



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Board, Thursday 10 November 2016 held at main site, Castle School

- Present:** Wendy Batchelor (Chair of Governors), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), David Greenway (parent governor), Shannon Booth (staff governor), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor) Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Georgie Woods (co-opted governor), Ola Cassels-White (co-opted governor) and Vicki Murphy (clerk to governors)
- In attendance:** Atul Attra (School Business Manager) and Rhona O'Neill (Deputy Headteacher)
- Absent:** Malcolm Pullinger (parent governor)

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

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

New governors / link roles (WB)

Pay award (WB)* (**part two item – non-staff governors only**)

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest relating to this meeting were raised.

WB also noted that governors had been asked by the clerk to complete the new business interest & declaration forms. VM confirmed this was an annual requirements and both parts were now included on one form. VM collected completed forms and will arrange for storage in the school office.

4. Minutes from 23 June 2016 and matters arising (WB)

- *Summer activities (RON)*

RON updated that a varied summer programme had been supported by the pastoral team to enable families to take part in activities together e.g. trips to soft play, laser quest and bowling. RON also noted that working with Swings and Smiles charity, an a weekly youth club has now been set up. Parent governors agreed that activities offered were well received and improved take up.

- *Use of mobile devices for progress*

JH updated that this was moving forwards, but not yet in place across the school, as data updates can only be updated via iPads.

- *Exclusions and Prevent training (JH)*

JH confirmed that Exclusions training had taken place today for governors, and dates had been set for Prevent training (29 November or 8 December). RON is also updated all level 1 safeguarding training and most staff have now completed this, with a few refreshers to complete in the next few weeks.

- *Parking at main site and Victoria Park Nursery School*
Updates on parking would be given under the Premises committee report (item 5e on this agenda).
- *Policy mid -term reviews*
WB noted that this was being considered as part of link governor roles – to be covered under item 13 on this agenda.
- *Pastoral team (RON)*
RON confirmed that the new pastoral team was settled and making superb progress in working with families. They will do a short presentation to governors in Spring about their work.
- *Music scholarship (OCW/RON)*
OCW updated colleagues that the idea of a music scholarship fund had been presented to governors this term and they had agreed to support the fund with £1000 available per year (over the coming 5 years). This would support the provision of music tuition via Berkshire Maestros (or other provider) and applications could be made by pupils across the school. OCW noted that one or two scholarships would likely be awarded each year – but if significant interest for this, then further details could be submitted to the finance committee for consideration. **ACTION: Update for governors at the next meeting.**

AE asked about parent access / training for new education programmes including Tapestry, Dynamo Maths and Education City. Staff noted that information was being sent to parents this week, and that further training could be provided if required. **ACTION: AE to update governors at the next meeting**

JH noted an outstanding policy update (item 10 – minutes 23/6/16) as information needed to be clarified with West Berkshire Council. **ACTION: VM to send draft policy to JH for checking with local authority and update given to the next meeting.**

5. Committee reports

a. *Curriculum (GW)*

GW updated governors that the committee met in October and noted positive progress for pupils, with useful update by SB. GW also noted that there were no 'Not in Education Employment or Training – NEET' pupils from those leaving the school, as all progressed to further opportunities. GW noted that staff had updated governors on the new maths initiatives that would be rolled out across the school. GW also noted that staff had updated them on positive outcomes from Pupils for Positive Change meetings that were now taking place in the school.

Governors had received an update on a pupil with a managed move to Priors Court, and noted this was working well. Staff also shared details of planned residential trip for two classes later in the year.

The Middle Leadership team will present to this committee in January as part of their development programme.

b. *Staffing (GW)*

GW updated that the committee had met in October and discussed updates. GW also noted that the committee had discussed the movement of pay banding for support assistants from band B to band C. The committee recommended this for agreement by all governors at today's meeting. All governors agreed to this change (which will be effective from 1 September). **ACTION: AA to action this change for support assistants, to be backdated to 1 September 2016.**

c. *Pay panel (GW)*

GW noted that the Pay Panel has met three times this term to discuss pay policy and complete the Headteacher's Performance Management.

d. *Premises (KW)*

KW noted that the committee had met in October and discussed current planned projects and future developments.

