



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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MINUTES of a meeting of the Full Governing Board to be held on Thursday 28 February 2019, from 5.30pm at Castle Post 16 – by Newbury College

- Present:** Wendy Batchelor (Chair of Governors), Ursula Codrington (Vice Chair and co-opted governor), Joan Sargent (parent governor), Charlie Kowalski (co-opted governor), Marie Verney (parent governor), Marcos Butterwick (co-opted governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor) and Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor)
- Apologies:** Alison Eade (parent governor) and Carol Turner (co-opted governor)
- In attendance:** Atul Attra (School Business Manager), Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher), Debra Matthews (prospective Clerk to Governors), Kimber Paterson (prospective co-opted governor)

WB welcomed all to the meeting, and introduced two observers. Debra Matthews, who already works in schools in the Reprographics team, is considering the Clerk to Governors role. Kimber Paterson, is observing with a view to becoming a co-opted governor on the Board in due course. All present introduced themselves.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from AE and CT.

2. Any other business (AOB) items for the agenda

Food & nutrition (MB)
Pastoral service (MB)
Ofsted (JH)
SFVS (AA)
Safeguarding policy update (CW)
Procurement card register (AA)

3. Declarations of interest for this meeting

No declarations were made.

4. Minutes from the last meeting (15 November 2018) and matters arising

Governors agreed with the minutes from the last meeting and WB signed a copy. The following matters arising were discussed.

- New governor 'buddies' and induction
WB asked if new governors had received sufficient information. VM had sent welcome packs to each and a site visit to Post 16 has been arranged for MB and MV. A separate date will be arranged for CK in due course. It was noted that buddies would be helpful from the relevant committee for CK and MV. Governors noted that a summary of 'useful' training would be helpful. **ACTION: VM to confirm a visit date for CK and note buddies for CK and MV. WB to advise on useful training for new governors.**

- *Update on Post 16 Catering Enterprise*
JH confirmed that catering still taking place at Post 16 – but the group does not cater for external events, as this was very much led by the staff member who has recently left for personal reasons. Governors asked if students are still able to develop these skills and staff confirmed that the team is still running a café at post 16 and students still have the opportunity to learn new skills and gain confidence in this area. Their work experience is still supported via World of Work at Post 16 which continues to grow in success and profile. Governors were happy with this update.
- *Signing of single central register*
This will be covered and signed later in this meeting.
- *Visit forms*
VM confirmed that these continue to be received and governors can complete short review for any visit to school (not governor meetings). **ACTION: VM to ensure visit form is sent to governors with each set of minutes as a reminder to continue to submit visit forms as and when associated visits take place.**
- *Governor emails*
Following discussion at the last meeting, it was noted that governors were all able to access school email. There had been some discussion around a more user-friendly interface that was still GDPR compliant, but governors agreed this would likely be picked up by a new ICT manager once they are in place. Governors noted that notification on school email could be set up, and AA had progressed setting up text groups via School Comms for any urgent matters, and this was working well already. **ACTION: Update in autumn term.**
- *Governor vacancy*
WB noted that since the last meeting, KW had made contact with KP – who is joining us for this meeting, with a view to stepping on board in due course.
- *Post 19 provision*
JH noted that a short update on this will be given as part of his Headteacher's report (item 6).
- *Acronym decoder*
After discussion at the last meeting, a handy reference guide had been produced for governors – and would be added to as required. This would now be included in welcome pack for any new governors joining the board as part of induction information.

Governors also discussed access to The Key – which provides useful reference for staff, governors and clerks. **ACTION: VM to share link and access details to all governors with these minutes.**

5. Committee reports

a. Curriculum

UC updated that the committee had enjoyed a short briefing on the World of Work project which provided an informative update. UC also noted that the committee had been update on Crest – the new system that is used to record incidents in school (previously Friars). It was noted that the role of Link Governors would be reviewed at the next full board meeting in June. **ACTION: Add to June agenda with action by WB.** Finally UC noted that the terms of reference were also reviewed and agreed.

b. Staffing (UC)

UC noted that the committee received staffing updates via the Headteacher's report. Policies were discussed and reviewed, along with terms of reference which were also agreed. UC also noted the committee had an update on the evolving form of the Friends of Castle School – which would continue to raise support and funds for the school and related activities.

c. *Pay panel*

UC noted that this committee had met earlier in the week and was progressing ongoing review of the objectives identified as part of the Headteacher's review. UC noted this continues on a termly basis.

d. *Premises*

KW noted that the committee had discussed a number of updates, including the new cleaning contract. KW noted that termly site walks continue, the last at main site had only identified a few minor points, and a walk at Post 16 was arranged for this term. Cycling safety had been discussed previously, and staff & parents noted that this had improved on site. Governors also noted that the new parking spaces at main site had eased congestion, and although parking was adequate, the site remained busy at peak times.

