



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

Love Lane, Newbury, RG14 2JG

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Minutes from a meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Thursday 9 November in the Jane Evans Room at Main Site

- Present:** Wendy Batchelor (Chair), Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Joan Sargent (parent governor), Averill Hewitt (co-opted governor), David Greenway (parent governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Georgie Woods (co-opted governor) and Vicki Murphy (Clerk to the Trustees)
- Apologies:** Carol Turner (co-opted governor)
- In attendance:** Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher) and Atul Attra (School Business Manager)

Election of the Chair, Vice Chair and new governor appointment

Prior to the start of the meeting, VM noted that the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for 2017-19 would now take place. WB was proposed to continue as Chair – all governors agreed. UC was proposed as the incoming Vice Chair, and all governors agreed. **ACTION: VM to update school files and advise governor services.**

WB also noted that CT had recently joined the governing body as a co-opted governor – and governors all agreed to this appointment. WB noted that CT will sit on Finance & Premises committees for the present time.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from CT for this meeting.

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

- Music programme – Primary
- Declaration and business interest forms
- Traffic awareness – Love Lane
- Pay policy

3. Declarations of interest

None declared.

4. Minutes from the last meeting (22 June 2017) and matters arising

- *Parental use of Evisense*

AE / TW noted that AE noted that a sample of parents have been given registration details for the system but there had been some access issues. AE noted this has been logged with the school and they are following up. AE noted that she had spoken to other parents about it and there seemed to be some resistance to engage and use the system. Governors asked about the purpose of the system and staff noted it records and reviews progress in class, enabling parents to see targets and progress – providing more than a

'daily diary'. Staff noted that they are working to resolve some of the access issues.
ACTION: AE / TW to update on progress at the next meeting.

- *Training for pupil progress*
WB noted that Shannon Booth is willing to run a training session for governors on data, but needs clarification on what is required. **ACTION: JH to contact governors via survey monkey to assess and clarify need.**
- *My Concern*
CW is to provide an overview to governors on the new safeguarding reporting system under item 8 on this agenda.
- *Update on 'world of work' contacts*
WB reported that she had further discussions with VM about possible leads with local businesses. WB noted that as there are two vacancies for co-opted governors on the board, it would be beneficial to follow up links with any local partners who may have commercial expertise that they may be willing to share with the FGB. **ACTION: All to consider if any links that might be interested in governor opportunities and forward details to WB or VM.**
- *Use of BACS payment*
AA updated that this facility will be in place by January, just awaiting set up of final system. AA noted that the signatories are AA, JH, CW and Kate Mason.
- *Legal clarification for minibus training*
Further to discussions on recent restrictions on driving minibuses for those with regular driving licences, JH suggested that the approach is discussed by Staffing Committee in January. JH noted a policy will be given to governors for consideration and review. JH noted that a staff member has been trained and qualified as a MIDAS trainer, which would enable some in house training for staff and to minimise cost where possible. **ACTION: Update to FGB on progress and suggested ratification of approach by March 2018.**
- *Newsletter rota*
JH noted this has been updated and issued to governors. Governors to continue sending submissions to JH as required.
- *Complaints process*
Following a number of complaints during the previous school year, WB noted that she had clarified process for dealing with any related paperwork to panel members. Governors agreed that they were now clear on this process and no further action needed.
- *Policy review process*
JH noted that the revised policy schedule and review process was now in place. VM sends policies for review to nominated staff in advance of initial review by committee. Amends are discussed and agreed if appropriate and then policy is sent to FGB for ratification or reconsideration if required. **ACTION: VM to send updated policy schedule to governors for info. VM to send ratified policies to JH for issue to all staff following each FGB.**
- *Social event for governors*

Governors had previously discussed a social event for colleagues. AE and DG have considered some options and suggested an outline or taking part in forthcoming quiz night at Post 16. Governors also discussed possible meal following strategy day in March. **ACTION: Governors wanting to attend quiz night on 7 December, 7pm to let DG and AE know as soon as possible. Otherwise, AA to look at options for venue (school training room) and meal (Castle Pub?) following the strategy event. Update at the next meeting.**

5. Committee reports

a. Curriculum

WB noted that a small number of governors had met to discuss curriculum issues in October. They also had a short presentation from SB on data and pupil progress. WB noted that as a quorate of governors was not present for this meeting, the minutes were recorded but required ratification by this FGB to be held as an accurate record. Governors agreed with minutes provided. It was noted that the election of the Chair was deferred to the January meeting, but it is proposed that UC will take the role from outgoing governor GW.

