

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held in School on Tuesday 19 March  
2019 at 6.00pm**

**Present:** Shaista Ahmed (SA); Zed Aziz (ZA) Derek Cross (DC); Liz Currie (ESC); Jane Dixon (JD); David Hall (DH); Mohammed Hans (MH); Gareth Harris (GH); Jonathan Hodgson (JH); Keith Wilson (KW); Mr P Roberts (PDR)

**Non-voting:** Mr J.Flynn (JMF); Mrs J Dunn (JDN- Clerk); Mrs C Proud (CEP); Mr S Taylor (SAT); Mrs D Ellis

**1. Welcome to new Parent Governors**

DC opened the meeting by welcoming the newly elected parent governors to their first meeting. All governors then introduced themselves.

**2. Declaration of interests:** None

**3. Apologies for absence:** Tony Atherton; Stuart Eakin.

**4. Chair of Governors**

DC explained that before we move on to the main items of the meeting he would like to address the recent very sad news of the passing of our chair of governors, Malcolm Pinder: a minutes silence was held in memory of Malcolm. PDR then gave details of the funeral arrangements and explained that due to the importance of the role held, there were a number of things that we now have to do including the appointment of a new Chair.

The Clerk explained what we need to do in terms of appointing a new Chair: a chair would normally be appointed at the next FGB but with Malcolm's death being so recent, there was little time to organize nominations and an election process for this meeting. Nominations were however now invited; a special meeting and election will be held if more than one nomination is received.

The Clerk instructed Governors that nominees should complete a nomination form and return it to her no later than midday on Friday 29 March. If there were only one candidate, this candidate would be appointed.

If there is more than one candidate, a special meeting of the governing body will be held on Wednesday 3 April at 6.00pm. If this meeting is required, Governors will be provided with candidate submissions in advance. Nominees will be required to be present at this meeting, though they will have to leave the meeting when the remaining governors will discuss the suitability of the candidates. Votes will be cast, counted and the result announced.

Governors were asked to note that:

- Anyone employed by the school cannot be appointed as be the Chair of Governors
- Governors should vote in person at the special meeting – so it is important that all governors attend
- No postal / email / ballot box voting before the meeting will be allowed
- Virtual voting is permitted via a conference call/telephone (e.g. skype) if a governor/director cannot attend in person but must be arranged with the Clerk in advance
- Proxy voting is allowed but is only permitted for members appointing another member

Governors discussed and agreed the process for the election of a new chair. The date of the special meeting (should this be required) was also agreed.

## **5. Safeguarding**

A verbal report was given by SAT relating to child protection referrals. The support provided by the counsellor, school nurse and pastoral team in school continues to be widely used and provides an essential support service for the students and some staff.

An update was given on training – the vast majority of the teaching and operational staff have been provided with induction safeguarding training or had their previous training refreshed. Arrangements are currently being made to refresh the Level 3 DSL training of SAT and the Deputy DSLs.

Q. Is the caseload up in comparison to previous years?

A. It is very dynamic, but we are careful about closing child protection cases so we tend to keep these on therefore appearing to increase the caseload

Q. Do we know how figures compare to other schools?

A. It is difficult to compare our position with that at other schools, we tend to look at the figures year on year to see how they compare. I do meet with other DSL's at network meetings and can see what kind of things are a trend in the area. We are finding out about more issues now than we have done in past, this is likely down to our processes and procedures. We tend to see a spike in cases at this time of for y11 and 13 students because of exams.

Q. Is there something we can do to address exam related stress?

A. We do a number of things already to support our pupils: we have exam ready evenings, students are given revision tips, SSM's are available to discuss any issues with pupils. Not all of the anxiety cases are directly linked to exams, there can of course be other reasons for stress and anxiety.

JH told SAT he found the information very informative and thanked him for providing it. He asked that he inform governors if additional resources were required. SAT said that at moment we pay for one and a half days per week of Counsellor time but we could easily fill two days.

We are always revising the plans we have in place so if we feel we do need more help we will let governors know.

CEP informed governors that one of our alumni delivers bereavement training, free of charge and is coming into school next week to provide some free training to our SSM's. We like to maximize any opportunities that arise.

Q. Do you find pattern in the cases, more girls than boys for example?

A. No particular patterns, we have a mixture of boys and girls and children from a wide range of backgrounds. We have noted that boys are more readily coming to us now than ever before. DC suggested that whilst on the topic of safeguarding, we look at the policy, which is for approval at the meeting and asked SAT about it. SAT explained that there are some quite significant changes, largely to bring it in line with Kirklees guidance.

The child protection policy was also reviewed at this point, as SAT is also the owner of this policy. SAT explained that the changes to this one related more to our internal processes. He informed governors that he did this with the help of the link governor link, which we no longer have. We need to re-establish this.

Governors thanked SAT for his time and he left the meeting.

## **6. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

JD pointed out some typing errors in the minutes for the Clerk to correct before publishing.

Governors asked about the AOB on Ipads from last time and where we are with this initiative.