KW noted the current list of projects was reviewed, and noted a number of new items are progressing due to generous donations and successful grant applications. A single donation of £30k from a local foundation will fund the total replacement of a sensory project and will start in May. The school is also looking to install an all-weather track for all pupils. It will be fully accessible by foot, wheelchairs and bikes. The total cost will be in the region of £80k, and part funding has also been secured. The school's fundraising is starting to gain rewards and it is expected by end of the school year that confirmation of larger grant applications will be confirmed. AA also noted that Waitrose will again have the school as a featured charity in March. Governors agreed this was positive progress.

As further updates AA noted that there would be work to improve access controls and security at both sites. A project to make repair to the main site driveway is now the project list with West Berkshire Council, and initial assessment has already been completed. It is expected that this will be completed during the summer 2019.

Governors had discussed the building works neighbouring the Post 16 site, but staff did not feel any significant disruption to date as the new primary school was in build.

e. *Finance*

KW noted that the finance committee had a full update and report from AA, and reviewed all budget lines with variance of £5k or 10%. KW noted that AA clearly explained these and gave satisfactory responses to all queries. KW noted that the Private Fund continues to have a healthy balance. KW noted that the committee had discussed whether the Private Fund may be able to support continuation of the school's brass band, and this request would be considered alongside other commitments.

6. Headteacher's report

JH had circulated an updated report in advance of the meeting. WB invited governors to ask any questions.

WB asked JH to give a short update on these two cases. JH noted that the first excluded pupil was now back in school. JH noted that there had been some extended restorative work with the second pupil and there had not been any further significant issues with this young person.

p. 15 Boost Group

Governors asked about this group. CW noted this is a targeted intervention group for Key Stage 3 & 4. It is led by the ELSA team and intends to develop confidence and independence. The initial trial has worked well and has supported 10 pupils to date. CW noted that there would be some linked emotional support training for staff that aimed to upskill all staff in this area to provide further related support to those who need it. CW noted governors were welcome to attend this training. **ACTION: VM to send remind to governors about this training date when available.**

Ofsted

WB commended JH and his team following the successful short inspection of the school in January and retention of outstanding status. JH noted that the inspector noted that the school was very secure in its practices and ethos, commending staff on their work to achieve this. Governors asked about impact of this – and how it may lead to an increase in applications. JH noted that there had already been an increase in out of county requests and a waiting list was now in operation. Governors asked about priority for those within West Berkshire, but staff noted that assessment was made on need rather than geography and the school was not able to turn away applicants based on location alone.

All agreed this was a huge achievement for the school and felt it was a very positive commendation for all those involved. JH noted that the school would anticipate another inspection in around four years under the current schedule.

Post 19

JH noted that discussions had taken place with West Berkshire Council around enabling a provision for learners at 19+, as an alternative to the typical college pathway.

JH noted that the school was hoping to offer a follow on option for the 'World of Work' programme to a small cohort of learners, with strict entry and exit criteria, to provide a one-year route to employment scheme. This would be 3 days in employment supported by 2 days job coaching and skills such as Maths and English.

It is hoped that the scheme will have a soft launch in summer 2019, supported by West Berkshire Training Consortium, and employers who are already engaged with the school via the WOW programme.

JH reassured governors that young people who were not eligible for this scheme would continue to receive support guidance and signposting to other follow on options as part of their transition planning from Post 16 to enable access to learning or support provision that most suits their needs. **ACTION: JH to update at June FGB**

7. Progress & achievement update

A termly report on progress was included in the Headteacher's report from Shannon Booth. Staff noted that the new approach to progress monitoring since September is now well underway and staff are using these new methods to monitor progress of all pupils. All noted that, in its infancy, the data could not be compared – but continued to be clear and show areas of improvement across the school.

Governors thanked JH and his team for their updates.

