

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
8th March 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
4.15pm for 4.30pm start**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Lydia Bower, Lara Coleman, Jane Dickson (Chair), Alison Frost, Les Gunbie, Vanessa Hickey, Matt Hillier, Reg Hook, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Jenny Poore, Bronagh Shevlin, Haydn Stride, Derek Swindells
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Richard Baker, Andrea Cumming

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome. The reappointment of Alison Frost as a Co-opted Governor and Lydia Bower as a new Co-opted Governor were confirmed.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Rosie Reekie was absent from the meeting.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest Millie McDevitt declared that she was a parent of a child in the year 6 cohort coming to the school in September and had been contacted by some parents involved in the “Misplaced 62” campaign. Whilst this was not a specific agenda item an update had been planned in item 2 below.</p>	
2	<p>Chair’s Update The Chair updated Governors on activities and priorities arising since the previous meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business Manager was away from the school on extended absence due to health reasons. The Headteacher, Co-Chairs and Vice Chair were in close contact over financial matters. The Headteacher had also been in communication with the Local Authority so that any financial matters were also copied to the Headteacher School were covering his duties by sharing out amongst the team and with ongoing support from the business group of governors the school was meeting its statutory duties regards financial management. A card and best wishes from the Governing Body has been sent to the Business Manager. Governors also discussed general wellbeing and stress levels of staff (although this was not a major contributing factor in the case of the Business Manager) and this was covered in more detail in 7a. • Headteacher performance review completed for spring term, good progress being made towards objectives. • The council’s Children and Young People’s Committee were meeting at the same time as governors to consider representations from families whose child had not been allocated a school in their catchment area. The school had received correspondence directly on the matter. A meeting was scheduled with the Headteacher, Co-chairs and Local Authority representatives to discuss admissions, both in the short and longer term, the following day. Governors discussed capacity in school, maintaining the quality of teaching and learning and opportunities for students as well as the health and safety implications of taking on more students. It was noted that ultimately, it was a decision for Brighton and Hove City Council. 	

3	<p>Last Meetings Dated 18th January and 1st February</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved ten pages of minutes from the meeting held on 18th January and three pages from the meeting held on 1st February.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing and behaviour link governor - Haydn Stride and Lara Coleman agreed to take on the role. • Careers link governor - Derek Swindells and Dick Knight agreed to take on the role. • Governors were advised that the SFVS return had been adjusted with a minor amendment and resubmitted since the last meeting. • There was a question about ongoing delivery of RS, philosophy and ethics curriculum. Governors were advised that RS/ethics was a subject for all students and that sociology and psychology classes had grown significantly over the past few years. Curriculum was picked up further under item 5b below. 	
4	<p>Headteacher Update</p> <p>The Headteacher provided a verbal update to Governors covering the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of the year groups welcomed back earlier in the day with the remaining year groups learning remotely. Each day another year group would return until Friday when all would be in school. • Some staff still working from home due to shielding , delivering lessons from home. Others isolating because of a positive lateral flow test or because of being in close contact with someone positively tested. Around eight teachers not in school. • Lateral flow testing being done in a hub with new flooring , different bays and a newly paved covered area at the back. The whole track and trace system at school was very effective. Staff had been undertaking testing since January so were confident with process. A few families had not given permission for testing. 280 tests completed earlier in the day (one positive). • Some parents did not agree with the face covering requirement during the whole school day and had communicated with the school on the matter. Responses had been sent and where appropriate exemptions given, identified by a wristband. It was hoped the Government would review this at Easter, as per their road-map. • Unions consulted about the changes introduced to safeguard everyone. Much of the plan was as it was before Christmas. Risk assessments had been completed and communicated to staff so that they were aware of the protocols. These had also been shared with the health and safety link governor. • The bus company had put on an additional bus to school until easter break. • Student queries received over assessments; in response a year 11 bulletin was sent explaining the process that the school was working on to support students with their end of year assessments. There would not be full examinations in the hall, assessments would take place in classrooms and last about 45 minutes. The procedure would be robust standing up to exam board moderation and for appeals process. • The school had 330 students allocated on offer day with seven withdrawals since to take up independent school places. A further two students had been placed with the school bringing numbers up to 325. This was below the PAN with the expectation that additional students would be allocated through the reallocation pool to bring numbers up to 330. • The school had been approached about taking on extra students but was over net capacity. It was a struggle on most days to manage 1690 students especially under covid situation. The current space, capacity of teaching staff and amenities (toilets) was insufficient to accommodate any more than 330 intake in September. Maintaining the quality of teaching and learning, student progress and opportunities and safety of the school community were priorities. • On the whole everyone seemed pleased to be back in school with face to face lessons. Teams learning had been very successful since January with increased confidence in its use. The good learning from the process would be carried forward, such as virtual parents meetings. Having staff in school during lock down was effective in supporting all student learning and each other. 	