PDR explained that this is on hold for now, we want to look into how having Ipads will have a positive impact on teaching and learning. It is of course very expensive to provide Ipads for every staff member and all pupils. At the moment, we don't think the cost would balance against benefit. As most people have mobile phones nowadays, it might be worth looking into a 'bring your own device' option instead.

Governors accepted the minutes as a correct record.

## **7. Review of sub-committee meetings/minutes**

### **F&R**

JH spoke through what was discussed at F&R highlighting several key points.

We are currently forecasting a better than break-even position for the 2018/19 budget and there is likely to be a modest revenue budget surplus at year-end.

Two CIF bids have been submitted to the ESFA in December 2018, the outcome of these bids is awaited.

In terms of the budget for 2019/20, the budget will balance but our core funding is shrinking and the amount of financial protection is increasing. We have ended up with additional money that we didn't expect to get when previously forecasting because the government will fund (temporarily) the 7% increase in teachers pensions until 31/8/2020. These one off grants are likely to be 'mainstreamed' in future years and so we may lose this funding in the longer term.

JH thanked to John and Donna for all their hard work.

### **C&S**

DC spoke to the minutes from last time, highlighting the topics of discussion, the first being the potential changing of the catchment area. DC told the FGB that Dan Peacock had delivered a presentation explaining the potential options, after discussion, Governors had agreed that there should be no change to the catchment area.

The likelihood of the need for further changes to the over subscription criteria in the year 7 admissions policy were noted, the current policy has become too complex.

DC asked if anyone had any thoughts.

DH apologized he wasn't at the C&S meeting but wanted to say that he felt the right decision had been made in relation to catchment area.

A discussion took place around how the academy was marketed. Visiting primary feeder schools is a good idea, it was reported that we have visited some of our feeder schools, some are very supportive of their students applying for our test, and others are less supportive.

DH pointed out that the opinions of primary head teachers influence this level of support significantly; we should aspire to work with them and need to establish how we do this ensuring we approach this challenge in the right way.

Governors recognize the importance of good public relations (PR) and how we might involve the press more in school life, for example by inviting them to attend our open days. Governors acknowledged that the school has had more positive press exposure over the last couple of months and Twitter is very good as it really shows off the school.

DC then spoke through the other topics discussed at the meeting, including data, Staffing and the changes to the Ofsted framework, currently the subject of consultation.

Governors discussed staffing, the events relating to staff-wellbeing and the resignation of the Headteacher. Governors agreed that there were lessons to be learned.

Changes would be made following the appointment of a new Chair and the link governor scheme would be re-visited.

Governors then discussed policies. Procedures for approving these would be reviewed properly when we have a new Chair in place.

Governors gave credit to SLT for stabilizing the school. It was acknowledged that trust takes a long time to build back up, but we are doing all we can and it appears to be coming back slowly but surely.

DA said that the governing body had taken a lot of criticism over the whole situation and asked if confidence had been won back? PDR explained that there are still bridges to be built - it is really important that governors have more of a presence in the future.

## **8. HT report**

PDR said that he would not talk through the whole of the document but would address certain points of interest and answer any questions anyone has, as everyone should have read the report in advance of the meeting.

He first addressed the student numbers section explaining the reasons for the students leaving and joining us since September. The number of students joining us is high due to the vacancies we had available in year 8 to take us to 210 in line with other year groups. We also had two sixth form students come back to us from Greenhead. He also gave the destinations of those students who left us.

PDR then moved on to discuss the student progress section and explained the graphs provided. We are concerned about the Y13 projected results for summer 2019.

We are doing everything we can to address this concern, but some students have completely the wrong attitude to learning. It may be that some students should not really be studying A-level and a more accessible, vocational course would have been more appropriate.

Members of SLT are meeting with y13 parents and students at parents evening this week to try and further get the message across that they really need to start putting the work in. Biology and Chemistry are having real issues. They recently tried to arrange revision workshops and of the 90 families, they invited, only seven responses were received. We are having an external review of the subjects next week – staff have reacted very positively to this and see it as an opportunity rather than a threat.

We are likely to have the same issue next year as some year 12 students have a poor attitude to learning. We are doing our best to improve this for example by making sure all silent study areas are being used appropriately.

A discussion took place around internal and external students and how they differ in work ethic and attitude, how classes are structured, class sizes and how students coming from elsewhere did in their GCSE's. PDR said we did fill up the places with students who may have just met our entry requirements and this was driven by budget considerations. We do need to have at least 500 student to make the sixth form viable.

We are increasing the entry requirements for this year in an attempt to address this. This is a risk but we want to increase the ability of the students. It was noted that many students receive unconditional university offers now, they feel that they do not need to try as much – this is not very motivating.

Poor behaviour on the part of some students can have an adverse impact on the students who are well behaved and want to learn.

Q. Can we take a student out of school after year 12 if they aren't where they should be?

A. No - We can only permanently exclude if there are serious behaviour concerns.

Governors asked if students are able to go see their teachers in non-teaching periods. PDR explained that all staff are generally teaching to capacity, but do put in extra time to meet with students for example at lunch times, after school and during holidays. Governors suggested that we might be at risk of normalising the fact that staff do this but were grateful that this happens.

