



# The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

Love Lane, Newbury, RG14 2JG

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## Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Body, held on Thursday 8 March 2018, at Post 16 Centre, Newbury College

- Present:** Wendy Batchelor (co-opted governor), David Greenway (parent governor), Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Averill Hewitt (co-opted governor), Carol Turner (co-opted governor), Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor) Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher) and Vicki Murphy (Clerk to Governors)
- In attendance:** Atul Attra (School Business Manager) and Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher)
- Apologies:** Joan Sargent (parent governor)

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from JS.

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

- SFVS (AA)
- New governor update (WB)
- Build update (JH)
- Summer fair (CW)
- Victoria Park Nursery School (JH)

### 3. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

### 4. Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising (WB)

- *Update to election of chair & vice chair*  
VM confirmed that this took place at the last meeting and files were now updated to reflect Chair and Vice Chair roles. WB continues as Chair, supported by UC as Vice Chair.
- *Parental trial of Evisense*  
Parent governors reported that this had not yet been successfully rolled out. AE reported that the school had communicated this to the provider to enable usage but there will still access issues. **ACTION: JH to follow up and report back to governors at the next FGB.**
- *Training session for pupil progress*  
Shannon Booth ran a training session for governors on 22 Feb and five governors had taken part. Attendees agreed it has been most useful.
- *Promotion of governor recruitment*  
This will be covered under item 10 – AOB.
- *Minibus training programme*  
JH and AA confirmed that this was now underway and training would start being rolled out to staff next week.
- *Policy review process*

VM confirmed that the policies from the last FGB had been updated and school files were up to date.

- *Social event for governors*  
Governors had attended a Post 16 quiz before Christmas and reported an enjoyable evening. The strategy day will be held on 20 March at main site, and JH will send an agenda for this shortly.
- *Governor safeguarding training*  
VM noted that governors are now up to date with main safeguarding training, and record of attendance is being held by Di in the admin team. **ACTION: CT to forward training certificate to VM for record following recent online training.**
- *Governor skills audit*  
WB noted that she would plan to progress this activity later in the year with governors. **ACTION: Update at the next FGB.**
- *Charanga music programme*  
AA reported that this funding request had not progressed since the last meeting, and the staff member who is leading the project has been off school due to ongoing illness. Staff reported that this item is on hold for the time being and an update would be given in due course.
- *Declaration forms*  
VM reported that governor declaration forms had been completed at the last meeting and were now updated in school files. This exercise will be repeated in Autumn term.
- *Traffic awareness at Love Lane*  
JH noted that letters had not yet been sent to parents, but there have been various other communications to promote road safety. E.g. via PSHE curriculum and through addressing risk factors for vulnerable children (taxi transport considered). Parent governors reported that they will be aware of children who need support in crossing the road on the school run. JH noted that school is trying to balance the need for developing independence in pupils, while raising awareness of risks and promoting how to stay safe. Staff noted that the building works at main site were not affecting road safety, as site workers were managing movement on site in a safe way and accepting deliveries at appropriate times only.
- *Pay policy 2017*  
This policy had been reviewed at the last meeting and was now updated

## 5. Committee reports

### a. Curriculum (UC)

UC noted she had now taken over from GW, with TW as Vice Chair.

Committee had discussed various developments and initiatives including update on progress and facilities that will support the curriculum e.g. new buildings. UC also updated on policies that were reviewed and have been brought forward to this meeting for ratification. Governors discussed the query that had been put forward with regard to the behaviour policy, but noted that the policy reflected the general view – with staff noting that it gave a structure within which to operate but allowed for some personalisation of approach depending on needs of each child. AE noted that 'doodle maths' has been introduced and is working well with positive results. Governors agreed to thank Meaghan for her work on this. **ACTION: JH to feedback to maths team with thanks for work on this project.**

### b. Staffing (UC)

UC noted that election held and she is now Chair supported by TW as Vice Chair. UC noted that the staff survey had presented insightful results. CW noted that this was being used to inform developments, training approaches for various staff groups and would be repeated on an annual basis. The committee had recommended the removal of two policies as they were superfluous and information contained within other policies. AH noted that she had looked into Equality role for

governors – but that not much specific information available. Updates on recruitment for posts in school were also discussed as part of the headteacher's report.

c. *Pay panel (UC)*

WB noted that at the last meeting the increase for staff pay was approved. UC also noted that PP had met earlier today to review objectives and progress against these.

d. *Premises (KW)*

KW noted that site walks had taken place at main site, much improved and very few items for minor repair. KW also noted that a walk had taken place at Post 16 – and a longer list of repair items had been made – reflecting the age of the building and focus will now be on getting these done via the site maintenance team. KW also noted the committee had discussed the impact of the GDPR and the project for building new classrooms at main site, which was now underway.

e. *Finance (KW)*

KW noted that correction to be made to report by Mr Christmas – as not audited but independently examined accounts.

