



# The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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## Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Body, held on Thursday 12 November 2015 in the Jane Evans room at Castle School (main site)

**Present:** Brian Connolly (outgoing Chair of Governors), Wendy Batchelor (incoming Chair of Governors), Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor), Georgie Woods (co-opted governor), Ola Cassels-White (co-opted governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Shannon Booth (staff governor), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Malcolm Pullinger (parent governor), David Greenway (parent governor), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor) and Vicki Murphy (clerk to governors)

**In attendance:** Atul Attra (School Business Manager), Rhona O'Neill (Deputy Headteacher)

\*Prior to the start of this meeting, governors were invited to visit classrooms at main site to review student work to see learning environments. DG and KW also completed a Health & Safety walk with AA. The meeting started at 5.20pm.

### *Introductions*

At the start of the meeting, governors were introduced to Alison Eade, new parent governor, who has recently joined the governing body.

### *Election of Chair*

Prior to the main business for discussion, governors were invited to elect a new Chair, replacing Brian Connolly, who is stepping down at this meeting. BC thanked colleagues and the school for their support while he has been in role. VM then invited governors to consider the appointment of the new chair. Wendy Batchelor was nominated and all governors wholeheartedly agreed with her appointment. Governors were also asked to appoint a Vice Chair, with GW having been nominated. Governors agreed and fully support GW as Vice Chair. **ACTION: VM to inform governor services that WB is now Chair, supported by GW as Vice Chair.**

### *Committee membership*

WB asked governors to also consider whether any revisions to committee membership were necessary to accommodate new governor AE, and reflect the change of roles. These were agreed as follows:

### *Finance & Premises*

KW had previously agreed to chair these from January 2016, and AE would also join these committees to ensure skills balance and quorum. These committees now consist of KW, BC, DG, MP, RP, AE and JH.

### *Staffing and Curriculum*

WB has asked to move across to these committees from January 2016, which continue to be chaired by GW. These committees now consist of GW, UC, SB, TW, WB, OCW and JH.

### *Pay Panel*

WB will join this committee from January in place of BC. The panel will now consist of GW, UC and WB to support JH in reviewing objectives and the pay policy. **ACTION: VM to update committee lists for governor files and school lists accordingly.**

## 1. Apologies

There were no apologies for this meeting as all governors were present.

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

- Business interest & declaration forms (for update at meeting)
- Health & safety audit / update

## 3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

#### 4. Minutes from 16 June 2015 and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed by governors and signed by WB. Governors then discussed the following matters arising:

##### *Appointment of co-opted governors*

VM advised that the administration and informing of this change, following adoption of the new governing instrument has been completed.

##### *Update to governor section of shared drive in school*

VM updated that this work is completed towards the end of each term (or as required). Governors agreed that policies should also be sent to staff for information once they have been reviewed and/or changed. OCW noted that Madeleine will send copies of these out once reviews are complete. AA also noted that other updates for staff would be available e.g. folder in staffroom with key information e.g. policies and health & safety information

##### *Feedback from strategy day 2015*

OCW noted this would be covered under item 10.

##### *Policy updates from last meeting*

VM confirmed that policy updates from the last meeting had been completed.

##### *20 key questions document / review of governance*

BC updated governors that this document had come from governor services at West Berks and was a self-audit on governance which is recommended to be carried out on an annual basis. BC to share updates with WB as necessary and create an action plan for governors if necessary, working with development governor OCW as required. **ACTION: Update on any required actions at the next meeting.**

##### *Minibus proposal*

JH / AA updated governors that this had been discussed at the finance committee and the school is progressing the D1 training courses for school drivers who need to be able to drive the minibus vehicles, and do not have this cover on existing licences. The school is still investigating purchase of a smaller vehicle. **ACTION: Update at the next meeting.**

#### 5. Committee updates

WB invited committee chairs to give an update on this term's meetings:

##### *Curriculum*

GW noted that the committee had met and alongside regular business had discussed the increasing numbers at the school and how this would be accommodated. JH had advised that he is already in discussions with the local authority to look at how accommodation can meet short and long term needs. Governors were also aware of the increase from out of county placements. GW also noted that SB had given a most useful update to governors on progression data, and policies were reviewed. RON updated governors about systems for managing residential trips through 'evolve' which was now integrated into school systems.

