



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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MINUTES of a meeting of the Full Governing Board (FGB) to be held on Thursday 21 June 2018, from 5pm in the Jane Evans room, main site.

Present: Wendy Batchelor (LA governor), David Greenway (parent governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Urusla Codrington (co-opted governor), Marcos Butterwick (co-opted governor) and Vicki Murphy (clerk to the governors)

In attendance: Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher)

Apologies: Tracy Warwick (parent governor), Carol Turner (co-opted governor), Joan Sargent (parent governor), Averill Hewitt (co-opted governor) and Atul Attra (School Business Manager)

***The planned site walk ahead of the start of today's meeting was postponed until autumn term at which point governors will be able to view the new classrooms.**

WB led introductions to the new co-opted governor, MB, and welcomed him to the Board.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from CT, AH, TW, JS and AA.

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

- QCF centre (JH)

3. Declarations of interest (WB)

None raised.

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

FGB - 26 April 2018

- *Budget meeting and submission to West Berkshire Council (WBC)*
Governors noted that AA had submitted the agreed budget to WBC on time.
- *Private fund request for Youlbury trip and Activity Weeks*
It was noted that this had been approved and progressed to enable these activities to take place.
- *Start of term arrangements*
The agreed change of start date for autumn term had been agreed by governors and JH had communicated this to parents using the usual channels.

- *Music Scholarship project*
JH updated governors that the project was underway, with governors CT and TW represented on the panel. Staff member Ali is back from sickness and will lead the process. The panel will also be joined by Mark from Berkshire Maestros – with JH noting that four scholarships will be available. The panel is hearing applications on Monday 25 June.
ACTION: Governors to receive an update on the project by the end of term.
- *Transport issues*
Further to the discussion at the last meeting, identifying changes to minibus / taxi transport arrangements, WB noted that she had written to WBC on behalf of governors, but had not yet received a response. **ACTION: Update at the next meeting as to current situation and any response received.**

FGB - 8 March 2018

- *Parental trial of Evisense*
JH noted that the trial was still underway but not all parents and carers had been able to access the system. **ACTION: This is still 'work in progress' and update next term as to whether this is ongoing.**
- *Safeguarding training*
CW shared that the recent safeguarding audit by WBC had highlighted good practice in the school and there were no resulting actions to follow up. Governors thanked CW and staff for their vigilance and ongoing prioritisation of this issue.
- *Skills Audit*
WB noted a number of replies were received, but still responses outstanding. **ACTION: This item to roll onto next agenda, noting that when responses received from all a full audit can be made to identify skill gaps and areas to consider when recruiting new governors.**
- *GDPR update*
JH confirmed that the school's GDPR compliance had been led successfully and was being managed on an ongoing basis by AA. All staff agreed that this had been a useful exercise and identified areas to improve practice.
- *Governor visit forms*
VM noted 4 visit forms received this term. WB reminded governors to try and complete these for each visit to each site (for non-meeting purpose e.g. observation / class visit / informal meeting or taking part in event). **ACTION: VM to send copy form with minutes so all trustees have a copy.**
- *Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS) return*
KW noted that this process had been completed by AA earlier in the term.
- *New governor update*
WB confirmed that Marcos Butterwick was joining the board at a co-opted governor and would sit on Finance & Premises committee. This still leaves a co-opted and parent vacancy, which will continue to be advertised in the coming term, and into the start of next year.
- *Victoria Park usage*
JH confirmed that there will be no pupils at Victoria Park from September – and noted that there would be a one-year hiatus of use – noting that this will be reviewed again in the new

year and governors updated accordingly at FGB. **ACTION: VM to add to spring agenda for FGB update.**

5. Committee reports

a. Curriculum

UC gave a short update on the term's meeting. UC noted that governors had received updates on training and pupil progress – and noted clear use of the FRIAR system for accident reporting. It was noted that WBC may be changed this reporting system but governors will be updated in due course if that changes.

It was identified that a training session on post P levels and non-core skills progression measurement may be useful, and this can be explored next term.

It was noted that the link governor list still awaited an update. **ACTION: VM to send current list to JH for review and update.**

CW had shared that new statutory guidance on Sex & Relationships education will come into force from 2019, and the school policy will be reviewed accordingly. CW also noted that E Safety – which is evolving to Digital Safety, will come back to governors next term for ongoing review.

Concerns over changes to school transport by WBC had been shared and followed up by the Chair of Governors.

UC finally noted that governors had enjoyed reading about proposed themes for the coming year and felt this would lead to much exciting work for the staff and pupils.

b. Staffing

UC reported that recruitment had taken place for 2 new teachers and these roles have been filled.

It was also noted that there had been a discussion around Investors in People (IIP) status and the agreement was not to continue with payment for this accreditation.

UC also noted that governors had been given access to secure email to meet with compliance for GDPR and governor communications were all being made this way now. Governors noted that it would be useful to know if they could access system via a secure app. **ACTION: JH to explore options for this with AA.**

c. Pay panel

UC reported that the pay panel met today to review Head's objectives and learned about moderation work being carried out with the Berkshire Alliance of Special Schools (BASS). UC confirmed that the Head continued to make good progress in meeting the identified objectives.

d. Premises

KW updated that governors were encouraged to complete visit forms following each visit to a school site (for non-meeting purpose).

KW also updated governors that she had met with AA to carry out a review of progress being made against GDPR compliance and had confidence that AA was managing this well, and had achieved most of the requirements (and others being worked towards).

KW noted that budget pressures meant the list of active projects continued to get shorter – but good progress was being made on the new build classrooms, which were due to be handed over on 9 August.