KW noted that governors had received an update on school budgets – and private fund. Governors also received an overview of upcoming budget, KW noting the forecast for subsequent years reports a less secure financial position as impact of reduced funding and other pressures starts to be realised.

KW noted that AE will complete the next reconciliation exercise, and this can be done remotely by governors – with reference to the 'how to' guide.

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

WB invited governors to ask if they are happy with report in new format. JH suggested doing a 'survey monkey' towards end of year to gauge feedback on views. DG noted that there is a lot of mandatory information now to be included in the report, but noted this matches with more responsibility for the role of the governing board.

WB asked about polytunnels and enterprise project. RP reported that most of classes have now started growing and planting seeds, and soil improver has been added. Sprinklers have been repaired and are now working well. RP hopes the polytunnels can be viewed as part of the summer fair in June.

Governors noted the success of the catering project at Post 16, and noted that the team will be providing catering for the governors' strategy day later this month.

DG asked about accident reporting, and asked if any cause for concern. JH noted that no specific concern as reports are all explained in the details of each incident. JH noted that any pupils with numerous accidents are reviewed and appropriate changes made to their behaviour plans as required. JH noted that if this indicates a general concern e.g. around slipping – then will investigate if any action can be taken to limit. JH pointed governors to the research undertaken by Shannon Booth in this report.

Governors also discussed exclusions – and JH noted that 2 exclusions had taken place. One pupil has returned and behaviour has improved dramatically. The school is consulting with the local authority as to the future plans for the other young person and other placement options that may be considered that may support their needs and behaviours.

Governors noted that a huge amount of training has taken place for staff in the last term. JH also mentioned QCF framework, which offers differing levels of qualification for support assistants – up to level 3. This increases opportunities for internal promotion – as reduces need to recruit for teaching assistants when posts become available. JH noted that the system is highly valued and equips staff well for their roles. AA noted that the school is meeting with West Berkshire Council shortly to discuss the apprenticeship levy and whether funding is available for this programme.

JH noted that it is still difficult to recruit lunchtime controllers as it is a role with limited hours and relatively low pay. AE asked who would cover this role if not enough in post. JH and CW noted that this would be filled with other staff covering, but preferable to have specific staff for this role.

Governors thanked JH for his report.

## 7. Policies for ratification

The following policies have been discussed by committees this term and are brought for ratification:

- SEND
- Admissions
- Provider Access
- Creative Arts
- Administration of Medicine
- Behaviour
- Capability
- Minibus
- Manual Handling
- Severe Weather

JH discussed the minibus policy, which is a new addition this term, with governors noting that it will allow drivers aged 21 years and over (once trained), to drive any school vehicle. JH notes that this has been researched thoroughly and will be moving forward with staff to complete the MIDAS training in due course. AA noted that the school will lose access to a shared vehicle at the end of March as it has been shared with another provider who is also stopping using it, and there are no plans at present for replacement. AA noted that there are related costs to this vehicle including maintenance and insurance. JH noted that this still leaves 5 vehicles for the schools use. Discussions around other vehicles that could be driven by staff members e.g. MPV / 7 seaters. Governors discussed whether this could be considered as an option for Post 16. AA noted that fundraising for this project might be explored by the new Fundraiser post that will be recruited for shortly.

DG noted one amend to Administration of Medicine. VM to make change. Governors asked about how medical needs of new pupils are administered. JH noted this involves working with school nurse, Leanne to review medication and build into care plans.

Subject to the above change, governors agreed all policies and these will be signed and filed. **ACTION: VM to update and arrange signature.**

WB asked if Severe Weather policy stood up during recent bad weather. JH noted that school closed for 2 days last week due to heavy snow. Decisions made based on forecast – but agreed it was the right decision and parents informed in good time. Governors asked if school updates own website due to closure, and JH confirmed he updates. Governors asked how parents are informed, with JH noting that he texts parents, then informs local authority and radio – who provide updates on school closures online and via media channels.

