



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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MINUTES of a meeting of the Full Governing Board on Thursday 22 June 2017 in the Jane Evans room at Castle School (main site)

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

1. Apologies

These were received from TW, DG and AH.

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

- a. Parent and staff survey (WB)
- b. Minibus situation (JH)
- c. Building works (JH)
- d. Letter to increase imprest limit (AA)
- e. Register of authorising officers (AA)

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

4. Minutes from 27 April 2017 and matters arising

Governors agreed these minutes and WB signed a copy. An update was then given as follows:

- *Agreement of 2017-18 budget and submission to WBC*
AA confirmed this now submitted and being worked to. It was noted that AH had offered to look into further coaching opportunities that may be accessed as part of the Sports Premium funding, and this would be explored via the Finance Committee in autumn term.

5. Minutes from 9 March 2017 and matters arising

Governors agreed these minutes and WB signed a copy. An update was then given as follows:

- *Update on music scholarship programme and related events*
AA provided an update that the music scholarship programme was progressing well and four students were to be supported in the coming year. The school had received a generous donation from Sirius Logic (£10k) to fund the whole project this year. AA noted that the company have previously supported smaller projects in school including Christmas presents for the pupils, and thanks had been given for this generous donation. AA noted that monies earmarked from the Private Fund would not be required at this stage for the project. JH noted that it was hoped this would become an annual event and governors will be kept updated through the Curriculum committee.

TW had also provided a report by email on a recent musical event in which Castle pupils took part at Adlington School. TW noted that it has been well supported and the pupils had all done really well.

- *Parent use of Tapestry and Evisense programmes*
 - AE updated that she had spent time with Becky Hunter in Cardiff class to see Tapestry in use. AE noted that this works well to capture daily progress and enable parents to see a learning log and photos for their child. AE noted that a parental trial of Evisense is planned but not yet in place – and this would be followed up. AA confirmed that licences for these programmes were covered in the new school budget. **ACTION: AE to update on Evisense at the next FGB meeting.**

- *Use of pay as you go mobile for school trips*
 - JH noted this had been a standing item for a little while as there had previously been some concern over staff having to use personal mobiles while on residential or day trips with school. JH noted that this had been investigated, but not currently a specific demand for these. AA confirmed that if staff wished to claim back for calls made, they could do so using copy of their statement. JH / AA noted that they would review again if there was increased demand for this resource.

- *Dates for training in pupil & progress data*

VM noted that this had previously been offered to governors as training to give an overview of pupil progress data. JH noted that set dates would be offered as part of the 2017-18 training programme, and would encourage CPC governors to attend (but noted all governors were welcome).

- *Update on use of 'My Concern' system for safeguarding*
 - CW provided an update that we have licence for cloud based system for tracking logging and reporting information. CW noted this uses live data and can enable staff to report any safeguarding concern, so it can be noted and dealt with following safeguarding procedures. CW noted the school will start using the system in September and training will be built in to ensure staff are appropriately trained. CW noted there are many benefits to using this system, it ensures that each concern is logged and tracked, staff are notified when there concern is received and there is also a function to invite / uninvite contacts so that specific cases can be viewed and then closed down once concluded. KW asked if the system can be accessed via the Ipads in classrooms – and CW confirmed this – noting it was very simple to set up and use. AA noted that the £600 cost of implementation was not included in this year's budget, but could easily be accommodated. All agreed this was a positive step in further enhancing current safeguarding procedures at the school. **Action: CW to update on implementation at the next FGB meeting.**

- *Potential new governors / 'World of Work' and other contacts*
 - WB noted that there has been some follow up with potential new governors, but those approached were unable to commit at this time. WB noted that there are still two vacancies on the board for co-opted governors, and asked all governors to consider if they have any contact with local industry, charity, fundraising or other relevant experience. WB also noted that she had discussed possible opportunities for exploring social media platforms to create interest in these roles.

ACTION: Governors to forward any contact details to WB / VM – and update to follow at the next FGB meeting.

