



THE GRANGE SCHOOL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Governors of The Grange School held at the School on 18 November 2019 at 6.00 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mr A Sherwell (Chair of GB) Mr M Cardoso Mrs M Dobbie Mr A Hamshere Mrs V Kucht	Mr V Murray (Headteacher) Mrs Z Sutcliffe Mr P Harper Mr J Parker
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mr H Beveridge Mr P Jackson Mrs M Mitchell	Business Manager Associate Member Clerk
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Mr N Hood Mr D Waters Ms E Westley	Apologies received and accepted. Apologies received and accepted. Apologies received and accepted.

**1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following other business was tabled:

- ALPS update

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**3.1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record and handed to the Headteacher for display at the school.

**3.2 MATTERS ARISING**

**3.2.1 GOVERNOR DECLARATIONS**

All up to date.

**ACTION**

**Headteacher**

**CORE FUNCTION 1 : ENSURING CLARITY OF VISION, ETHOS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION****4 VISION AND VALUES**

The draft document had been circulated to staff for consultation; feedback was positive.

The draft will be put to student voice before the end of the term.

Consistent with the co-operative values the draft had also been shared with the ALPS partner schools; feedback had been positive.

**Action:**

- **Conclude consultation with staff and students; present final draft to the January meeting.**

Headteacher

**The focus of the meeting being Resources Issues, Mrs Sutcliffe now in the Chair.**

**5 RISK REGISTER**

Two model risk registers had been circulated; Governors agreed to use the NGA model to identify the top, high level risks.

Governors identified the following risks as a starting point:

- Heating failure – impact on wellbeing and the learning environment.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Form recruitment – impact of increased local 6<sup>th</sup> form places and potential risk to funding.
- Key personnel absence – impact of absence of specialist, singleton roles on the effective operation of the school e.g. IT manager, Marketing and Communications Manager.
- Major IT failure – system failure
- Major IT failure – malicious attack

**Action:**

- **Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Beveridge to complete the first draft risk register, to include mitigating actions, to be presented to the January meeting.**
- **Governors to submit suggested risks to Mrs Sutcliffe.**

Mrs Sutcliffe,  
Mr Beveridge  
Governors**CORE FUNCTION 3: OVERSEEING THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND MAKING SURE ITS MONEY IS WELL SPENT.**

## 6 RESOURCES REMIT

Whilst all business is conducted at Board level the detail is contained in the Terms of Reference document. Governors **agreed** the Resources Remit and the financial delegations within it without change.

The Business Manager had circulated a summary report to inform the meeting, with the associated supporting documentation.

## 7 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Business Manager advised that the Quarter 2 revision to the financial plan had been submitted; there had been no material change to the surplus forecast of £23k.

The original budget had included the 2.75% pay increase and the assumption that all eligible staff would progress.

The DfE has provided indicative figures for 2020-21; BCC has undertaken to provide the budget allocations by the end of December to inform the first draft FP 20-21 which will be submitted by 28 February.

## 8 VOLUNTARY FUNDS

Governors received evidence of the audited accounts for the period 31.8.18 to 1.9.19; all was in order.

## 9 CHEQUE BOOK SCHOOL

The Business Manager explained the implications of becoming a cheque book school. The school would:

- have greater control, and visibility, of cash flow
- be able to manage the payment of invoices in the correct timeframe
- make and receive e-payments in real time rather waiting for BCC to process and allocate funds
- save £1000 a year in payments to BCC
- save administration team time overall (there would be an additional requirement to process VAT payments but that is offset by savings elsewhere).

### **Arising from Governors' questions, observation and discussion:**

- The Business Manager and Finance Officer both have experience of operating a cheque book school; it is not an onerous task.

## ACTION

- Training is available, and has been booked for January 2020, to ensure staff are up to date with current requirements.
- The school receives 6<sup>th</sup> Form and HNBF early in the year, which provides the buffer to even out the ebb and flow of payments and ensure all commitments can be met. The school runs a balanced budget; there are no plans to go into deficit. If there was an unforeseen situation which result in the school going 'overdrawn' an application would be made to BCC to support that; this is the same as the current arrangements. There would be a loan and recovery plan put in place.
- Referencing the risk of reliance on key personnel Governors explored the resilience in the finance team to manage the finances in the event of absence; three staff will be trained; all are signatories to the account with two signatures required on all payments. There is resilience in the team.
- Both the Business Manager and Finance Officer have experience of submitting VAT returns; knowledge will be refreshed through the training.
- Governors would continue to receive the monthly CFR: the school is not allowed to go into deficit in line with current arrangements and the financial delegations previously agreed remain unchanged.

Governors **agreed** that the Business Manager should request that the school become a cheque book school and contact the LA accordingly.

### Action:

- **Business Manager to initiate conversion to cheque book school.**

**Business Manager**

## 10 ICT PLAN

The plan had been circulated. Of note:

- Internet coverage had been increased both in coverage and speed.
- Transfer to Windows 10 will be completed by the end of term; support for the current operating system ends in January 2020.
- Information is now backed up to the web.
- The rolling programme of replacement laptops continues.
- System security improved with two factor authentication.

### Arising from Governors' questions, observation and discussion:

- The SEND Governor, following her visit, highlighted concerns raised by the SENDCo regarding the reliability of the hardware used to support SEND.

**ACTION**

- The Headteacher advised that he had not been aware of the issues and that the SEND hardware currently sits outside the normal cycle of repair and replacement.