##### *Staffing*

GW updated that the committee had discussed staffing and reviewed policies. SB updated that following the meeting, additional lunch and support staff were being recruited. OCW noted that a governors tea with staff had also been held this term.

##### *Pay panel*

GW updated governors that the pay panel had met three times this term to discuss ongoing review of objectives and had also completed the Headteacher's Performance Management.

##### *Finance*

WB updated that the committee had met and received full update on school finances for main and private fund from AA. The committee had been updated on current and planned spend, including possible update for school minibus. AA had also updated the group that the cleaning contract would be taken over from 1 December by Churchills (existing staff would TUPE over). BC asked if a summary of headline figures for non-finance

committee governors would be useful for this meeting. **ACTION: AA to provide for next FGB meeting in March 2016.**

#### *Premises*

WB shared that the committee had met this term and reviewed ongoing projects and planned works. AA shared an update on current projects with the governors and also updated on health & safety reviews and cycle of review. Governors had completed a health & safety walk at main site, and would complete further walks at nursery and post 16 site in following terms. *\* VM note – send DP model policy to WB ahead of the next meeting*

### **6. Headteacher's Report (JH)**

BC thanked JH for his detailed report which shows lots of improvements and progression across the school. Governors noted that it shows an amazing achievement for the school and for individual students in progress being made at all levels. SB noted that staff are always reflective of the progress made and always looking for new ways to support students in reaching their potential.

KW asked about Pupil Premium Grant (PPG), JH outlined that there is usually a 25% gap between PPG pupils and others not in receipt of this. However, this is the national average is not reflected in the Castle'S school's progress where there is no gap. JH and staff noted that the school has many interventions to support all children in making progress at the school. The PPG is used to fund resources / staff that directly benefit children in receipt of this funding. SB noted that the 1-2-1 support for children that need additional help is key to this.

OCW outlined that the QCF training for support assistants is going well and there are now 49 support staff working towards this programme.

DG asked about accommodation for older pupils as current cohort progresses e.g. larger numbers moving up to Post 16. JH noted that this was being considered as part of the ongoing accommodation strategy, and governors would be kept up to date with any developments.

### **7. Progress and achievement update (SB)**

SB shared an update with governors on progress to date, and welcomed questions. SB noted that interventions programme continues to see improvements across the school at all levels, with many improvements being 'embedded' into the school's learning culture. SB noted that parents are also becoming more involved in helping to set targets for pupils and this is being encouraged. Parents governors were asked to comment on this and all felt that this was a good idea, if supported fully at home. Governors suggested adding a 'how to help at home' section could be included on the website to provide further guidance on how parents can support the learning partnership between home and school. Governors thanked SB for her continuing work and updates. **ACTION: JH to look at adding website section for 'how to help at home'.**

### **8. Policies for ratification**

Since the committee meetings in October, there had been three additional policy updates. These were discussed.

Safeguarding / Child Protection – governors were informed there had been an update since the last review and agreed to ratify this policy.

Lone Working – AA updated that this had been revised as part of health & safety audit and governors agreed to ratify this policy.

Supporting Students with Medical Needs – JH noted that an update to this policy was required, and the model policy had been used. DG noted that there was an implication of governor responsibility in part of the policy which required clarification. **ACTION: AA to check level of cover in place for governors on current insurance policy and advise. Governors were in agreement to ratify this policy, subject to appropriate level of indemnity cover being in place.**

WB asked governors to consider whether policies should be considered in this way, outside of committee meetings, and all agreed that this did not always give sufficient time for review. Agreed that unless a directive to review or change to previously ratified model policy, policies would be reviewed in the first instance by committees and brought to full governors for ratification only.

