steering group.</p> <p>It was agreed that the school’s position should be focussed on the canteen’s inadequacy of design and lack of capacity as the most pressing issue, one that required significant investment to improve which the school would need to talk to the Local Authority about.</p> <p>ACTION – A school risk register to be developed as a tool for tracking and monitoring key risks for the school including reputational risk.</p> <p>ACTION – End of year review of the flow through the canteen at the end of the year.</p> <p>ACTION – Write to the Local Authority about supporting the school with both the canteen and the resource provision , both outstanding matters.</p>	<p>BT/MH</p> <p>BT/MH</p> <p>BT/MH</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to Governors highlighting some key issues and answering questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall attainment was looking strong with GCSE level 4+ predictions well above national at 74%. • Progress 8 school had slightly dipped to 0 due to English having taken a more pessimistic viewpoint. • The year 10 cohort were looking good on attainment and likely on progress though this was the year group that had no key stage 2 data as a starting point. • The environment centre was being converted into an alternative provision centre with three rooms to complement the alternative provision timetable. The school 	

	<p>was still waiting for the meeting with the Local Authority to move on with the planned resource provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little movement on staffing , no current teaching vacancies. The changes to ratios agreed at the previous meeting had neem communicated with staff. • The Government had changed the fining for school holidays taken in term time to £80 a child from September. • Draft budget had been submitted to the finance team at the Local Authority. • The link governor structure had been reviewed by the school resulting in a proposal to include curriculum links, alongside a visit programme of one a term for each curriculum area. A suggested report proforma was included within the meeting pack. <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board agreed a link structure that included curriculum areas. The governor links were agreed during the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION – Process of introduction , curriculum leads to their governor links.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding data provided broken down by term and areas of concern. No significant changes in trends. • For the start of academic year 2024/5 year 7 would be provided with an extra transition day. 	MH
5	<p>School Development /Deep Dive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Premium Loretta Lloyd presented on pupil premium (PP) highlighting the following points: • 2023 progress 8 score for disadvantaged students was the best for many years with an upward trajectory since 2016. The gap with their peers was reducing, demonstrating that the school strategy was working, • Persistent absence was a challenge increasing within the PP group. The school was able to track against other schools on weekly basis through the attendance tracker programme that it subscribed to. Within the current year 11 PP students 60% were persistently absent. • The most recent estimate of attainment data by teachers did show a drop, likely due to the high level of absence. In response the PP strategy had been refocussed on improving attendance. • Student concerns had been identified through online forums providing actionable insights to help individual students and the school as a whole. • There were students spending time out of class , the standard response to comfort break requests was now one of allowing a break after completion of the task in hand. • The average number of minutes late to class had decreased but the proportion of students that were late had increased. • It was important to engage disadvantaged students in extracurricular activities to improve attendance and academic performance. Broadening access to the diamond fund for students to apply for trips would assist with building relationships. 	

Comment and questions from Governors.

- Introducing more trips earlier in the school year would maximise the benefits of the relationships throughout the academic year.
- What strategies were not working for the PP group.
- The reasons given for non-attendance were interesting with a large number being very unwell, stressed or a little unwell. These were all difficult areas to make improvements.
- Do any of the student comments illustrate the role of social media in staying up late, communicating with friends.
- As a parent it was difficult to know how to respond to issues of a child's mental health and if working from home it was probably easier to let them stay away from school. Was there some work that could be done in equipping parents to deal with mental health concerns?

Response to Governor comment and questions

- Many trips are done in key stage 3 so the benefits of relationship will go on throughout the school.
- Attendance was a barrier, if students were in school, they benefit from the many support strategies in place and then do well.
- Contact with parents was important to determine whether their children might be able to come into school and for example to help them educate their children on work ethics and to be resilient and/or ways of getting a better quality of sleep.
- In some cases, use of mobile phones was a contributing factor to tiredness and anxiety.
- Some parent sessions were being planned.
- **Attendance**
Richard Baker provided some additional information on attendance.
- The attendance data had been recorded in a way that did not compare favourably when benchmarked against other local schools. Once an adjustment had been made to compare like for like the attendance overall had improved to 89.7%.
- The school was following national trends on attendance.
- The in school year 7 behaviour had caused some concern and attendance issues, year 8 as a citywide cohort were a concern for attendance.
- The Local Authority attendance data was below its statistical neighbours on attendance. The main category for absence in the city was authorised absence for illness.
- The conversion of the environment centre would provide a "safe space" facility for reintegration into school for those absent due to anxiety.
- The school was relaunching the messaging that managing attendance was everyone's responsibility alongside building trust with families.
- The attendance team had sent out letter offering support with mixed feedback.
- 450 children across the city were now being home schooled, up from the previous figure of 150.
- Attendance team of three in school working alongside the form tutors having conversations to break down barriers to attendance.

	<p><u>Comment and questions from Governors.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there a mechanism for sharing best practice from other schools. • On the table of similar authorities data, it was noted that Southend were in a better position, was it worth going outside of authority to seek best practice? • Similar attendance concerns were present in optional activities such as the scouts. • Lower attendance was a generational thing post covid. Mental health was part of the picture. <p><u>Response to Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance team had met with colleagues at nearest school to share best practices. • A visit to Southend schools could be useful. 	
5	<p>Business Group Meeting of 19th February 2024</p> <p>The business group meeting notes from 19th February had been included within the meeting pack together with December 2023 budget outturn and a written commentary on the draft budget for 2024/25.</p> <p>a) Budget Monitoring Report No further comment or discussion.</p> <p>b) First Draft Budget It was noted that the draft budget included the staffing structure as currently in place. The pay increments incorporated within the budget were based on those advised by the Local Authority but had seemed a bit low. A balanced position was looking possible for 2024/15 but bot subsequent years.</p>	
6	<p>Policies</p> <p>Several policies as listed below had been presented for the Board’s approval. One policy that was submitted late was read at the meeting.</p> <p>a) Children with Medical Needs who Cannot Attend School b) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme c) Protection of Biometric Information d) SEND Information Report</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing board approved the four policies listed above as presented.</p>	
	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Nominations Panel The nominations panel had met on 27th February to discuss the recruitment strategy for the current two co-opted vacancies. One vacancy was being promoted through the parent body with the objective of finding someone with strong community links and the other through external links with the aim to appeal</p>	

	<p>to younger people. The panel terms of reference were proposed for Board approval.</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Nominations Panel terms of reference was approved by the Full Governing Board as presented.</p>	
7	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Our City our World Additional funding had been received to enable the initiative to continue.</p> <p>b) School Closures Notification of two primary school closures.</p> <p>c) Governors Training and Networking Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data training 6pm on 12th March. • Governors’ conference on 23rd March. • The 2024/25 training programme was about to be published. <p>d) Communication Governors were urged to use the office 365 suite applications in communications.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.25pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting – 13th May 2024</p>	

Minutes approved.

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