



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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MINUTES of a meeting of the Full Governing Board held on Thursday 17th June 2021, from 4.30pm, Virtual meeting

Present: Wendy Batchelor (Chair, LEA governor), Nicola Markham (co-opted governor), Helen Cabell (co-opted governor), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Luke Adams (parent governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher) and Jayne Tomlinson (clerk).

Apologies: Marie Verney (parent governor), Giles Francis (Vice Chair, co-opted governor), Charlie Kowalski (co-opted governor),

In attendance: Atul Attra (School Business Manager), Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher) Philip Jackson, Director Cloud 1 (Observer).

WB introduced Philip Jackson who was attending the meeting as an observer.

1. Apologies

Apologies received by MV,GF,CK.

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

- School Development Plan

3. Declaration of interest at this meeting

No declarations were made.

4. Minutes from the last meetings (29th April 2021) and matters arising

Governors agreed with the minutes from the last FGB meeting and they will be signed when it is possible for the chair to do so. The following matters arising were discussed.

- *DBS checks*

AA stated that he had started to carry out renewals as well as any new DBS checks for new staff since the last FGB meeting in April and 17/ 26 DBS checks were completed. WB asked how long it would take to finish the process and AA replied that he thought it would take the rest of the year to complete the process. He explained that the guidance from West Berkshire stated that DBS checks should be carried out every 3 years and that they are recorded on the single central register.

- *NM enquiry to the school nurse*

NM stated that she was waiting for the removal of the bubbles at the academic year end to speak to the school nurse however, the school is still not allowing visitors into the school so hopefully she will be able to meet with her in September. **ACTION: NM will meet with the school nurse In September, if it safe to do so.**

- *Governors with a particular interest in pupil assessment*

WB stated that she thought that all governors should be interested in pupil assessment and then going forward the governing board will look for a governor who has a particular interest.

JH stated that James Whybra and Will Harvey will put a training session together for the governors. **ACTION: James Wybra and Will Harvey to put a training session together for the governors on pupil assessment.**

- *Local IT companies*

WB confirmed that we had approached some local IT companies with the intention of finding a co-opted governor.

5. Committee reports

a. *Curriculum (WB)*

WB asked NM to update the governors with regard to Riding for the Disabled. NM stated that JH had asked the chairperson to write to him but the chair had recently resigned. NM had managed to secure funding from 2 different sources to cover the cost of riding lessons for a year for the children. NM also stated that the horses were able to take up to 70kg in weight which would allow older children to participate. JH stated that he planned to make this activity happen again. Policies were reviewed and put forward for ratification and a safeguarding update had been given by CW. A lot of the topics covered at the curriculum meeting were discussed at the recent strategy session.

b. *Staffing (WB)*

WB stated that Shannon Booth had now left the school and the policies were reviewed and put forward for ratification. JH had given an update on Castle Theale..

c. *Finance (HC)*

HC congratulated AA on the completion of the catering contract which starts on 24th July and is for 3 years with Dolce. SFVS had been submitted and no feedback was expected. Fundraising is still challenging however AA informed the governors that a grant application for just under 7k had been submitted to Get Berkshire Active which had been successful which will be used to purchase ground maintenance equipment. AA explained that 2 football clubs currently used the football pitch but that the school had been approached by an athletics club to use the track but a changing room facility is needed before it can be opened to the community. AA also informed the governors that the school had been approached by Berkshire West as they are closing the hydrotherapy pool at the hospital and they are putting a proposal to the school. JH wanted to reassure governors that if the hydrotherapy pool is rented out the pupils will always get priority. PJ asked if the pool would be opened up to other healthcare professionals. AA answered that with budgets getting tighter it could be a option.

d. *Premises (HC)*

HC explained that quite a few projects were ongoing. HC and CK had not managed to do the health and safety walks. WB asked if they would do the main site and Post 16. JH explained that normally each site is assessed alternate years but that it may be worth doing both at the same time this year. **ACTION: HC and CK to organise health and safety walks around both sites.**

e. *Pay Panel (HC)*

HC and WB met with JH to see if he had met his objectives. Most of these objectives were covered in the strategy day and they had looked at evidence and how they capture success.

6. Headteacher's report

JH had circulated an updated report in advance of the meeting. JH asked for any questions the governors had in regards to his report.