KW noted that the school was progressing installation of multi-use games area (now underway) and other developments in outdoor play and learning areas. AA showed governors visuals for planned work and all agreed this would significantly improve facilities for the pupils. Staff fed back that work completed already was already helping to improve behaviour issues for some classes at break times. Governors are invited to have a look once work is completed.

KW noted that site walk plans were made by the committee, and the main site walk has been completed this term by DG and AE.

Governors had asked about final cost for a gas leak that happened earlier in the term. AA confirmed that final bill was in the region of £15k – with some costs to be shared with Castle Gate site.

KW noted that parking had been discussed, options for main site were being considered with the local authority and an arrangement with St Joseph's Church has been agreed to provide a few spaces for use by those at Victoria Park Nursery School.

RON asked about consideration of providing site mobiles for staff on residential trips.

ACTION: RON to investigate provision of a few pay as you go mobiles for such trips and update at the next meeting.

KW shared that an update had been given on asbestos training and school was very well briefed in this area, exceeding what is required. Finally KW noted that a recent health & safety audit gave the school an excellent rating – with only a few minor improvements to work on. All thanked AA and his team for work on this.

e. *Finance (KW)*

KW confirmed that the committee had met in October and discussed updates and budget position with any variances above 10% or over £5k. KW noted that she had a response from WBC to query about data integrity but they were not able to provide requested data. Governors agreed that it was useful to have raised this point with the local authority.

AA noted that the school inventory was almost complete and work would continue.

Similarly the Brookfields benchmarking exercise would be completed as time allows.

The committee had reviewed financial policies which are brought for ratification to this FGB meeting. AA will raise the imprest limit once the FMP policy is agreed by governors.

KW has completed a 'how-to' guide for reconciliation and will test with Alex Harris this term, ahead of other governors using to complete termly reconciliations with the finance team.

KW confirmed that an update on the Private Fund was also given, with current balance around £54k.

KW confirmed that the committee had agreed to fund music scholarships from the Private Fund. KW and JH had attended a recent course on effective financial management through West Berkshire Council.

KW also confirmed that

the draft audit report had been received and thanked AA for all his continuing hard work. The feedback was that the school was 'very well controlled' which all agreed was an exceptional achievement.

JH had provided an update on funding for high needs block and funding for Corfe and Balmoral trips had been agreed.

6. Headteacher's report (JH)

JH noted that report circulated in advance and invited questions.

KW asked about links between work at last strategy day and school transformation plan.

JH noted that this will be covered in further detail at governors strategy day in March.

WB noted that the use of red / amber / green (RAG ratings) will help to clearly identify progress made against key areas.

DG asked about lesson observations and whether any target set for increasing number of outstanding lessons. Staff noted that although specific targets were not being set for this area, they worked hard to create a supportive environment for staff where good practice is shared and a culture of improvement exists across all areas. All noted the positive impact that this was having across the school.

Governors asked about implementation of the 'blue sky' performance management system – and JH noted this was working well. JH confirmed that this would be integrated across the school in due course.

DG asked about Rochford review, and JH noted that it was not replacing the current 'P' levels at this time. SB added that an addition to the B Squared system included a profiling measure for those on the autism spectrum, and was being used in three classes at present, but would be rolled out over time.

7. Progress & achievement update (SB)

SB had provided an update to the curriculum committee earlier in the term, and this was included in the Headteacher's report for this meeting. SB had also provided a further review sheet to illustrate the 'one page wonder'. SB shared that now there are three consecutive years' worth of data. Governors asked if any emergent trends, but SB reported that no specific trends, but what clearly comes through is that more rigorous targets are being set, and staff feel more confident that use of data is embedded across the school, forming part of daily activities for class teams.

