



Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting on 23rd May 2023 at 6.30 p.m. at school

Governors Present:

Phil Bevan (PB) (Head Teacher)
Alex Bond (AB) (Community) Chair
Paul Ray (PR) (Community) Vice-Chair
Jane Braddy (JB) (Community) Vice-Chair
Ruth Long (RL) (Community)
Mirabelle Stobbs (MS) (Community)
Mick Mayes (MM) (Community)
Kathleen Thomas (KTh) (Staff)
James Barnes (JBa) (Parent)
Samantha Gould (SB) (Parent)
Jane Hulse (JH) (Parent)

Guests:

Mark Adams (Assistant Headteacher)

In attendance:

Alex Molton - Clerk

Apologies:

In Absentia:

Tara Barnes (TB) (Staff)
Liz Holmes (LH) (Community)

The meeting opened at 6.40 p.m.

	Procedural Matters	Action
1	Standing Item: Welcome, apologies for absence and acceptance/non-acceptance, resignations, governor recruitment, agenda for today AB welcomed governors and guests to the meeting.	
2	Standing Item: Notice, Confidentiality and Quorum Requirements The meeting was declared noted and quorate and attendees were reminded re confidentiality of the matters discussed until they were in the Public forum.	
3	Standing Item: Declaration of Interest / Pecuniary Interests for tonight's meeting None were made at this point in the meeting.	
	Ensuring Accountability (<i>Governor questions and comments are in italics</i>)	
4	Standing Item: Approve minutes of 21st March 2023 and review Carried Over Items The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. PB confirmed that there will be a Maths progress update at the next session, following the recruitment of two new Maths teachers. PB confirmed that the SLT will be interviewing two more tomorrow. AB explained that we are still waiting for a report on student voice. MA is attending this meeting to talk through PPG.	



	<p>Uniform policy is still in review so will come to the next meeting. ACTION: AM to add to next meeting agenda.</p> <p>Self-evaluation form to be reviewed in full at the next meeting. ACTION: AM to add this to the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>Getting an update on FCC site issues from Claire Ellison (CE) at the next meeting.</p> <p>A pro forma form for link governor visits has been added to GovernorHub.</p> <p>PB explained that an updated Behaviour policy has gone out to staff this week and the updated version will be uploaded to GovernorHub shortly for governors to review.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">AM</p> <p style="text-align: right;">AM</p>
5	<p>Standing Item: Any Out of committee activity None were reported.</p>	
6	<p>Receive Head teacher's Report PB had uploaded this to GovernorHub ahead of the meeting for governors to review. Highlights this month include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two further Strike days • INSET Day – start of term 4 – focus on T&L, SEN, Curriculum Development • Y7 Parents' Evening • Two successful meetings with Vale Academy Trust – Richard Evans CEO & Headteachers from the VAT Secondary Schools • Y9 Formal Assessments • Y9 Students won the regional Rocket Launch competition and subsequently came second in the National Finals in Leicester. • Y11 Student competed at the National British Para-Tennis Finals • Emily Timbrell, Y12, has been selected to exhibit her artwork at the Royal Academy this summer! • Successful bid to host Y7 Nurture Project with Oxford Brookes University and Mulberry Bush • Exam season in full flow. • The new Y7 cohort has 265 accepted places, not counting EHCP students who have had their places delayed by OCC <p>Following the planned working for next year with the Vale Academy Trust PB has met with Heads of Larkmead and KAs and found there are similar challenges and focuses for next year.</p> <p>ACTION: AM to ask LB to ensure that the communication regarding the planned working with VAT next year.</p> <p>AB explained that the next year offers FLT an opportunity to explore whether we might want to look at merging together with VAT next year. We are able to do our due diligence and consider the benefits and pitfalls of a merger.</p> <p>AB explained that the benefit for FCC of the Trusts potentially merging is that we then have two other Secondary schools to work with and benchmark against. It also offers opportunities to share resources, and particularly staff, across the Trusts.</p> <p>KAs has expertise in supporting student who need extra reading support, which would be of benefit to FCC.</p> <p>PB confirmed that the rocket launch programme will be sponsored and take place again next year. He is hoping to get the students to talk in assembly about what</p>	AM