- *Change of governor status*
 - VM confirmed that WB status was now local authority governor – and updates had been made with governor services. **ACTION: VM to forward update to JH for school website.**
- *Use of online BACS payments*
 - AA updated that all the details are in place and planned to start using this facility in September. **ACTION: Update at the next FGB.**

6. Committee reports

a. *Curriculum & Planning*

GW updated that the CPC had met and discussed pupil progress and other updates from the Headteacher's report. JH noted that he planned to introduce a shorter, more-focused HT report from September to include headlines and key themes for governors, plus some updates from team leaders on new initiatives and progress.

b. *Staffing*

GW noted the committee had discussed carrying out a staff survey in the autumn term. GW also confirmed that no issues with recruitment at present, as school full staffed at present GW noted that the group had discussed the delegation of responsibilities in the Pay Policy and this would be reviewed again next term.

c. *Pay panel*

GW noted that pay panel had been held today and will meet again early next term. JH clarified the purpose of this group, is to perform and monitor the HT performance management process. The group will meet early next term to review existing and set new targets as part of this process for 2017-18.

d. *Premises*

KW noted that permits had been introduced for use of a small number of spaces at St Joseph's church, for those staff visiting Victoria Park Nursery School – and this was working well.

KW updated that there had been a discussion around a reading room facility at Post 16, but there was no resource to fund this at present.

KW informed governors that the committee had also discussed the building of new classrooms at main site to meet growing pupil numbers.

JH gave an update at this point – as recent discussions with West Berks property services, were now moving forwards, and there had been agreement to fund three new classrooms to be linked to the existing buildings. JH noted this would provide three large class spaces, a meeting room and small office space. This is planned to start in January 2018, for completion by June 2018. JH noted that the availability of parking spaces had also been discussed, and there was a possibility of an additional 20 spaces being included as part of the build. JH noted that WBC was now progressing to obtaining quotes – and would keep governors updated on progress at next term's meetings.

KW confirmed that the site walk at Victoria Park Nursery School had been completed and a small number of recommendations were being reviewed.

e. *Finance (KW)*

KW noted that 2017-18 budget discussions were completed this term and proposals forwarded to FGB for approval. KW also noted that a successful audit report was received and thanked AA and his team for all their work in this good result. KW also noted that the SFVS process had been completed and successfully submitted to WBC. KW informed that JS has joined this committee (and premises) as part of her governor duties

JH noted that the letter previously drafted to parents re: funding pressures for schools had not yet been sent. JH noted he may review this later in the year, but felt it was not necessary to send at this point. KW noted that some parents had been affected by recent cuts to Post 16 transport and AA noted the school was supporting most vulnerable cases where possible. KW asked if these changes had any impact on attendance, but staff noted not at present.

7. Headteacher's report (JH)

JH had circulated the HT report in advance and invited questions.

Staff noted that school sports days had been well supported this week.

JH updated that the interim report on pupil progress showed that the school is currently on target.

JH noted that a full report on 2016-17 will be available for the next FGB meeting.

The use of Dynamo Maths within the school is currently being reviewed.

JH shared a report on pastoral activities and noted how well this was integrated across the school.

Governors asked about shallow water training, and RP confirmed this was required for those who would supervise activities in the Hydro Pool. Governors also discussed the issue about minibus training for staff that does not currently hold a category D1 on their licence. JH noted that although the school already implements MIDAS training for those who drive school vehicles, those without D1 cover on their licences were not legally allowed to use the vehicles for pupil transport. AA noted that conversion courses were available at a significant cost (and would need to be offered to at least 25 staff) but the school needed some further clarification on whether this was legally required. **ACTION: WB to investigate and report back to FGB in November.**

School Transformation Plan (STP) 2017-18

JH had circulated a version of the STP with his report and noted that this gave targets across four specific areas. JH asked governors for their comments, with a view to reaching agreeing in principle so a version could be taken forwarded for planning and target setting as part of the school's performance management process.

AA noted that the finance audit had noted it was preferable to have a 3-year plan where possible, but all agreed that it was hard to issue specific targets this far ahead. All agreed that the document could incorporate elements of the long-term vision, but with specific targets for the year ahead only – to keep it as a functioning document. JH also noted that he would plan to add notes on link governors to the relevant sections of the plan to keep focus in these areas. On that basis, the governors agreed with the STP that had been issued and asked JH to progress with further development and actions in this as the school moves forward to the new academic year.

Governors discussed staffing and JH noted that there was currently a full complement for September.

JH encouraged governors to continue to visit the school website and blog to keep up to date with what is going on in the school. **ACTION: JH to issue newsletter rota for governors to remind of deadlines for contributions in future issues.**

8. Progress & achievement update

JH noted that an update had been shared under item 7 – Headteacher's report and a full report on 2016-17 would be available in the autumn term for governors to review.

9. Follow up from complaints

WB gave a short update to governors on two parental complaints that had been reviewed this term. WB noted that one complaint (relating to speech and language provision) had been resolved and some recommendations were made and put in place.