Governors considered the implications of us getting bad results/media, and how this might put people off coming to the school. ESC added that she didn't feel the results was what puts students off staying, but more the personal touch that they get from staff here. Staff turnover may have influenced students choosing not to stay on over last two years, but hopefully this will now change.

PDR then moved to item seven of the agenda (Y11 retention) as we were on the subject and talked governors through the paper. Retention had typically been 90%+ for many years, but then dropped to 72% in 2017 and 58% in 2018. PDR explained that we are doing all we can in terms of trying to retain our current Y11 students, with the consultation evenings, careers interviews and talking to those who have expressed they are thinking about going elsewhere. Attitudes appear to have shifted since Christmas, particularly in y11 and lower down the school. He concluded that we are moving in the right direction and prospects appeared to be good. ESC added she feels it is strength in numbers and travel is a big factor.

Following the discussion PDR brought the governors attention back to the HT report and asked if there were any questions.

Q. How are we managing the curriculum with starting GCSE subjects year 9?

A. We are still doing 11 subjects and are confident that this is right thing to do. We have an ambition to bring back work experience and spreading the curriculum out across 3 years, should enable us to do this. There is also less pressure of students.

Q. The exclusions seem high, is this unusual?

A. No – this is not unusual, normal numbers.

Q. What are we doing differently in terms of quality of teaching?

A. We have changed the structures of the observations. Our CPD programme has also changed in terms of need; we now have a much more tailored approach. We are also able to match people's strengths and weaknesses to allow people to buddy up. All calibrations are now done and we only have one teacher observation to redo. We have a long way to go but we have much more going on around training and support. CEP also explained the plan for the June training days. Both teaching and operational staff are going to go visit other schools on the Thursday to see how things are done, pick up any good ideas etc. and then spend some time on the Friday feeding back to departments.

Q. I see that Classcharts has been inconsistent for a while, why is this.

A. These are different inconsistencies; previously it was in relation to how staff were using it for positives and negatives, now its homework. Each time we add a layer it takes staff a while to get into the habit of it.

Q. There is no mention of Student voice.

A. This has been toned down a lot because it causes a lot on anxiety among staff. ESC added that she did not find it very useful and that it should potentially be more department based, as it currently feels targeted.

JH noted that there is a notable drop in staff resignations and sickness and that this is reflective of culture now.

## **9. Governor Recruitment**

PDR explained the background to this item but said should probably defer it now until we have a new Chair in post. All governors agreed. ESC asked about staff governors and how many we can or should have, as it might be that some staff governors want to come back. The issue of clarifying sub-committees, special committees etc. should also be brought back to the table once the new Chair was in place. We need to tidy things up.

## **10. Policies for approval**

- a) Child Protection – Approved earlier in meeting
- b) Home School Agreement - Sixth Form - PDR explained this policy and the plan for registering sixth form students moving forward in light of later lessons, tutor time etc. – Approved.
- c) Safeguarding - Approved earlier in meeting
- d) SEND Information Report - Approved subject to name changes
- e) Social Media Usage – Approved

## **11. AOB**

**Dewsbury Learning Trust** – PDR explained to governors what this is and what happened at the meeting he went to the previous day. The other three partners of the trust feel that HGS is no longer needed and proposed that we are ‘divorced’ from the partnership.

The trust has run its course, achieved what it was set up for but there is no longer a benefit for us or Westborough. The links and support we have will remain but in an informal way. The other three partners still benefit from the Trust and are expected to remain in the partnership.

Governors agreed to PDR implementing the formal removal of HGS from the trust.

**Governors training** – we are still waiting for the training needs analysis from three governors. JDN will circulate an email tomorrow. Please can you return this ASAP as Louise Daddy is then going to put a training plan or similar together.

**Brexit** – Have we thought about the implications on any trips we have booked, have we looked into this? Passports and insurance for example? Yes, as far as we are able but continued uncertainty is unhelpful.

**Bus service to and from Wakefield** – We are currently consulting with parents from Wakefield and Huddersfield areas to establish whether or bus services might be viable, so far we have had 82 expressions of interest. Once we have collated the information we will share this with the company to establish viability. A discussion was had around this and ways it may work and be paid for.

JD asked if there was anything, the school would like from us as a governing body in terms of support. PDR said the governors had been supportive over recent months and thanked them for the very kind offer.

JH asked if there were any plans in place in terms of marking Malcolm’s contribution to the school. Maybe a prize or plaque of some sort? PDR said we do not have a plan in place yet but we are going to speak to Malcolm’s family to come to an agreement of what would be appropriate.

JDN asked if all governors would be able to attend a special meeting on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April should one need to be held and confirmed she would send all the necessary information out via email tomorrow. Governors agreed they would be available if needed

DC informed governors that this would be the Clerks last meeting for a while as she will be off on maternity leave by the next round of meetings. Governors thanked JDN for her time and hard work.

**Governors were thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.05pm.**