	<p>they've done.</p> <p>A fence around the site has been agreed by the FLT Resources committee and work on this will start in term 6.</p> <p>Charlotte Tribbick and Rachael Wheeler have been appointed to the new Assistant Head posts.</p> <p>Safeguarding is in a similar place this term. We have a new Safeguarding Officer starting next term, who will be focusing on this entirely and not teaching at all.</p> <p>Fixed term exclusions remain high and work is still to take place on our new Behaviour policy to support this.</p> <p>We have a teacher going on maternity leave in September and another who has just returned from maternity leave.</p> <p>AB explained that following the drug incident in January at school we issued two PEXs but one family has asked for the case to go to the Independent Review Panel, which was granted and held on 5th May. The IRP concluded that the Governor's Discipline Panel should reconsider the decision to issue the PEX.</p> <p>The IRP's decision was premised on the following three points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The GDP should examine whether PEX was a last resort. Specifically, whether the pupil could have been managed and whether he might present a lower risk to other pupils after engagement with Aquarius (the drug awareness program). It was concluded that the impact on discipline within the school would inevitably be catastrophically affected by the pupil's potential return. Although recognised that neither party was looking for a return to FCC, should a managed move not be accepted by either the host school or the pupil, they would have returned to the FCC roll. Furthermore, it was noted that the pupil had previously been offered the support of Aquarius, but the family had declined, only accepting in the light of the incident. ii) The GDP should have ensured the pupil's voice was heard. The IRP minutes record that this would have been helped by having a representative from OCC, however it also alleges that more could have been done to put the pupil at ease. The nature of the hearing was described, noting that a neutral venue was used, although recognising that it is inevitably an uncomfortable meeting. It was further noted that despite the pupil be in at home on the day of the IRP hearing, they chose not to engage with the IRP. iii) The GDP should have considered factors in the pupil's life that may have led to his actions (specifically his health and split from his girlfriend). The IRP does acknowledge that these factors 'might not have been significant enough to change the GDPs decision'. <p><i>Won't we run out of time as they are Year 11 students?</i> PB: Yes, and they don't want to come back into school. AB explained that they want to clear their school record.</p> <p>The Governors Convened a disciplinary Panel to consider the recommendations from the independent Review Panel. The panel considered the points raised. The decision</p>	
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	<p>was to unanimously uphold the PEX.</p> <p>It was agreed that permanent exclusion was the only action available to the school given the very public nature of the event. Failure to exclude would have undermined the school's behaviour policy, and lead to a loss of confidence in the school and its governance within the community.</p> <p>It was agreed that all reasonable efforts had been made to allow the pupil to speak during the hearing.</p> <p>It was agreed that the nature of the event was such that serious consequences were inevitable, regardless of life factors.</p>	
7	<p>Receive report on PP (to be reviewed in conjunction with attendance figures)</p> <p>MA explained that our historical position is that we were relatively reactive – we support with uniform/trips/equipment. We want to look at what we can do more proactively.</p> <p>We have moved from being just under the national average for PP students to now being just over the average – around 25%.</p> <p>The majority of targeted funding/effort should be on the quality of teaching and learning for these students.</p> <p>We want to gain a better understanding of each student's individual needs rather having a blanket approach to what we offer them.</p> <p>We have built a database of all of the PP students with information about their background, those who are also SEN and those with low attendance levels – which is connected to research showing the impact of students having multiple vulnerabilities. We need more knowledge on what those students are experiencing in school – are they on a school team/do they attend trips or after school clubs? And then we need to look at fitting our funding around supporting this.</p> <p>We need to know where we signpost our students on to – how we promote music lessons more for students for example; could we advertise this more around school to try and target these students specifically? Feedback from County is that are processes are consistent with Best Practice.</p> <p><i>Attendance figures for PP students are lower than the national average – how are we tackling this?</i></p> <p>MA: Closer working between these two areas to get a better understanding of each student and how these different elements fit together.</p> <p>We are monitoring attendance for all PP students and how they sit within each attendance bracket, as well as considering who is then best placed to address this within school. We know that PP students are more likely to have lower attendance levels; many PP students have attendance levels in the 80% bracket. We are working with these pupils to understand how we can use interventions to get them into school.</p> <p><i>Why have we not done this before?</i></p> <p>MA: We have not had an attendance officer before and we have not used this approach in targeting attendance before. We are now using the model of best practice which helps us to better understand this and the possible interventions which we can use to try and get students into school more. The increase in numbers of students together with the increase in PP has meant we have had to adopt a new strategy to</p>	



address attendance and PP is connected to this.

Our attendance has previously been above the national average but this is not the case anymore.

PB explained that nationally attendance levels have dropped by 5% and we are slightly more than this. Plus there is an increase in student anxiety and school refusers. The figures are skewed by our current Year 11, where there are a higher number of truants and non-attenders than the average.

Have we shot ourselves in the foot by putting work online and therefore making it easier for students to carry work at home?

PB: Yes, possibly, but we have had to follow the guidance for schools throughout Covid.

MA explained that the picture of attendance has changed rapidly during the two years of Covid and without a previous system for addressing this in place we have had to put one together very quickly. We have been able to use legal systems effectively to get students back into school this year.