b. Staffing

WB noted that a small number of governors had met to discuss staffing issues in October. They reviewed staffing data from the HT report, and discussed forthcoming staff surveys for safeguarding and investors in people accreditation. WB noted that as a quorate of governors was not present for this meeting, the minutes were recorded but required ratification by this FGB to be held as an accurate record. Governors agreed with minutes provided. It was noted that the election of the Chair was deferred to the January meeting, but it is proposed that UC will take the role from outgoing governor GW.

c. Pay panel

UC is now leading Pay Panel with WB and KW, as GW is stepping down. UC confirmed that the panel had met and completed the Headteacher's review. UC noted that new objectives for 2017-18 had been set and these will be monitored as the year progresses. UC noted that they were supported in this process by Kim James, an independent Schools Improver Adviser. UC noted there was a related Part 2 item which would be discussed by non-staff governors at the end of this meeting. * *This is minuted separately.*

d. Premises

KW updated that site walks for Victoria Park and Post 16 had been completed and list of works was up to date. KW noted that they reviewed current project list, but in light of limited budgets there were less new projects underway. KW noted that the effective use of in house maintenance team continued to make savings in this area. KW also noted that AA advised some income derived from contracting out of maintenance staff to other school sites and this could be developed as time allows. KW noted that the playground works have been completed and being well used, also noted new kitchen space at main site which is also proving a useful resource. KW noted that the committee was updated on plans for new classrooms and parking spaces which are due to be completed by September 2018. It was noted that the KW would continue as committee chair for Premises with DG as Vice Chair. KW finally noted that the group discussed the changes in Data Protection and although current policy has just been reviewed, a further review and revision is expected in the new year. KW noted a sub group will work on this and updated FGB in due course. Site walks for this academic year were agreed and dates arranged with governors and site teams.

e. *Finance*

KW updated that the committee reviewed budgets to date, and updated figures received from AA and his team. KW noted that all on track at this stage, and noted that spend and surplus were as expected at this stage. KW also noted that the Private Fund was reviewed and has a healthy budget at this time. KW noted that the impact of transport costs for Post 16 students was discussed, but staff noted that there had not been any significant impact on attendance due to increase in these costs.

WB thanked committee chairs for their reports.

6. Headteacher's report

JH had circulated his updated report ahead of the meeting. WB noted the new format ensure that most relevant and current data was available.

AE asked about pastoral support, p.14 – noted that some parents may have already completed this training prior to their child's admission to Castle School, and thus may not wish to do it again.

DG asked about absences p.2 – with reference to any response from local authority to rate of absences. JH noted the schools absences were in line with other special schools and he would authorise term time absence e.g. for holiday, where he felt it was in best interests of the child and their family. Parent governors noted that consideration of these requests is appreciated.

Governors queried use of term 'engaging potential', p.2. CW confirmed that this is an education programme for KS3 and 4 for those not in mainstream and provides a 1:1 approach with personalised learning programme and mentor support.

Governors discussed recruitment, and staff noted good response to recent recruitment drive.

Noted it can still be hard to fill certain vacancies e.g. lunchtime support, but make good use of local forums to minimise advertising spend. Governors thanked JH for his report.

7. Pupil Progress update

Governors had been sent a summary of pupil progress data and reports from Shannon Booth.

WB noted that governors on Curriculum committee had also received an update on this during the current term. WB noted that further training had been offered to governors and this would be clarified with a survey for follow up in Spring Term.

8. My Concern overview

CW gave governors an overview of the new My Concern system for reporting and recording of all Safeguarding Concerns in school. Governors saw a demonstration of the system and noted how it can be used to produce reports as required. CW noted information prior to September 2017 is paper based, but from now onwards it is all securely stored via this cloud based system.

Governors asked about whether system could also record incident records currently recorded using the FRIAR forms. CW to considered this could be a future development. CW noted that a review of trends would be possible once a full year's worth of data had been captured.

Governors discussed safeguarding training and CW noted that this is still available via school and West Berkshire. Governors noted that some of them may still need to complete Qwango safeguarding modules for Child sexual exploitation, Domestic abuse and Female genital mutilation. **ACTION: VM to check with DE which governors still need to complete these modules and arrange link access to be sent through.**

CW noted that surveys had been completed this term on perception of safety and it was noted that 95% of parents reported their children were happy coming to school. CW noted that mental health and self-esteem / resilience continued to be risk areas for young people at the school and

staff were to receive additional awareness training to help them identify signs and symptoms of this within pupils. Governors thanked CW for this update.

