



# The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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## Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governors on Tuesday 18 November 2014, in the Jane Evans Room at main site, Castle School

**Present:** Brian Connolly (Chair), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Shannon Booth (staff governor), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Georgie Woods (community governor), Ola Cassels-White (local authority governor), Ursula Codrington (community governor) David Greenway (parent governor), Kate Dress (parent governor) and Vicki Murphy (clerk)

**In attendance:** Rhona O'Neill (Deputy Headteacher), Atul Attra (School Business Manager) and Katherine Wilkes (meeting observer)

**Apologies:** Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Malcolm Pullinger (parent governor) and Wendy Batchelor (community governor)

Item	Summary actions	Lead governor
5.	Follow up on business interest and declaration forms	Clerk
6.	Governor vacancy	Clerk
6.	Bid submissions to St James Place	JH
6.	Assessment review training	OCW / SB
7.	Dates for health and safety training to be circulated	Clerk
7.	Pay panel admin	Clerk with GW
7.	Pay policy – add statement and scales	Clerk
9.	Governor skills audit and working party	OCW
10.	Finance committee agenda	Clerk
11.	Policies – update and file	Clerk
13.	Evaluation form to governors	OCW / Clerk
15.	Strategy day	AA / JH / BC / OCW
15.	Terms of reference	Clerk
15.	Ofsted celebration	AA / JH

### 1. Apologies and introductions

VM noted apologies had been received from TW, WB and MP. These apologies were accepted. BC then introduced Katherine Wilkes to the group. Katherine had applied to be a school governor and was attending this meeting to find out more about being involved at Castle School. BC noted he had already had a short meeting with KW to inform her about the work of the governing body. KW introduced herself and noted particular experience in accountancy and audit work. Governors welcomed her to the meeting.

### 2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

At this point in the meeting, BC asked VM to introduce the election of chair and vice chair. VM confirmed that governors should agree a chair and vice chair for the next two year term. BC has been nominated as Chair, and all governors agreed with his re-election. WB had offered to stand at Vice Chair, and all governors agreed with this election. VM handed back to BC to continue with agenda items.

At this point, BC noted that this would be his last term of office as Chair and had already started discussions with JH about succession planning. Governors noted that they were particularly appreciative of all the hard work which BC has given to the school over recent years.

BC thanked all for their kind words, and continuing support. Governors furthermore congratulated the staff for their recent 'outstanding' achievement from Ofsted for their ongoing hard work, and JH responded by formally thanking the governors for their input into this process.

### 3. Items to be raised under AOB

Governors added the following agenda items to be covered later in the meeting:

- Waste and cleaning contracts (AA)
- Election timings (BC)
- Guideposts holiday club (RON)
- CRB checks (OCW)
- Pay policy (JH)
- Health & safety walkround (DG) – *to cover under item 7*
- Part 2 minute item (this will be discussed after the main meeting closes and will require non-staff governors to remain)

### 4. Declaration of interest on items pertaining to this agenda

No declarations were made.

### 5. Register of Business Interests / Code of conduct

VM asked governors to ensure that their declaration and business interest forms were reviewed and returned, signed and dated by the end of November. **ACTION: VM to follow up with governors who did not attend this meeting to ensure forms are checked, signed and then filed in the school office.**

### 6. Minutes of last meeting (17 June 2014) and matters arising

Minutes from the last meeting were discussed and governors agreed them. The following matters arising were then discussed:

#### *Governor vacancy*

Following the last meeting, the application from KW had been received and she had been invited to school and to this meeting. **ACTION: VM to follow up with KW after this meeting to establish if she would like to come on board. Update at the next meeting.**

#### *Deadlines for newsletter*

JH confirmed that deadlines for governor contributions to the school newsletter have been circulated.

#### *Dates for assessment review training*

Training suggested at the last meeting is to be arranged with SB and governors. All felt that the best time for this to take place would be Jan/Feb 2015. **ACTION: SB / OCW to arrange and communicate to governors.**

#### *School factsheet development*

JH noted that the school information sheet had been discussed at the last meeting as being a useful tool for governors to have in the event of an inspection, and felt governors had been very well informed on the recent visit. No further action needed.

#### *New parent coffee morning get togethers*

Staff confirmed that these took place and were very successful. Staff planned to hold further events at the start of terms where new pupils have joined the school.

#### *Central register*

BC confirmed that this has been updated and signed today.

#### *Policy updates*

VM confirmed that the policies ratified at the last meeting were now updated in the school files.