Governors also discussed the model Data Protection policy that was issued from West Berkshire Council. Governors agreed to adopt this and build into the regular cycle of review. **ACTION: VM to add to policy library and arrange format / signature for this policy.**

AA also updated that the school will buy into the local authority service to support IT reviews for compliance with GDPR. WB asked about privacy notice, and AA updated that this was not yet drafted but would be worked on shortly. AA confirmed he is confident that the school will meet required deadline for compliance. **ACTION: Update on progress and outcomes at the next FGB.**

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

CW noted that WB and UC met with her earlier today for a full safeguarding update. CW noted that safeguarding continues to be a priority for all across the school sites. CW noted new training in elements of safeguarding (Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation) is now completed by all support assistants, in addition to other staff – and governors are also able to complete these modules. CW noted that My Concern is still being well used to report concerns across the school, and 128 reports were made since the last FGB meeting. CW noted that this shows that staff are confident in using and although most concerns relate to welfare and wellbeing, more serious concerns are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

CW reported that the PSHE curriculum is receiving a review and Jo Davis is helping to coordinate this. This will include internet safety and sex & relationships education – which will be statutory from September. CW also noted that links with West Berkshire Council are good, the school has a link social worker who meets with her at least 6 times per year to discuss concerns, signposting and discussion of other queries.

DG asked about links for families with children who are moving from care of Children's Services and into Adult Social Care. CW noted that links are in place for transition e.g. looked after children, move to leaving care team, child protection cases, move to vulnerable adults. JH added that the school provides some support with this process, as Post 16 centre pupils are aged up to 19 – and any issues with the transition of their services from Children to Adults may be addressed in advance of their graduation from the Castle School.

CW reported that a Safeguarding Audit will be carried out in school on Monday 12 March. **ACTION: CW to update governors on outcomes at the next FGB.**

WB signed a copy of the single central register at the meeting and passed to AA.

#### 9. Governor visits, training and development (JS/VM)

CW noted a Level 1 safeguarding training will take place at main site on 26 April from 1-3pm. Governors are welcome to attend, please let Di Ellard in the admin team know if you wish to attend. A list of governor services training via West Berkshire council was also circulated for information. **ACTION: Governors to advise VM if they wish to attend any training so register can be updated.**

WB asked about governor visit forms – and reminded governors these can be completed for any visit to school e.g. to observe, attend training, meet with staff or attend an event. Governors do not need to complete these forms for any governor meetings. Governors discuss use of paper and online forms, and agreed one system would be better. **ACTION: VM to send link to visit form to governors. JH to provide access details to VM for monitoring of these forms, and VM to update each FGB on forms received. Update at the next FGB.**

WB asked CT about induction training at West Berks – CT reported attended training and found very useful. Online training also been completed. Governors also noted that The Key continued to be a useful resource. WB asked governors if they felt any specific training would be beneficial and to send updates to her on any topics that might be relevant and useful.

#### 10. AOB items

##### *SFVS*

AA noted that Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS) exercise has been completed, WB and KW to sign. AE has already reviewed. WB signed at the meeting. **ACTION: This will now be returned to WBC.**

##### *New governor update*

WB updated governors that response to recent recruitment drive from a grandfather of child who is at the school. MB had made approach to WB and a meeting has since taken place WB reported MB has a relevant skill set and will be an asset to governors. MB to attend FGB in June, and would like to attend induction training ahead of this. **ACTION: VM to provide details to MB of governor training and meeting information.**

##### *Build update*

AA updated that the building project for new classrooms is underway and this is going well so far. JH reported that site staff are working well and project is being well managed. **ACTION: Update at the next FGB.**

##### *Summer fete*

CW reminded governors that the school's summer fair will take place on 9 June from 1-3pm. CW invited governors to offer any support, before or during the event, or help with providing contacts for raffle prizes, or contacts for a 'celebrity' to officially open the event.

##### *Victoria Park Nursery School*

JH updated governors that there were no children from Castle School using the allocated space at Victoria Park this year, as all foundation children are accommodated at main site **ACTION: JH to update governors in due course on use of VPN facility.**

Finally JH updated governors that the Post 16 centre will be hosting a World of Work event tomorrow and hosting local employers. JH noted that the incoming principal of Newbury College will also be attending and will be a useful link between access to education provision at the college for the pupils at Post 16.

**Date of the next meeting**

The governors' strategy day is being held on 20 March.

Meetings for the rest of the school year are as follows (all at main site):

19 April – Finance & Premises Committee from 4.30pm

26 April – FGB meeting from 4.30pm (short meeting to sign off budget only)

10 May – Curriculum & Staffing Committee from 4.30pm

9 June – School summer fair 1-3pm

21 June – FGB meeting from 5pm

These minutes to be agreed by FGB on 21 June 2018