9. Policies for ratification

The following policies have been discussed by committees and come to this meeting for discussion and ratification.

- Administration of Medicine
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Equality & Diversity
- Social networking guidance
- Safer Recruitment - NEW
- Private Fund
- Governor visits
- Offsite activity guidance
- Data Protection
- Continuing Professional Development
- Recruitment & Retention

WB noted that these policies have been reviewed by committees. Governors approved these policies and agreed to remove CPD and Recruitment & Retention from the list. DG raised a query about the Behaviour Policy, and governors had a discussion about the wording used. JH noted it relates to an ethos and statement of values – but noted he would review and add a caveat if needed. **ACTION: VM to arrange policy updates. JH to review Behaviour Policy and advise governors by email if any further amends made.**

10. Safeguarding update and signing of central register

CW reported that there 33 safeguarding concerns reported in the last half term. This led to 2 referrals to Children's Services, one case is now concluded and one is ongoing. The single central register was signed during the meeting by WB.

11. Governor visits, training and development

WB noted that VM is to circulate current West Berkshire training information to governors following each FGB meeting. JS volunteered to undertake development governor role, which will help to lead, encourage and review training opportunities for governors regularly. WB noted that a skills audit of governors is due. **ACTION: JS and WB to work on skills audit and update governors at next FGB.**

12. Academisation update

WB noted that the groundwork done over the past academic year has been very useful but school is not progressing at this stage. AE noted that St Bartholomew School have noted that they will become an academy so may be some other local primary schools approached to link with stronger secondary schools. JH noted that he will continue to update governors as to local picture as part of his HT report. **ACTION: This item to move to HT report for future FGB meetings.**

13. Enterprise project update

RP updated colleagues that the raised beds and polytunnels are still being well used and a rolling growing programme for vegetables is helping to provide seasonal ingredients for the cookery lessons. RP noted that they hope to be able to provide some 'grow and sell' boxes at the end of summer 2018 – weather dependent! **ACTION: This update to move to the Headteacher's report for future FGB meetings. VM to remind RP of deadline for update to JH.**

14. AOB items

Music Programme - Primary

TW noted that she had recently visited the music department and was shown an innovative package for year 1-6 pupils which provides focus on various topics e.g. numbers, space, world, colours and felt it was relevant. TW noted that staff member is currently using a trial package, but may be worth considering if a subscription can be afforded as part of curriculum budget. **ACTION: AA noted that staff member would need to discuss with him, and he will progress discussion with her about the Charanga package.** JS asked if any related provision for secondary pupils, and this would need to be considered as part of the discussion.

Declaration and business interest forms

It is an annual required for governors to review and complete the declaration and business interest forms. These were completed during the meeting and returned to VM for file. **ACTION: VM to update files and ensure CT has completed form by the date of the next meeting.**

Traffic awareness – Love Lane

AE informed governors that there had been some recent concerns about traffic speed and pupil safety on the neighbouring roads to school. AE noted that she had recently witnessed two significant incidents where pupils had been unsafe close to the school entrance. Governors had a discussion about this. AA noted that traffic calming measures were in place near school, but may be opportunity to raise again for added measures with local authority as Shaw cum Donnington Primary also would like a crossing for their pupils. JH noted that as many pupils get transported to main site it is mainly as issue for pupils who are travelling to and from school independently, but this is being reviewed with those who present a risk. JH noted that he is in touch with parents about this but noted that many busy road en-route to school site and it may be hard to safety proof the whole route. JH noted that parents may need to consider suitability for older pupils to walk to school independently if they have any concerns about their road safety and awareness. **ACTION: Update at next FGB.**

Pay policy

WB noted that the 2017 Pay Policy has been reviewed by the Staffing Committee and would need ratification by FGB. **ACTION: VM to send current policy to all, and governors to respond by 17 November if any queries, and to confirm they are in agreement with it. VM to then arrange update in school file and update to JH.**

Thank you

At the end of the formal meeting business, WB extended special thanks for outgoing co-opted governor Georgie Woods, who is stepping down after several terms of office. GW has been a governor since 2003, and has been involved with the school for over 25 years as a volunteer with Riding for the Disabled locally. Governors presented a small gift to GW and wished her all the best, thanking her for all her involvement and input to the school over the years.

Date of the next meeting

The next committee meetings will be held on 18 and 25 January. The next FGB meeting will be held on 8 March. Next term's meetings will be held at Post 16 site.