	<p><u>Questions and comments from Governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much catching up would the average students need to do to get to an expected position for the time of year? • Had the school explored using temporary toilet facilities? • Was the viewpoint on taking extra student numbers the same as the other schools in the city? What case could the school put forward to strengthen its position? • If teachers do wear masks when delivering lessons how would staff continue to meet the additional needs of some students? • How was the school was supporting children with special educational needs (SEN) with returning? • Balance of heating the school whilst keeping ventilation difficult, would mask wearing enable the school to be heated more effectively? • The children and young persons skills committee was being recorded and there would be a web link. The council’s viewpoint on admissions had been made clear at the start of that meeting. A link would be circulated so Governors could watch it. <p><u>Responses to governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost learning was not being used as a phrase within the school as learning had continued throughout lockdowns. There were some students that would not have engaged with online learning. Where children had missed out it related to creative subjects such as in drama where they would have normally seen two performances visits by the same time of year. The return school focus would be on socialising back into class with catch up funding used for small group interventions. There were some students that may have worked harder than at school and will have built up independence and resilience from working at home. Summer schools with more creative and sporting activities was being considered. • The Local Authority had been asked to install a toilet block in the nexus area to ease capacity. It was a toilet block originally so plumbing should be there. • The Local Authority was clear that the school was over capacity but had no influence over the independent appeals process. They would normally support the school’s viewpoint. From previous years’ appeals there was a paper outlining the impact on curriculum timetabling and other students’ outcomes. • The school had been provided with masks with panels and with visors. Many staff would distance themselves and choose not to wear masks when delivering lessons though some do feel more comfortable with masks. • Learning mentors were supporting the more vulnerable students returning to school on an individual basis. The SEN team had been making contact with the families about key workers to make sure that they could be supported on return. Those that had been in school during lockdown might struggle more as the whole school returned. • Mask wearing would likely last until Easter but for safety ventilation would continue along with social distancing. 	
5	<p>School Development Priorities</p> <p>a) Literacy Item not covered as school lead for literacy was unable to attend the meeting. Item deferred until next Full Governing Body meeting in May 2021.</p> <p>b) Curriculum Offer Governors were presented with an update on the school’s curriculum offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently in the third year of the planned curriculum changes introducing languages as part of the core offer and preferences offered to year eight on the GCSE language and practical subjects that they would take. The current year 11 were the last cohort on the old languages curriculum. French and Spanish being offered with the vast majority taking a language, 91% of all students being entered into EBacc. Whilst the expectation was that all students would study a language there were a few that were struggling that had been withdrawn so they could focus on other subjects. • Emphasis now on core GCSEs starting in year nine as opposed to year ten. 	

- Religious studies had been taken out of the curriculum as a core GCSE and in place all students have two hours a fortnight on ethical religious studies. This had been a successful change given the department freedom to change the curriculum to suit what was useful to the student. Positive feedback about the course coming from students with good engagement.
- Increase of practical and vocational options on offer with even the most academic students option for practical subjects. Vocational qualifications on offer at level 2 (GCSE equivalent) included health and social care, sports studies, creative media and music performance. Additionally three vocational option available (not level 2) being personal development and employability skills, sports leadership and Maths for lower attaining students.
- In terms of GCSE options, history and geography had been the most popular choices for those taking exams in 2023. Less popular subjects included Latin, dance, statistics and media.
- School options booklets published on the website along with the school curriculum content and each subject's specific interpretation.