All agreed that the project had been well managed and site staff had been respectful and mindful of the school environment. **ACTION: AA/CW to pass thanks for contractor for this compliance.**

It was noted that the first round of interviews for site staff had not been successful, but a further round of advertising and recruitment would be held shortly.

e) *Finance*

KW noted that the terms of reference for this group had been updated. KW also noted that the group was still awaiting the update from the independent examiner. KW noted it had been agreed that she would write to Ian Pearson (WBC) to raise budget concerns on behalf of governors.

KW noted that AA had updated that the school wished to recruit a fundraiser – and this was still being explored. KW noted that policies had been discussed and agreed, along with the process for agreeing school trips where a shortfall has been identified. KW noted that the finance officer has carried out this term's reconciliation with AE and all working well.

6. Headteacher's report

JH had circulated his report in advance of the meeting and invited questions.

KW asked for a definition of NEET – noted as not in education, employment or training. Governors had a short discussion around some of the follow on provisions – and how specialist colleges offer a more specific provision around access to certain careers e.g. hospitality. JH noted he had recently met with the new principal at Newbury College and hopes this relationship can evolve to further support the transition of students from Castle Post 16.

Governors noted that the planned numbers from September will be 173 – noting how this has increased steadily over the past six years (130 in 2012).

Governors asked for a definition of PECS – RP noted this is the Picture Exchange Communication System – a communication system for those who are non-verbal to aid and encourage communication.

AE asked if classes for 2018-19 had been confirmed yet, JH noting that confirmation would be sent to parents in due course.

WB asked about moderation for early years from WBC, with JH noting that this is ongoing – involving team members from school as part of the strategy board.

MB noted that as a grandparent at the school, he had found the Tapestry app useful – and noted could this model be used for secure access to email. **ACTION: MB to follow up with AA.**

WB noted that the staff report in this update were particularly insightful and a useful addition. WB also asked about restorative practice sessions, with CW noting that training for staff was being held to further this project. WB thanked JH for his full report.

Values and vision statement

JH had circulated a draft 'values & vision' statement as part of his report which comprised of feedback taken on the governors' strategy day in March. Governors had a full discussion around the content of this and noted they were in agreement with this version. **ACTION: JH to roll out agreed statement as part of the new term INSET activities, cascading to staff and stakeholders.**

7. Progress & achievement update (JH)

The latest update on progress was included in the circulated Headteacher's report. No questions were taken on this item.

8. Policies for ratification

WB introduced the following policies for review, which have been reviewed by committees this term

- Health & safety
- Governor expenses
- Fair assessment
- Internal moderation
- Sex & relationships education
- E Safety (AKA Digital Safety)
- Malpractice
- Staff Absence

Governors agreed to all the circulated policies – with the exception of Health & Safety (which needs to be clarified with AA). Any further changes to this policy will be ratified via secure governor email. **ACTION: VM to arrange filing of all policies and follow up on Health & Safety policy with AA next week.**

The following model policy was also brought for consideration to FGB as it had not been to committee this term.

- Redundancy

JH noted that this is not a statutory policy, but it would be appropriate to have this in place due to review of the QCF centre, and impact on staff. Governors agreed to adopt the circulated version. **ACTION: VM to add to policy file and review calendar.**

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

CW noted that she has met with WB and UC today to review safeguarding and Looked After Children (LAC). All agreed that systems were in order and working well. CW noted that My Concern continues to be used for reporting welfare and safeguarding concerns. CW noted that WBC will issue a review of safeguarding policy (expected July) which will come to governors meetings next term. **ACTION: The single central register was not available for signature today, due to absence of AA, but WB will be contacted w/c 25 June to arrange to sign.**

10. Governor visits, training and development (ALL)

MB noted that he had completed his induction training at WBC and found this useful. MB noted he has also been given access to Governor Hub and is starting to explore. Other courses attended this term include complaints training and Health & Safety. **ACTION: VM noted that as soon as new dates issues by WBC training she would circulate these to governors.**

11. Meeting dates for 2018-19

The draft dates circulated for meeting dates were agreed. **ACTION: VM to circulate agreed dates with minutes and publicise in school.**

12. AOB items

QCF Centre

JH noted that the school is looking at cost effectiveness of this centre and considering future plans. JH noted that the current centre costs £26500 per year to run, and enables the site to provide level 2 & 3 training for teaching assistant staff who wish to upskill. The school wholly supports the continuation of training of staff to this level, but have identified that this training could be provided free of charge by accessing the apprenticeship levy – with delivery of the programme through West Berkshire Training Consortium.

The proposal being consider is that current learners will finish their programmes by December 2018 in situ, and a new programme (delivered by WBTC) will start from September. JH assured governors that the learning follows the same programme and learners achieve the same qualification at the end, and this will continue to be delivered on site.

After discussion, governors agreed to the consultation exercise taking place on this proposal, and impact on those staff members affected. **ACTION: Full update from JH via staffing committee in autumn.**

Appointment of Co-opted Governor

WB noted that MB was now formally appointed as a co-opted governor to the Board. WB proposed this, seconded by UC, and agreed by all those other governors present. **ACTION: VM to confirm update to Governor Services and ensure MB has access to all governor systems, including secure email.**

Outgoing Parent Governor

WB made special thanks to David Greenway, who is stepping down from the Board at this meeting, after being a governor for over 10 years. All agreed he had made a huge contribution as a governor and sincere thanks were given for all his efforts. Governors presented a card and small gift to DG as a token of appreciation.

Date of the next meeting

This is the last board meeting of the academic year, and committees will start in October 2018. **ACTION: VM to send papers in due course following the summer break.**