8. Policies for ratification

Existing policies

Model Redundancy policy
Sex & Relationships Education
Intimate Care
Admissions
Curriculum
SEND
Safer Recruitment
Charging & Remissions
Non-smoking
Health & Safety

ACTION: Governors noted these had all been reviewed by committees this term and ratified them. WB signed a copy of all at the meeting. VM to update school files.

CACHE policies

It was noted that these are now outdated as they relate to exams that are no longer offered, and governors agreed to these being removed from review calendar and policy list.

Safeguarding policy

It was noted that a small update had been made to the West Berks safeguarding policy. CW has spoken to them about the changes, and they noted it was not necessary to change the entire policy, but to inform governors of changes. This policy will be reviewed again in June at full board. **ACTION: Add to June agenda for review.**

9. Safeguarding update and signing of central register (CW / WB)

CW updated that she had met with WB and UC. CW noted that there are currently no children on child protection plans, and three looked-after children who are well supported by the school. CW noted that the school continues to effectively use My Concern to record any safeguarding or low level welfare concerns. CW noted there is a general national decline in Child Protection Plans, which may be as a result of the safeguarding families approach being taken by local authorities. CW noted that there is a new link social worker who meets termly with the school and this multi-agency working is having a positive impact on practice.

WB signed a copy of the single central register at the meeting.

For the benefit of newer governors, JH noted that this is a working document, kept up to date by AA and reviewed by CW. It includes details of all staff, such as DBS records, qualifications, document checks and mandatory training. It is always checked as part of any Ofsted visit. Governors asked if it is GDPR compliant, JH noted yes and that data is kept and stored securely within limited access folders.

10. Governor visits, training and development (ALL)

MV and CK had recently taken part in safeguarding training. Upcoming finance training may be of interest to governors. JS noted she had recently taken part in a pastoral session on Sleep which had been useful. **ACTION: VM to send updated WBC list and any upcoming school dates to governors for info.**

11. AOB items

Food & nutrition

MB asked about school policy on food & nutrition, and governors had a discussion around this. It was noted that there were often sweet foods around in school either in lunchboxes or cakes

relating to birthdays / cake sale etc. It was noted that some pupils have restrictive diets which can mean that they will only eat / tolerate certain food types (which may not always make up a balanced diet). Staff noted that they could encourage a healthy lunchbox, but it was hard to monitor and restrict. School meals follow guidelines, and the school nurse works with children who have special dietary plans.

Governors felt that this was a relevant issue and would benefit from further discussion. Agreed that it could be raised at the upcoming strategy day – when key stage leaders could also give input to the discussion. **ACTION: Discuss at Strategy Day on 19 March.**

Pastoral service

MB asked about support for families who may need signposting for advice on benefits, and whether this was something that West Berkshire Council could support. Staff noted that they could provide support, but would not necessarily sit as part of their role. MV noted that some local charities can offer support e.g. Swings and Smiles / Mencap, and staff agreed that families could be put in touch with these providers to offer family support for guidance or assistance with accessing relevant information to meet their needs.

Ofsted

This has been covered in item 6, Headteacher's Report.

Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS)

AA confirmed that the finance committee had just completed a robust review of this year's document, making updates as required. For the benefit of new governors, it was noted that this is a pro-forma document – which is submitted to West Berkshire Council on completion to provide an annual review and evidence of the financial approach, procedures and policies of the school. AA noted this is evidenced by financial reports and updates, but also by financial policy and minutes from full board and finance committee meetings. Governors were satisfied with the recommendations of the finance committee and WB signed a copy of this document for submission.

Procurement card register

AA noted that this was a standard review of the register which lists staff with a procurement card to enable them to purchase goods for the school. This currently includes AA, his site manager Pete Butler, Jo Potts (Finance Officer) and James Whybra (Post 16). Governors agreed to the continuation of this list of authorised users and WB signed the register.

Strategy Day

JH confirmed that the governor's strategy day would be held next month and would give governors the opportunity to meet middle leaders and contribute to the School Transformation Plan. This event will be held at main site, and all governors are encouraged to attend.

At the end of the meeting, WB and the team gave thanks to VM, as outgoing Clerk, as this is her last meeting. VM will be stepping down as Clerk in March once handover to a new clerk is complete.

12. Date of next meeting

Governor's strategy day on 19 March 3-7pm at main site (Jane Evans room)

Finance & Premises Committee, 4.30pm on 4 April at main site (Jane Evans room)