Questions and comments from governors

- How did the subject cohort numbers work for classes?
- Good breadth of curriculum. Where was environmental education being covered?
- Climate education would run across cross curriculum.
- The subjects that had been less successful were mostly orientated to the lower ability students. If that had been down to the performance where was the school in supporting staff?
- How could it be ensured that students in the non-qualification subjects got the quality of support they needed?
- Was there any facility for students to learn other languages i.e. Mandarin and Russian.
- What was the science uptake?
- Was there an analysis of the option choices against what was expected?
- Were GCSE Options choices submitted by Year 9 students in line with expectations and if any subjects were particularly under-subscribed, what analysis is the school doing to understand why?

Response to governors' comments and questions

- For art and DT subjects the maximum in a group was 22, drama and music was 25 , additional maths 20 though no less than 12. For the written subjects 30 was a possibility, dependent on the amount of marking required. Some flexibility built in to allow for transfers. Whilst the maximum numbers were for guidance each case was discussed individually in the context of the staff available and making the timetable workable.
- Within the science curriculum there was an environmental aspect. An option for a vocational qualification in environmental education was being explored, currently there was no qualification available.
- There were opportunities for climate education in geography and science as well as other curriculum areas such as citizenship.
- The subjects that had a tendency towards less able students were not just offered to that cohort. Where there were concerns about any teaching formal support would have been put in place. Members of the leadership team had taken up delivery of some lessons as additional support.
- The staff delivering non qualification courses had chosen them and a lot of support with extra time had been given to enable them to prepare. The size of the classes were also very small enabling more individualised support.
- There were issues in getting mandarin language teachers for a few hours a week. Both Mandarin and Russian were challenging subjects best suited to starting in earlier years. If there were staff prepared to teach other languages than it might be possible to offer more from year 10. Previously German was dropped as there was insufficient uptake from students.
- The number of science classes are established to meet the number of students. About a third of students were taking triple science.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers choosing each subject tended to be consistent with some small variations. Information is provided to students to enable them to make the right choices for them. <p>6.09pm - Andrea Cummings left the meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Business Manager and Business Group - Meeting of 1st March 2021 The Headteacher updated Governors on business conducted at the business group meeting on 1st March and presented the monthly outturn report for December and first draft budget for the following year.</p> <p>a) Budget Monitoring Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overarching position was positive with a surplus carry forward Some of this surplus was set aside for the ATP sink fund. Covid related costs were being reclaimed in part. Reasonable costs were reclaimable for the test centre where the school had employed staff to operate the testing and also for new non-porous flooring. Savings made from exams; invigilators being used for covid testing. No changes to direct staff costing since last forecast , however the need for teacher cover absence greatly reduced on previous years. Heating related costs were a lot higher than budgeted due to requirement for ventilation. Claims from basic needs funding to cover IT capital costs. Staff who generated private income had been furloughed with the majority returning earlier in the day. <p>b) First Draft Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income budget set) pessimistically until lettings situation clearer. No additional funding to cover teachers increased pensions and salaries in 2021/22 . There would be no cost of living pay increment but progression through pay scales would increase the salary bill. Turnover factor was not usually included in the school's budget as staff turnover was historically low. A figure had been included as covid was expected to have some impact on staff members decisions about their future work patterns. Inflationary increases included within utilities. High needs funding significantly lower in the budget , this would need some investigation to ensure it was accurate. Slight in year surplus predicted for the 2021/22 financial year. Further edits to staff budgets as staffing structure became clearer. <p><u>Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The canteen prices were considered and business governors concluded that the prices should not be increased for poverty-proofing reasons so as not to negatively impact the school community.-This would be reviewed in September Fantastic job by school leaders in clearing the deficit and ending up in a positive position in a very challenging year. The benchmarking data showed an impressive amount of self-generated income. In the draft budget there did not seem to be a budget allocation to support the new vision /school improvement work. 	
7	<p>Other Reports and Recommendations</p> <p>a) Staff Survey There was a presentation to governors on the outcomes from a staff survey using a format used for a number of years. The survey went out in January when there was some uncertainty about the covid related issues. On the whole it was noted that the outcomes were quite positive though there were a few dips on the trends of previous years. 80 members of staff completed the survey, a lower participation on previous years. From the areas where a dip had been identified it appeared that working more in isolation during lockdowns had impacted on the ability of staff to participate more in decision making and to feel that their efforts were recognised.</p>	