SB offered governors further training if they want to understand data, or refresh knowledge. **ACTION: VM to gather feedback from governors on training need at this point and update SB to agree next steps.**

8. Policies for ratification

The following policies have been discussed at this term's committees and now come for ratification by the FGB. OCW raised a query about use of electronic registers as part of the Offsite activities – but staff noted that details of staff and pupils taking part in these trips are recorded on a separate list. Governors then agreed the following policies.

a. Administration of Medicine

b. Child Protection & Safeguarding

c. E Safety

d. Equality Scheme and Action Plan

- e. *Pay Policy 2016*
- f. *Social Media Use*
- g. *Financial Management Policy*
- h. *Private Fund Policy*
- i. *Data Protection*

j. *Guidance for Offsite Activities*

ACTION: VM to arrange update on school files and in central office. Each policy will be signed by WB as Chair of Governors.

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

WB, GW and RON have met today to review safeguarding. RON noted that level 1 training is currently being updated for all staff, and most are now complete (with a further 15-20 to complete in the next week or so). Training is offered in groups or online. Staff noted that face to face training is best suited to those who don't have much access to IT as part of role e.g. support assistants, and this should be considered for future training needs. RON noted that text reminders are used for staff not on email regularly. RON confirmed that WB has signed the single central register at today's meeting.

10. Governor visits, training and development (OCW)

OCW gave a short update on governor visits and training. OCW noted that not all visits had been recorded, and that governors should complete visit forms for each activity at school that is not a formal meeting e.g. class visits, volunteering or training.

OCW noted that the recent governors tea party was well supported and a similar event could be arranged for next year to follow half term break in October. **ACTION: VM to add to governors calendar and book Jane Evans room.**

OCW noted that the new governor handbook had been issued, and information updated on school website. **ACTION: OCW to ask Michelle Segre to re-issue governor passwords for use on secure area of website.**

Governors agreed that updated photos should be taken next term. **ACTION: VM to remind governors for Spring term that photos will be taken at committee meetings and / or FGB.**

OCW had circulated an updated newsletter rota and reminded those who are due to submit contributions.

Staff noted that governors were welcome to attend the celebration assembly on 16 December at 10am.

11. Academisation update (WB / JH)

WB gave an update to governors on working party who are looking at issues around academisation. The working party is currently WB / JH and AE. All have attended recent courses and updates on the subject, and also hope to visit other schools to see how academisation has been managed by other settings. WB noted a report to governors would be given in the Spring term to propose suggested next steps. **ACTION: VM to add to Spring term agenda for FGB.**

12. Enterprise project update (RON)

RON updated governors that the growing projects are still underway within school and class teams have started growing a new season of crops. Staff noted that competitions are being held to encourage classes to keep going on this. RON updated that she has recruited two volunteers via the Newbury Volunteer Centre to help with some gardening duties. She also noted that a grant had been received for the cooking fund, which would be used for maintenance of polytunnels. RON confirmed that this funding had come from Friends of Castle School, with some donations of plants received from stakeholders. **ACTION: Update at the next meeting.**

13. AOB items

New and link governors

WB noted that she has drafted an outline document which shows link governors for each area of the school, with staff contact for each area. WB noted that this progressed work that had been outlined in the previous strategy day and would also link to the School's Transformation Plan.

There are currently 2 governor vacancies, 1 x local authority and 1 x co-opted. WB noted that she is meeting a prospective governor tomorrow to discuss getting involved, and asked other governors to think if they were aware of anyone else who may wish to get involved as a governor. All agreed skills in IT, fundraising and awareness of the local business community would be particularly useful.

ACTION: Update at the next meeting.

Thank you

At this point, WB extended special thanks to OCW who is stepping down as co-opted governor at this meeting. All agreed she had made an amazing contribution as a colleague and governor and would be missed. A small gift and flowers were presented as a token of appreciation. OCW thanked colleagues for all their support.

****Staff governors and those in attendance left the meeting at this point.***

Pay Award

This item is recorded under part 2 minutes.

14. Dates of the next committee and FGB meetings

Curriculum & staffing committee – 19 January (Post 16)

Finance & premises committee – 26 January (Post 16)

Pay Panel – 9 March (venue tbc)

Full Governing Board – 9 March (Post 16)