#### *Playground*

AA confirmed this has now been installed and staff confirmed it was being well used by class groups. JH noted that a further bid for £10k has been submitted to ST James Place and the school is awaiting feedback on this in due course. **ACTION: JH to update at the next meeting.**

#### *Complaint*

Following an issue raised at the last meeting, BC noted that the complaints panel met to review and discuss the complaint received. BC report that the panel was able to deal swiftly and efficiently with the issue and the matter is now resolved.

The minutes from 17 June 2014 were signed by BC.

### 7. Committee updates

- *Curriculum & Staffing*

GW noted that the committees had met in September and reviewed progress data. There were no other major issues to report.

- *Finance & Premises*

BC provided an update in the absence of WB. He noted that the committee had discussed election timings and how these are detailed in the terms of reference. BC noted that the West Berks Council data had been delayed in being available to school and so AA had been able to provide summary data for review. AA confirmed that full data was now available. BC noted that the committee had discussed and agreed to the purchase of a new minibus which was now being used in school. BC confirmed that the private fund was also discussed and noted that the school was making a number of savings on consumables across its provision. Finally BC updated governors that the school size has now increased from size 6 to size 7 and noted that the committee had discussed the implications of this with regard to staffing costs moving forwards.

In Premises, BC noted this was a short meeting and discussed the completion of new classrooms which are expected to be in use by January 2015.

At this point, BC asked DG for an update on Health & Safety matters following recent walkrounds completed on school sites. DG noted that things were generally in good order and much improved from previous years. DG noted that a short list of improvements had been made and were being worked on in the school. AA added that there had been a full review of risk assessments and emergency procedures which would be completed by the end of the year. AA also noted that the school was working on data for COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) to meet legal requirements. Governors discussed Health & Safety training that was coming up in January 2015, and suggested it would be useful for at least 2 governors to attend this. **ACTION: VM to confirm dates for governors wishing to attend.**

- *Pay Panel and pay policy*

Following the committee updates, BC invited GW to give an update from the pay panel who have met this term to discuss headteacher's performance management, set pay ranges and review the pay policy.

GW updated governors that the pay panel has met three times this term, consisting of UC, GW and BC. GW sought guidance from the Clerk as to the forming of this committee and VM provided a checklist for governors to review.

Governors were in agreement that they were able to give delegated powers to this panel with regard to pay issues for the schools and its staff. As such, all agreed that it was not appropriate for staff governors to attend. GW agreed that where meetings had taken place, the panel would feedback to full governors on a termly basis.

**ACTION: VM to collate minutes from panel to date, and ensure terms of reference are filed for this panel. All agreed annual review of these moving forwards and a separate agenda item for feedback at each full governors as and when required.**

JH asked governors to consider the updates made to the Pay Policy as recommended by the panel, and asked for ratification at this meeting. Governors noted that the rights respecting schools statement needed to be added, and the updated pay scales included, but otherwise happy and governors agreed with the version circulated subject to those changes being made.

**ACTION: VM to update RRS statement and ask for pay scales to include in policy. VM to arrange for BC to sign following the meeting.**

8. **Headteacher's Report including report on Ofsted inspection**

JH invited questions on his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He noted that the school now has 151 children on roll and governors discussed the impact of increasing numbers on the school roll. JH confirmed that he did not have concerns about the school numbers at this stage, but did note that there would be an inevitable pressure on resources as numbers increased.

JH reported that the school continues to monitor the Pupil Premium Grant and the way it benefits targeted pupils within the schools. JH noted that Ofsted had identified this as an area of best practise for the school and all agreed that the school was readily able to show impact of the PPG and future areas for development.

BC thanked JH for his report.

9. **Reconstitution of governing body**

BC introduced and asked OCW to introduce this item. OCW updated governors that all governing bodies are now legally required to reconstitute themselves by September 2015. This involves re-visiting the governing instrument, and deciding as a governing body whether there are any changes they wish to make in the way that they are run. OCW, BC and VM had met with Michelle Blain from WBC earlier today to discuss the implications of this, and suggest useful next steps. OCW has offered to lead a separate working party on this issue, with a view to reviewing current skills and roles within the governing body and suggesting a workable way forward. OCW reassured governors that this need not mean significant changes to the governing body, although it presented an opportunity to review its effectiveness and would work to have a proposal for discussion and agreement by spring 2015. OCW confirmed that the new constitution must include at least 1 staff governor, the Headteacher, 2 parent governors and a number of other 'co-opted governors' – who may be staff or other members of the community. **ACTION: OCW to send governors the skills audit matrix to complete, and work with governors and clerk to prepare a proposal for the March meeting.**

#### 10. **Progress and Achievement (SB)**

SB gave an overview of the progress and achievement summary paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting. All noted this was a most useful piece of work, which continued to show the impact of interventions and development work across all areas of the school.