	<p><u>Questions and comments from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It appeared that two areas had been impacted - one around engagement of staff possibly impacted by the reduced ability to explain and justify developments that the school were making. With wider reopening of school staff briefings and meetings would make a difference. The other stand out was that staff were feeling less recognised, a strategy to explicitly acknowledge efforts and good work might be needed. • A peer voting system to recognise individuals might be appropriate. • The results should be feedback to all staff and to get them to come up with some of the ideas to support recognition and help them feel more engaged. • There was a high level of “unable to comment” responses for preparing students for the future. Could teachers be involved in the strategic visioning and implementation of “education for life:” <p><u>Responses to governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was more probably the smaller day to day things that were not being acknowledged, discussions were underway to how these could be recognised. • With the return of students the affirmations of what teachers were doing well would increase providing a sense of achievement. • 25th March staff meeting set aside for feedback of staff survey results though this might need to be a virtual meeting. • It was more likely to be the staff members outside of the classroom that had answered ‘unable to comment’. Their views were also important for school visioning. <p>7.02pm - Richard Baker left the meeting.</p> <p>b) School Vision Group Governors were advised that the vision group had met and discussed the positioning statement and what needed to be done to move it forward. One value that had been identified as key was one of resilience in terms of students independence and wellbeing. A school lead was to be appointed to work through the processes that needed to be put in place over the coming months to replace the current school vision of “industry and integrity“ in a way that was clear. Potentially a graphic designer would be needed to come up with ways to convey the vision to stakeholders. Next steps would be looking a bringing values to life and setting out a timeframe for implementation.</p> <p><u>Comments and questions from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been discussion about getting students involved in bringing the values to life. An interpretation that was more realistic for them. • Current work was phase one and would be followed by wider strategic vision on specifics such as school premises and curriculum. • There was some concern about the cost attached to the change of school vision. In response it was agreed that a budget was required to replace all “industry and integrity” resources though much of the work would be completed inhouse at minimal cost. The full governing body would be given an estimate of cost in terms of print and design with best values principles applied. 	
8	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>a) Freedom of Information Scheme</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the freedom of information scheme document as presented.</p>	
9	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Planning & Review Governors were advised that a summer item for Governors would be to look at the planning for the year ahead, the skills and makeup of the governing body and how to support delivery of school vision. A number of governor terms of office were due to</p>	

	<p>expire around the same time during 2021/22 so some succession planning might be needed to cover a transition period.</p> <p>b) Governors' Monitoring Visits during Coronavirus Governors were encouraged to continue with support and challenge virtual visits to their link areas of responsibility, but taking staff workload into account. Governors had been provided with guidance on how monitoring visits could continue during coronavirus including model monitoring forms. A separate folder had been set up on one drive for governors to upload and visit forms.</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) School Uniforms The council's Children's and Young People's Committee were also considering school uniform that evening. The Headteacher advised that the school's uniform was less formal, gender neutral and cheaper than other schools and that the school was partnering with Smarter Uniforms so that families could purchase second hand uniform. The school has a financial support officer available for any disadvantaged families who required financial support. Coats were currently being allowed as windows were open for ventilation.</p> <p>b) School Newsletter There was a reminder that governors had been asked to be included in the weekly newsletter circulation.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7.24pm Date of next meeting 10th May 2021</p>	