



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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Minutes from a meeting of the Full Governing Body, held on Thursday 10 March in the meeting space at Castle School, Post 16 Centre

Present: Wendy Batchelor (Chair of Governors), Brian Connolly (local authority governor), Georgie Woods (co-opted governor), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), David Greenway (parent governor), Shannon Booth (staff governor) and Vicki Murphy (Clerk to Governors)

In attendance: Rhona O'Neill (deputy Headteacher), Jan Vaughan (Friends of Castle School)

Apologies: Malcolm Pullinger (parent governor), Ola Cassels-White (co-opted governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor) and Atul Attra (school business manager)

**At the start of the meeting, it was agreed with the chair, that item 8 - Pupil Progress, would be taken as item 5 – as SB to leave meeting following this item. All other agenda items would be taken following on from this.*

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Malcolm Pullinger (parent governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Ola Cassels-White (co-opted governor) and Atul Attra (school business manager).

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

- Pupil voice group (RP)
- Trip for Dover Class (RON)
- Parent governor election (WB)

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest related to agenda items for this meeting.

4. 'Friends of Castle School'

WB introduced, Jan Vaughan, Chair of Friends of Castle School, who gave governors a short update on the charity, aims and objectives.

JV shared that the charity had recently reached a point where fundraising and seeking donations was becoming harder and difficult to sustain. JV noted that the group has re-focused and applied for a number of community grants to further support its work. JV reported this has been successful and the charity has received a grant from *The People's Health Trust* and *Greenham Common Trust*, with other active applications being progressed.

JV updated governors that this funding would help to support a range of activities including training, transport and family days. JV noted that the charity was seeking to re-engage with parents and carers and how pupils were also represented on the group, as well as parents and staff. JV talked about further developments included parent forums and use of community workers to support further grant applications. All agreed that good progress was being made, and WB thanked JV for the update. Governors asked JV to keep them informed if there was any further input from governors required as the projects move forwards. JV noted that new chair is Julia Avery for future contact with governors. **JV left meeting at this point.*

5. Progress & achievement update (SB)

SB gave governors a further update on the pupil progress. SB noted that there had been some re-inputting of data required this term, and re-baselining of pupils as some data anomalies had been found.

SB also shared that the school has continued to investigate the possibility of moving from the BSquared programme to another provider, but it was still being considered, as it was felt that not enough provider feedback at this stage on proposed 'Onwards & Upwards' system.

SB to provide further update to governors at May's Curriculum committee meeting, this will include data from Autumn and Spring 2015-16 terms for review.

Governors asked about remote access to these programmes, and SB confirmed that data can be inputted or review from any location with WIFI present. Governors also asked about handheld devices e.g. tablets, to enable staff updates in classrooms. **ACTION: AA / JH to review costs of this and report back to next meeting.** SB also noted that a training session for governors on data had been held this term, and those who attended agreed it had been useful. SB to provide a further session in due course as part of ongoing training programme. Governors thanked SB for her report. **SB left the meeting at this point.*

6. Minutes from 12 November 2015 and matters arising:

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed. Governors then discussed the following matters arising:

- *Update on governor roles*
VM confirmed that following the election of the new Chair, governor services had been informed, and other school documents had also been updated.
- *Update on 20 key questions / governance review*
WB confirmed that there is no further action required on this at present, as it is part of the ongoing review of governance.
- *D1 training / small vehicle use*
JH updated governors that purchase of new school vehicles was now underway, including a 9-seater vehicle which did not require D1 status (enabling younger drivers to take groups out). JH noted that the school was also in the process of replacing other fleet vehicles as per agreement of the finance committee.
- *New cleaning contract*
AA had previously updated governors that the cleaning contract was changing at end of November. Cleaning is now provided by Churchill, rather than Cofely.
- *'How to help at home' – website update*
JH noted that this was still being considered, about adding information for parents to the school website. **ACTION: JH to consult with parent governors and update at the next meeting.**
- *Supporting students with medical needs policy & related indemnity cover (AA)*
JH confirmed that this issue had been resolved at the curriculum committee, and the appropriate levels of indemnity cover were in place.
- *Policy updates*
VM confirmed these had been done following the last meeting.
- *Visit forms*
WB reminded governors to complete a visit form – each time they visit a school site. These can be handed to the reception of either main or Post 16. This does not apply for minuted meetings, but can be completed for other visits e.g. training, staff meetings, observations etc..
- *Business interest / declaration forms*
Governors queried if a summary of declaration forms should now be included on the school website. **ACTION: VM to check with Governor Services and update at the next meeting.**

Part two minutes from 12 November 2015

WB confirmed that these minutes had been agreed by non-staff governors and were signed.