NM asked about the breakdown of staff and the 4 staff who were working at the WOW (World of Work) at Post 16. JH explained that Louisa McClure manages the WOW programme, Nicola Hall is involved in finding the placements and Lisa Dobson also helps with this. There are just 3 of them and not now 4 as the funding could not be justified. WB asked that with regard to staff appraisal would it now reflect the new curriculum, JH stated that all staff have an appraisal and that the appraisal criteria will change every year, a software system called Blue Sky is used and the school is trying to focus on things that will really help and that will be reported back to the governors in the Autumn. WB asked about the reading strategy. JH stated that Emily Craggs who was the English Lead before going on maternity leave, had done a tremendous job and now Terri Madle had taken over that position. JH stated that the school wanted the skills to be embedded in the classrooms. CW added that the school had purchased, using COVID catch up money, a new reading programme called Rapid Reading, which can be accessed online. The school is currently assessing those pupils who are non-verbal to assess their reading age. Earwig will be used for tracking and making any necessary adjustments.

7. Policies for ratification

The following policies have been discussed by committees and come to this meeting for discussion and ratification. WB asked if there were any additional comments to be made regarding the policies.

Fair Assessment
Internal Moderation
Sex & relationship education
Malpractice
Engaging Volunteers in School (West Berkshire Policy)
Governor Expenses

ACTION: Governors noted these had all been reviewed by committees this term and ratified them. WB will sign a copy of all the policies when she is next in school. JT to update the school files and to place them on the intranet. JH asked JT to clarify the procedure for the approval of policies and minutes at the FGB.

8. Safeguarding update and signing of central register (CW / WB)

CW stated that she and WB had met up for a review and that WB had checked the figures for statutory training and 4 members of new staff had been identified as requiring the safeguarding training. Even though the Universal Safeguarding training sessions were continuing virtually, people were still engaging with it well. Staff are required to do a Universal Safeguarding training every three years but the school tends to ensure that it is every 2 years. CW stated that safeguarding concerns are still being logged but none had reached section 47. Looking at trends in the data the school could see that year on year there were more concerns coming from staff regarding mental health and well-being. The Keeping Children Safe policy will be updated to roll out to staff in September and will include sexual harassment from peers information. There are 3 LAC (Looked After Children) who are supported incredibly well and a new pupil who is a LAC will join in September. WB asked if the PREVENT training had been updated. CW explained that it had not been updated and it was only necessary to do that training when first starting at the school. CW

stated that the system was working very well and they recently contacted the authority regarding a pupil who they had concerns about and all the necessary steps were taken quickly. PJ asked if the school had heard of a company called Safety Net. JH replied that he had and the school used it as a useful resource. PJ added that there was another charity called TheCyberhelpline which is has a web site to help the end user to get online help. PJ to send the details for this charity to JH.

9. AOB items.

- *School Development Plan (SDP)*

JH and the SLT have developed the SDP which was circulated to the governors before the meeting. JH asked for approval from the governors to go forward with the SDP. He stated that there are 4 main objectives 1) Therapeutic Thinking, 2) Pupil Progress, 3) Curriculum Development 4) SEMH/ASC Provision. The governors approved the SDP.

- *Online Governor Training*

JT encouraged all governors to access the National Governance Association Learning for governors. It has several modules which include structure, roles and responsibilities, good governance, strategy, pupil success and well-being, executive leaders, the best use of resources and compliance. The modules are all given a time element so that the governors know how long it will take to complete the module. **ACTION: Governors to feedback to JT about the online training provided by the National Governance Association.**

- *Castle Theale*

JH and CW recently attended a Parish Council meeting regarding the redevelopment of Theale Primary School which went well. The next stage of the process is for the Executive to be involved and then the Diocese need to sign the buildings over. A project manager, an architect, and a surveyor are now involved and a team meeting is planned for 1st July at 9.30am. The building work will commence in the summer holidays which will involve landscaping and refurbishment and then in the Autumn, staff recruitment will take place. The school will work with West Berkshire LA to decide the entry and exit criteria for places. The school will open in September 2022 and there will be 6 pupils in each class (years 7&8) and more pupils will be added in future years. CW had made a shopping list and AA was helping to translate that into a budget. JH stated that at some point a governor will be needed to oversee this provision to feedback to the governing board. CW added that West Berkshire LA had already agreed the staffing structure and were very supportive.

Co-opted Governor

WB thanked Phil Jackson for attending the meeting and stated that she would catch up with him after the meeting to discuss the co-opted governor vacancy position. **ACTION: WB to liaise with PJ about the co-opted governor vacancy position.**

- 10. Date of next meeting.** JH and WB will liaise on how they would like governor meetings to operate from next year but suggested that sub-committee meetings might be face to face meetings and then FGB meetings might be virtual. **ACTION: JH asked JT to confirm the dates of the governor meetings next year.**