PB explained that he is no longer authorising holidays or requests for absences.

MM left the meeting due to unforeseen work demands at 7.23pm.

Do we need to put together a plan on attendance in order to be prepared to discuss this more thoroughly with Ofsted?

MA explained that staff are in the process of putting this together. We are working with a lag over the last few years and so playing catch up in this sense but we have a plan in place to proactively addressing issues such as SEN, PP and other issues which affect student attendance.

Do we have a document which shows how attendance is dealt with for governors to have for reference?

MA: Yes, we can provide details of what happens when students drop into levels of attendance below the national average.

ACTION: MA to circulate tiered response to attendance levels.

MA

MA will be meeting with the attendance officer each fortnight to look at attendance figures in each area of school: SEN/PP/those falling into lower attendance levels.

Does this mean that if attendance levels drop from one band to another will we then be dealing with this within two weeks?

MA: Yes, although this is a better time of year to be looking at the figures as we have a better picture of the overall situation for each student.

Do you have a target for where you want to be next year?

MA: Not exactly. We need to ensure that where students are falling into the lowest band of attendance we are using all tools at our disposal to address this and get students into school.

PB suggested we should be looking to be at or above national average for attendance (which is currently around 90%).



	<p>MA explained that using a new system we are now able to drill down into the figures for each student much more accurately.</p> <p>MA gave some details on the nurture project – some of this addresses some of the issues related to attendance.</p> <p>We currently have a group of Year 7s who have a lesson a week outside of their usual timetable. These are students who have struggled to transition to Secondary school. Next year we are going to be working with the Mulberry project to set up a nurture base at the school and work with them over the next two years in order to provide these students with extra support.</p> <p>MA explained that we will identify 8-10 students in Year 7 by October half term who need further support (this may also be influenced by their Year 6 information). These students will then spend their whole school day within this nurture project within the school. This is more of a primary school setting – they continue to learn the same as the rest of the year group but this is taught in a different and more familiar way for them.</p> <p>These students then ‘graduate’ from the programme and drop down to have less nurture time during the school day, with the aim of these students then being fully integrated into FCC by Year 9.</p> <p>Members of the SLT have already been trained on the project and some TA’s will be trained to run the scheme. After two years the Mulberry programme will step away with their research findings and we will ideally carry on the scheme for future year groups. We should have staff set up and ready to start training after half term.</p> <p>MA explained that there will also be a nurture plus programme, for those children who will always need a certain level of support from the nurture programme throughout their school career.</p> <p><i>Will these students remain part of their year group or be placed with the next Year 7 cohort?</i></p> <p>MA: They will remain part of their own year group.</p> <p><i>Does this programme provide enough spaces for the number of students who need this support?</i></p> <p>MA: Yes, we believe that this offers enough capacity for those students who really need this kind of transition support at the moment. There will also be some training for senior and middle leaders will also help this to filter down to a whole-school approach to providing a more nurturing environment.</p> <p>MA explained that the programme and training is all free.</p> <p>PB explained that we are the only Secondary school involved in the scheme.</p> <p>AB suggested that we need to keep a close eye on the scheme as it beds in to ensure that this meets demand.</p>	
8	<p>Standing Item: Health and Safety update</p> <p>AB reported that he and Jason have completed a survey recently but there was not much significant to report. The key finding is a need to review who is first aid trained at the school and ensure that these records are up to date; CE is already doing this.</p> <p>There was an incident whereby a staff member got their finger impacted by a fire door and a fire person then attended school to remove their ring. Jason will be repositioning the door-stop to prevent a reoccurrence.</p>	