7. Committee updates

WB asked committee chairs to give an update on this term's meetings.

Curriculum

GW updated that governors had asked for clarification on the exclusions process following a recent panel meeting, although had agreed that some more governors should be trained in this area. **ACTION: OCW to progress.**

GW also confirmed that the ESafety training was now available and a number of governors had completed it. Staff confirmed that Madeleine West keeps a record of all governor training and any completed certificates can be forwarded to her.

Staffing

GW updated governors that the committee had discussed staffing and related policies.

Pay panel

GW noted that the pay panel has met today (10/3/16) and all in order. The next meeting will be in June 2016.

Finance

KW noted that the reconciliation exercise was ongoing, but had highlighted an issue of data integrity, which was being questioned with West Berkshire. KW had requested independently verified data, which is not currently supplied by West Berkshire council. KW noted that she is writing to Claire White to raise this issue and would report back.

KW also updated that the schools inventory is progressing with AA and his team, recording all items over £100 in value, plus a number of smaller portable items.

KW also updated on benchmarking with Brookfields, and raising of imprest limits.

KW noted the group had discussed cost approval for residential trips, as full shortfall had not been confirmed at time of committee meeting. RON now confirmed this as £3960 for three KS3 classes to attend residential trip in summer term and asked for governor agreement. Governors agreed and authorised this request.

KW also noted that the committee had discussed the growth of the capital fund and how this would enable some of 'wish list' projects to get underway. This includes the installation of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) which all agreed would be a great benefit to the school.

KW also noted that there will be an audit taking place shortly, which will not involve governors directly, but she had offered her support to AA in preparation for this.

JH also provided an update on buildings in AA's absence to update governors that there will likely be two new classrooms on main site in September 2016, for KS1 and KS2 use. There is also a feasibility study currently underway for development of a new site on land at Newbury College, but further updates will be given in due course, once further details are available.

JH finally noted that the funding for the high needs block won't be cut at this point, but finance committee will need to be aware of contingency plan for if and when this changes (likely in 2017). **ACTION: JH to send link on 'Fairer Funding' to governors for information.**

Premises

KW updated that the governors had completed a site walk at Post 16, and discussed a further site walk at Victoria Park, which would be arranged in the summer term. Staff agreed that governors should attend VPNSCC at end of school day to complete a 'site walk' or go individually if they wished to observe learning and teaching, as it is a small team in a very busy setting. **ACTION: VM to liaise with Emmie Gage ahead of planned visit.**

KW also updated that site risk assessments are ongoing and a report of recommendations is forthcoming. KW also noted that AA had given an update on list of projects and planned works which was progressing well.

8. Headteacher's Report (JH)

JH invited questions on his report.

KW asked about unauthorised absences as governors had agreed that figures showed good attendance overall. JH noted that he may give authorisation for pupil leave outside of term time e.g. to facilitate a family holiday so that special needs can be accommodated more easily than at peak times.

Governors asked about number of pupils on roll, currently 157, but likely to increase beyond 162 in September. JH noted that he has already updated governors on short and long term planning for increasing accommodation for growing pupil numbers, and will keep governors informed of any

updates to this. Governors also had a short discussion about parking arrangements for the school as pupil numbers grow, and whether 'temporary' parking accommodation can be explored with site staff. **ACTION: JH to update governors as necessary.** Governors asked about staggered start times for school, but staff agreed that this was not possible because of some transport arrangements at this time.

DG asked about teacher training, and RON confirmed that there were currently 10 staff doing the QCF programme. RON noted that this intended to develop existing staff and encourage progression for support staff e.g. lunchtime supervisors and support assistants, into other roles e.g. teaching assistants as opportunities arise. All agreed there was a broad range of training offered by the school, much of which is bespoke to the specific needs of the school community. RON noted that some external training takes place, but less so now the regular staff training sessions take place on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Governors are also welcome to join training programme as their availability allows.

WB asked about recent staff changes, and JH noted that staff members leaving had been due to change of career, rather than unhappiness in role. JH noted a recent recruitment day had been held, and was successful in creating growing interest in the school and its work. RON added that the school was also involved in support training days for local schools, which help to reduce barriers and challenge perceptions of special needs education.