JH endorsed that this was a whole school approach and staff were pleased with the huge achievements made to date in reading and other key areas. SB noted it was very positive to show that all 12 leavers progressed to further study or employment last year and shows how much progress can be made during their time at the school.

BC noted that Ofsted had noted good practice in this area and suggested development of more consistent approach to record keeping, which JH confirmed was already underway.

AA noted that there were some further resources needed to support this work, and BC asked AA to bring these requests to the finance committee for discussion. **ACTION: VM to add to finance committee agenda for term 3.**

*\*KD left meeting at this point.*

#### 11. **Policies**

##### **NEW – for discussion and agreement**

- *Supporting pupils with medical needs*

JH noted that this is a required policy which has been drafted for approval. Governors agreed this policy. **ACTION: VM to add RRS statement and arrange for signature and filing.**

##### **From committees – for ratification**

- Governor allowances
- Data protection
- Safeguarding
- Governor visits and guidance
- Equality information
- E Safety

BC asked governors if they had any questions or amends to policies from committees that have been passed to full governors for ratification. VM noted that RRS statements are now in place on all these policies. Governors agreed all policies. **ACTION: VM to arrange signature and file for these policies.**

#### 12. **Safeguarding report (Ro'N)**

BC noted he had met today with GW and RoN for a regular safeguarding update. RoN noted that a future focus will be to involve families more in these policies and a consultation exercise will take place at the next parents evening. RoN noted that otherwise school is meeting the requirements and governors are also well trained and developed in this area. RoN noted that domestic abuse training was taking place in the near future.

Governors had a discussion about CRB / DBS checks for governors. At present, governors are not required to have a DBS check, but it is seen as good practice and all agreed that the school is seen as an example of good practice in this area, and should continue with checks for all staff and governors. AA noted that there were two options with regard to carrying out checks, and governors agreed the £44 cost per check to ensure school has done as much as possible to ensure that it is meeting its obligations.

*\*SB left the meeting at this point.*

#### 13. **Governor visits and monitoring/evaluation**

OCW noted that governor visits to school sites continued on a regular basis and encouraged all those undertaking visits to complete an evaluation form. **ACTION: All governors to be sent an evaluation form to keep for when they visit site for return to OCW.**

#### 14. **Governor training and development**

OCW noted that E-Safety training is taking place in school on 19 January at 2.30pm for those who are able to attend. VM also noted that the new 'hot topics' list of courses run by West Berks Council had been circulated to the governors and they should review and register if any courses are relevant or of interest.

#### 15. **AOB**

##### *Governors strategy day 2015*

BC reminded governors that they needed to agree a date for their Strategy Day. This was agreed as Tuesday 24 March from 3-7pm. **ACTION: AA to book venue. JH to discuss further with OCW and BC and agree next steps.**

##### *Waste and cleaning contracts (AA)*

AA updated govs that these contracts, currently run through the local authority have come up for review. Governors agreed they are happy to stay within the contract for these services. Staff did note that if and when the catering contract comes up for review, they would like to consider other options and some of the provision does not meet the needs of pupils at the school (e.g. portion size too small for secondary children). **ACTION: AA to advise WBC of decision to stay within the contract.**

##### *Election timings (BC)*

BC noted that this had been raised at the committee meetings, where election timings did not match the terms of reference for those committees. **ACTION: VM to review and update TORs to include election timings that enable committees to elect their own chair at the first committee meeting of each academic year.**

##### *Guideposts (RON)*

RoN updated governors that she had met with Guideposts following some concerns over the safeguarding procedures for the organisation that had been raised on a national level. RoN noted that she had been reassured that any issues have been addressed and that the school is happy to continue using Guideposts as the provider for holiday clubs moving forwards.

##### *Ofsted celebrations*

AA asked if governors are happy to approve a small financial contribution from school to fund a celebration event for staff following the successful Ofsted inspection. Governors agreed this. **ACTION: AA to progress arrangements with JH.**

The main meeting ended at this point, and all staff governors and KW left to enable discussion of the final agenda item which is recorded under Part 2 minutes.