9	<p>Governor Link visits</p> <p>AB had uploaded a template to GovernorHub to use for these. JH and JB had carried out visits this term.</p> <p>ACTION: JH to correlate these with her staff member before sharing with the LGB.</p> <p>JB reported that Safeguarding has now been broken down into smaller chunks. There were lots of open cases at the start of the year but these are now being reviewed on a regular basis. Behaviour remains the biggest challenge for Paul Dipple.</p> <p>JH talked through her report on SEN. Julie felt that the new policy on this has made a real difference already. There are split SEN sites which is not ideal. Staff training has helped her to feel more supported and improved staff communication with Julie about what she can do to support students.</p> <p>KT shared a tips sheet which Julie produced with small ideas of how to help SEN students within the classroom.</p> <p>There is huge backlog on EHCPs and this has had a huge impact. Short staffing remains in TA's and therefore there are very little one to ones taking place. The autism advocate TA is leaving.</p> <p>PB explained that the budget for next year includes a Deputy SENCo role and we plan to bring together all of the SEN work as part of the nurture project.</p> <p><i>Governors recognised that we do not yet know the needs of the cohort joining Year 7 this year so this could have an impact on the budget next year.</i></p> <p>AB has carried out a meeting with the DT lead, which flagged the need to replace one of the laser cutters, which has now happened. He also met with Phil Rees (PR) about swimming and reported that PR was very positive about this. School currently offers a free swim session to all students on a Wednesday after school. They have reduced the numbers of pupils in this group to ensure that everyone is safe.</p> <p><i>Are there any plans to push those able swimmers to compete?</i> PB: We do not currently have the capacity for this.</p>	JH
10	<p>To receive report on Sixth form</p> <p>To be carried forward to the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: AM to add to the next meeting agenda.</p>	AM
	<p>Strategic Matters <i>(Governor questions and comments are in italics)</i></p>	
11	<p>Budget</p> <p>PR explained that we were initially looking at -£200,000 (based on like-for-like expenditure for the coming year) but after several meetings with the finance team we are able to present a balanced budget for this year.</p> <p><i>What do the Trust use reserves for?</i> PR: These are contingency funds – there could be up to £200k of IT costs coming up in the next few years so this kind of thing would be covered if the budget does not include these.</p>	



AB explained we have £2m worth of repairs within the school which we need to address – things like roof work, only part of which will be funded. We will be looking to upgrade the insulation, change the fascias and change things like guttering to bring the roof up to a modern standard.

MS joined the meeting at 6.46pm.

Governors recognised that as the school is growing, there is an element of funding lagging pupil numbers because of the funding schedules. This will reduce in future years as the school roll stabilises as it reaches its current limits.

AB explained that the in-year surplus for this year will cover the cost of installing the proposed fencing around the site.

PB suggested that the budget as set out is the most accurate it can be based on our current situation.

Staffing changes have contributed to our budget being balanced this year – as more experienced and expensive teachers are replaced by those teachers who are earlier in their careers and therefore less expensive.

Some of the unexpected costs this year have included the rise in energy bills and the costs of staff salary pay increases.

AB explained that the proposed budget for 23/24 includes the two new Assistant Headteacher posts.

AB explained that it has, regrettably, been necessary to reduce the number of after school buses which we fund in order to achieve a balanced budget next year.

Are the buses full?

PB: No, and so we are looking at possible cheaper options, such as paying someone to drive a minibus. We would like to increase these if we can in order for all children to be able to access after school clubs and revision sessions. We might look to run more buses at particular times of the year, such as during exam revision time. We are keeping an eye on numbers in order to provide the most viable option according to need.

PB explained that the pay back into the Trust within the budget is currently the upper bound cost of what we are expecting for next year, in connection with our work with the VAT next year and us therefore potentially only funding half of a CEO post.

Why is the gas bill so low for 23/24?

PR: We are on a fixed term plan at the moment, which runs out 24/25. Our electricity is only fixed for one more year so we are expecting a big increase in the expense here after this time.

PR explained that we have also decided to remove the daytime cleaners from the budget for next year. We will reinstate these if they are felt to be needed.

Is there any opportunity to look at funding for green solutions?



	<p>AB: We have looked at the funding for potentially greener solutions for future heating provision and should hear more back about this at the end of the year. The cost of moving to a new type of heating system will be over and above what we will save but this is better than replacing boilers with something which will be obsolete in a few years.</p> <p>PR explained that we are also looking at replacing lighting with LED options instead. Teachers who do have this as part of their classroom report that these work well.</p> <p><i>The running balance on the last page progressively gets worse – is this going to eat into our reserves?</i></p> <p>PR: It would do but the likelihood is that by the time we get to this point new funding streams will be available.</p> <p>PR explained that there have been some assumptions that we would see growth in the Sixth form but this has not quite materialised so we need to have a conversation about this at a future meeting. Currently less than a third of our Year 11 go into Year 12.</p> <p>ACTION: AM to add to the next meeting agenda.</p> <p>The LGB approved the budget as set out.</p>	AM
12	<p>Policies to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Uniform <p>To be looked at next time.</p> <p>ACTION: AM to add to the next meeting agenda.</p>	AM
13	<p>Site update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fence <p>This has been approved by the FLT Resources committee and work will begin on this in term 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CCTV <p>This is being refurbished and we are replacing a couple of these.</p> <p><i>Are we able to install CCTV in the toilets to prevent issues such as vaping?</i></p> <p>PB: We have looked into this but the older-style toilets make this more awkward.</p>	
Other Matters		
14	<p>Good News Items</p> <p>These were discussed as part of the Headteacher report.</p>	
15	<p>Next meeting dates:</p> <p>20th June 2023.</p>	

Meeting closed at 9.15pm