Governors asked about continuation of 'Guideposts' or similar offer for holiday support. JH noted that the school is considering what may take its place. JH noted that longer holiday breaks are often when larger scale maintenance and repair works are completed, and may be difficult to accommodate a continuous holiday club provision on site, without compromising the maintenance programme. Governors agreed it was important to consider respite for families during holiday periods, and staff noted that pastoral team offered family days at local venues during the school holidays. Governors also discussed possibility of direct payments to families for sourcing of alternative respite support.

9. Policies for ratification (WB)

Following this term's committee meetings, the following policies are brought for ratification:

- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Curriculum
- Admissions
- Co-location
- Non smoking
- Lettings
- Health & safety policy
- Charging & Remissions
- Private Fund

Governors discussed and approved the above policies which had been discussed at committee meetings this term. WB signed all policies. **ACTION: VM to arrange to file in school and online. VM to update Rights Respecting Schools statement for Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy.**

Policy review process

WB also asked governors to consider current review process. WB noted that in some cases, an interim review may be appropriate to enable governors to keep check on whether policies are still meeting the needs of the school. KW noted that this had recently been the case with adding information about e-cigarette and vapour products to the No-Smoking Policy. It was agreed that WB to confirm list of policies with VM and issue via committee for mid-term reviews as appropriate. **ACTION: WB/VM to issue list of mid-term reviews via committee meetings – first update to be given in summer term.**

10. Safeguarding update and signing of central register

RON updated governors that the single central register has now been updated and revamped. RON has met today with safeguarding governor to review, and noted it is very comprehensive. RON noted that changes made to recruitment processes as a result of these improvements. RON noted a safeguarding audit is taking place on Monday 14 March in school. **ACTION: WB to sign central register in school on 11 March (as held on main site).**

JH also updated on radicalisation training and noted that he was now able to deliver training on this. Governors agreed that they should all receive 'Prevent' training in the summer term. **ACTION: Suggested**

date of 21 April to complete training. VM to update governors and arrange room booking to follow budget approval meeting for those who can attend.

11. Governor visits, training & development (OCW)

OCW had provided a written update for governors, which WB shared.

The plans for the Strategy day meeting on 22 March are now underway.

OCW has arranged NSPCC e-safety training for governors and this is now being progressed online. RON also updated that she had recently visited Henley College with OCW to look at opportunities for training. Further updates on this to be given in due course.

A reminder of the newsletter rota was also given and KW to complete next article for JH.

12. Enterprise project update (RON)

RON noted that project is going well and growing is underway. RON noted that a food fair / celebration event will be held in summer term to share progress made. RON also noted that a 'soup kitchen' trial is now running and delicious soup and cheese straws are available each Thursday as part of this project.

13. AOB items

Pupil Voice group.

RP noted that this group is now underway, with 8 pupils representing 6 different class groups across the school. GW had also attended and noted it was inspirational. RP noted that focus is on getting pupil to suggest solutions as well as highlighting problems, and had already discussed behaviour and safety. RON noted that improvements were now being implemented, following suggestions from the group e.g. rules for games played at breaktimes. RP noted each meeting will focus on a different topic, and classes spend time discussing ideas, before their representative brings those to the meeting group. All agreed working well to date.

Trip for Dover Class

RON has already raised this and agreement reached in funding of residential trips for KS3 groups. Staff noted that most of pupils will be taking part in this trip, and some visual prompts were being prepared for pupils who needed extra preparation for taking part.

Parent governor election

WB updated governors that as DG's second term of office had come to an end, VM had arranged for nomination forms to be sent to parents of pupils at all sites. One nomination form was received from DG and thus he is duly elected for a third term of office. Governors discussed parent governor role, once their child moves on from the school, and VM confirmed that it was possible to remain as a parent governor (until the end of the current term) once a child has moved on from the school. **ACTION: VM to provide necessary updates to governor services and school files.**

14. Diary dates for training and upcoming meetings

Tuesday 22 March, 3-7pm - Governors strategy day (Shaw House)

Thursday 14 April, 4.30pm - Finance & premises (main site, Jane Evans)

Thursday 21 April, 4.30pm - Budget sign off meeting (main site, Jane Evans) & 'Prevent' training

Thursday 5 May, 4.30pm - Curriculum & staffing (main site, Jane Evans)

Thursday 26 May – 3.30pm (suggested site walk at Victoria Park)* TBC

Thursday 23 June, 5pm - Full Governing Body (main site, Jane Evans)

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.