WB asked for a list of policies to be brought forward to the January committees to agree policies for review by each committee with frequency / interim implementation reviews also agreed at this stage, especially for those

policies which are reviewed once every three years. **ACTION: VM to prepare lists for January committee meetings. Update on review process at the next Full Governors meeting.**

Governors then discussed policies that had been reviewed by committees this term, and agreed to ratify all the following:

Social Networking / Mobile Phone (these are guidance documents for information)

E-Safety Policy – send as PDF to JH

CACHE policies (Diversity, Withdrawal & Learner Protection Policy)

Pay Policy (one small typo made at meeting)

Committee terms of reference (CPC, Staffing, Finance & Premises)

**ACTION: VM to update these policies on file and ensure copies updated on shared drive in school.**

#### **9. Safeguarding update and signing of central register**

RON updated governors that a safeguarding meeting has been held today with governors. She also confirmed that the school is completing their annual safeguarding audit (now done online) with more detailed descriptors on what information is required. RON also updated governors on related training that was taking place including radicalisation and female genital mutilation. RON confirmed that all staff had level 1 safeguarding training in place, and new staff members were undertaking this as soon as available (next session is December). It was agreed that this could also be offered to governors, along with updated online training for domestic violence, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

AA also noted that the school was in the process of updating DBS checks for all staff and governors. WB and BC signed the single central register and returned to AA.

#### **10. Governor visits, training and development (OCW)**

OCW updated governors on training matters. OCW noted that governor visit forms were still being completed, and encouraged governors to complete each time they visit a Castle School site as it was seen as good practice.

OCW also fed back to governors on the evaluation forms received on previous Strategy Day and agreed governors had enjoyed the practical learning demonstrations from teaching staff. All felt that Shaw House was a good venue and 2016 event would also be held here. It was agreed that updates from each team could also be part of useful insight for governors.

OCW also reminded governors of the upcoming newsletter contributions, The next deadline is 11 December for DG or MP to forward a short article to JH.

**ACTION: Bring copies of visit forms to meetings. DG / MP to forward newsletter piece to JH by 11 December.**

#### **11. Enterprise project update (RoN)**

RON updated that project going well and weekly competition being held to encourage pupils with this initiative to cultivate, grow, harvest and cook their own food. Trees for the school orchard have been delivered along with a poly tunnel to help with expansion plans. RON noted that they would hope to offer a 'café lunch' for staff at main site on a trial basis, and displays would be made for Newbury Show 2016 to showcase project to date. **ACTION: Update at the next meeting.**

#### **12. Any other business items (ALL)**

##### *Business interest / declaration forms*

VM asked governors to review and sign their business interest and declaration forms in line with current procedures. These forms will be kept on file in the school office and a summary of business interests will be made available via the school website. **ACTION: VM to file and arrange online information to be sent to JH for upload.**

##### *Health & Safety Audit*

AA also updated governors that they had just had a Health & Safety audit – and score was 86%, vastly improved from last time. AA noted that he and his team were working through recommendations to further improve health & safety measures. AA also noted that although school has a statement of intent for health & safety, they intend to adopt the West Berks policy through committee in January.

#### **13. Date of the next term's meeting**

**Curriculum & Staffing** committees – 21 January 2016, 4.30pm at Post 16 site.

**Finance & Premises** committees – 28 January 2016, 4.30pm at Post 16 site.

**Full Governors** - JH asked if date of Full Governing Body could be moved from 17 March 2016 as this clashes with another event. Governors agreed to hold meeting on 10 March 2016 instead, from 5pm at Post 16.

**ACTION: VM to update meetings list and inform Post 16 of date change.**

**Strategy Day** – 22 March 2016 – 3-7pm at Shaw House. All governors are encouraged to attend this event.

*The main meeting closed at this point, and a Part Two item was discussed with non-staff governors and Headteacher only. The item is minuted separately.*

*Thank you*

At the close of the meeting, WB, OCW and JH made a small presentation to outgoing Chair BC on behalf of governors and staff. All agreed a fantastic achievement to have served on the governing body for 15 years, 8 of which as Chair. Governors thanked BC for all his hard work and contribution to the school over this time. BC likewise thanked governors and staff for all their support and noted he had enjoyed working with the school immensely over the years. BC will stay on the governing body until summer 2016 as a local authority governor, but after this time will step down and a replacement to be found at this point.

Signed

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Dated

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