WB noted the other complaint (relating to a number of wide ranging issues) related to a pupil who was no longer at the school. A number of panel and review meetings had been held, and the investigation was now complete. Recommendations to review the Behaviour policy as a result are now in place.

WB thanked colleagues for all their help with these cases, and noted that secure sealed storage of all related documents would be held by the Admin office. **ACTION: WB to email colleagues with the process for this.**

10. Policy review process

JH and WB introduced a new process for review of policies, to ensure timely review and input from leadership team across key areas. KW asked if Health & Safety could be included each (to enable mini review – alongside main review every three years). AA also noted that SFVS needed to be added to the Spring agendas. Persistent Complainants should also be added. **ACTION: JH to make these updates and forward to VM for action.**

11. Policies for ratification

The following policies have been reviewed at committee's this term, and are now brought for ratification.

- Assessment, recording & reporting
- Attendance
- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Learning & Teaching
- Performance Management
- Allegations against staff**
- Code of Conduct
- Induction policy
- Work related stress
- Freedom of information
- Internet access

KW had noted about some elements of supervision for internet access, but governors agreed this came under E-Safety and Safeguarding policies and agreed with version circulated.

CW noted that there was a new model policy in place for Allegations against Staff, and governors agreed that the model policy should be adopted. Otherwise, governors agreed with the policies circulated and recommendations made. **ACTION: VM to update school files. CW to forward model policy to VM for circulation and update.**

12. Safeguarding update and signing of central register

CW shared an update on safeguarding to note that she has met with safeguarding governors and given an update on current updates. CW noted that new procedure for dealing with LADO (Local authority designated officer) with any concerns relating to staff – and the LADO will make a recommendation on course of action to be taken.

Governors discussed the recommendation that DBS checks can be upgraded to include live version – the cost implication of this is £13 per year. All agreed this was worthwhile and should be pursued for all staff and governors.

CW noted that the My Concern programme would be introduced from September for reporting any safeguarding concerns across the site.

A copy of the central register was signed by WB and passed to AA for school records.

13. Governor visits, training and development (ALL)

JS noted that she has taken part in new governor induction training and felt it was a useful refresher. UC will attend training on the Headteacher's Performance Management in June. WB is attending a session on complaints.

AE noted that she and DG had discussed possibility to have a social event for governors and all agreed this would be a good idea. **ACTION: To progress for next term.**

JH noted that the governor visit forms are still in use, but may often not capture each visit. JH suggested that a trial of survey monkey for visits would be introduced and all agreed this was a good idea. **ACTION: JH to provide update at the next FGB.**

**GW left at this point.*

14. Academisation update

JH noted that there was no progress on academisation at this point. JH is exploring options for Co-operative Trusts as an alternative and will update governors at the next meeting.

15. Enterprise project update (CW)

CW noted that RP is leading this project with pupils across the school, with lots of sowing and growing underway. RP noted that polytunnels have produced a good harvest and pupils are using seasonal produce for cooking classes. RP noted that the new seeds are now being given out and this will provide a new crop for next year's classes. Governors asked how growing areas are looking after during the holidays and RP confirmed that she or site staff will visit to check watering etc.. RP noted that pupils are enjoying this activity and taking responsibility for watering, weeding and pest control duties, developing a whole range of skills that may be used for study or possible work experience in the future. RP noted that there may be an opportunity to grow and sell some produce in the local branch of Waitrose. **ACTION: RP to update at the next FGB.**

16. Meeting dates 2017-18

VM had circulated meeting dates for 2017-18 in advance. **ACTION: AA to send template of new letterhead to VM for use on governor papers.**

17. AOB items

- a. Parent and staff survey
WB noted that there will be a separate parent and staff survey taking place in the autumn term. The staff survey will link to Investors in People status.
- b. Minibus training – this item has been covered under item 7.
- c. Building works – this item has been covered under item 6.
- d. Increase to imprest limit (see below)
- e. Register of authorising officers
AA noted that a letter to inform WBC of both of these issues was now drafted and ready to send. AA noted there had been a delay to this due to changes of Deputy Head and would be sent imminently. AA noted that it was requested that the imprest level was raised to £45k and governors agreed to this. AA also noted that WB and KW were added to the list of authorising officers.

**AH now appointed to staff – checking working hours does not restrict as co-opted!*

Date of the next meeting

The next FGB will be held in November, a full list is attached to these minutes for information.