**Action:**

- **Business Manager to liaise with the SENDCo to assess the immediate need, and the impact on the budget, and incorporate SEND hardware within the forward 5 year plan.**

**Business Manager****11 CONTRACTS**

The Business Manager reported that, as a result of improved contracting arrangements £11,467, per year, on contracts agreed in the last 6 months; £20k per year had been saved in the last year.

The majority of savings have now been realised; those contracts that remain are not expected to generate significant savings on renewal.

Governors congratulated the Business Manager on the significant savings and improved value for money.

The Chair highlighted that the ALPS schools are also looking to work together on contract renewal to benefit from economies of scale; there are operational issues to overcome including aligning the contracting periods.

The Business Manager highlighted that the school purchases energy through the LA contract; following an assessment of the provision the school was assured that this presented best value for money with the supplier's prices being consistently below market rates.

**12 PREMISES AND DFCG**

**Maintenance:** The Business Manager reported that significant maintenance work had been completed in the Summer holidays; the school had looked refreshed on return in the Autumn Term. There is an annual, rolling maintenance plan in place.

**Arising from Governors' questions, observation and discussion:**

- The Business Manager had made an assessment of each classroom and identified what work was needed in order to make the biggest impact. This resulted in some classrooms having just one wall painted which created capacity to improve more classrooms.

- This was more effective than the traditional approach of a full redecoration of each classroom and enabled more of the learning environment to be improved within the available funds.
- Class teachers are taking ownership of their areas and keeping on top of the cleanliness. Heavy traffic areas require annual maintenance.
- Graffiti, when it occurs, is tackled quickly to prevent escalation.

**Capital projects:** the school had £118k of which £89k has been spent on the agreed projects within the original plan namely;

- the inclusion room,
- 6<sup>th</sup> Form study room,
- Increased CCTV,
- new fire doors,
- new laptops

The remaining funds will be used to replace desk top computers.

### 13 LETTINGS

The school has a broad range of community lettings, the majority of which are during the week. Week-end lettings had not been considered viable previously due to the high cost of caretaker fees. The Business Manager has removed the need for caretaker presence through the installation of a key fob alarm for the languages block and a combination lock on the football field; neither now require a caretaker to access them. A similar approach will be taken with Sports Hall.

The facilities will be fully operational in January and will now be actively marketed. There has already been a new letting for January as a result of these changes.

#### **Arising from Governors' questions, observation and discussion:**

- The Business Manager is minded to not open up the wider school to lettings which would want to make use of school equipment; there would be potential health and safety issues and repair costs if anything was to go wrong or be damaged.
- The benchmarking information showed the school's additional income to be low despite having a good range of facilities. The Business Manager explained that it is not possible to establish, within the benchmarking data, the source of additional income be that lettings or other grants.

- Governors congratulated the Business Manager on overcoming the need for caretakers thereby opening up the use of the school to the wider community more fully.

#### 14 EXTENDED SERVICES

The school offers a wide and diverse range of extended services which meets the needs of the school and the wider community.

The school aims to respond positively to proposals from students regarding extended services. The provision is supported by staff or 6<sup>th</sup> Form Leaders.

Governors noted that the provision offered is wider than an academic focus and includes health, wellbeing and other interest areas.

#### 15 SFVS

Governors noted the changes to the SFVS and the revised submission date of 28 February to align with the submission of the FY 20-21 plan. The LA are offering training sessions on the new SFVS; details had been circulated.

##### Action:

- Mrs Sutcliffe, Mr Harper and Mr Beveridge to complete the SFVS; draft to be circulated to Governors prior to submission.
- Governors to consider attending training as necessary.

Mrs Sutcliffe, Mr Ha  
Business Manager  
Clerk:13.2.20 Agend  
Governors

#### 16 BENCHMARKING

The Business Manager had circulated the benchmarking information and analysis for 2017-18; the 2018-19 data had since been published. This had been reviewed; there were no material changes to the analysis.

##### Arising from Governors' questions, observation and discussion:

- The Headteacher explained that students completing courses at two schools, usually within the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, would show as 0.5 on the data.
- There is significant variance across the schools in terms of income; this may be linked to the minimum funding guarantee and reflect cohort profiles – deprivation index, EAL, PP. More detail will be available in FY 20/21 when the DfE is requiring schools to publish the annual CFR.
- The impact of the new funding formula on income profiles will be monitored.

Mr Cardoso left the meeting at 7.30pm.

- **Staffing costs (82%)** are high both compared with the sample group and against the DfE recommended level of 77%; teaching costs are in the top 10% of similar schools nationally. The school also has high student to staff ratios compared with the sample group. By way of context a 0.5 difference in student to staff ratios is the equivalent of 2.5FTE staff.
- Governors questioned if the higher staff costs and ratios should be resulting in the achievement of better student outcomes more quickly.
- The staff costs and ratios reflect the school's decision to offer a broad curriculum which meets the needs of students; this necessarily results in smaller class sizes and higher staff costs but is the right thing to do for the students.
- Similarly the school goes beyond statutory requirements to support students and invests in support staff to support all vulnerable groups.
- Governors were proud of the curriculum and support available to students and accepted that the staff costs reflected this.
- In terms of measuring the impact of higher staff costs on improved and accelerated outcomes this is not possible without a control group and would not be easy to assess. The correlation between expenditure and outcomes has never been raised during Ofsted inspections or any other form of independent evaluation of the school for that reason.
- The Business Manager highlighted that other areas of expenditure are low compared with the sample group. Within this expenditure on maintenance is increasing.

## 17 GDPR

The Business Manager reported that there had been no subject access requests, breaches or near misses. All staff had received training on GDPR on the INSET day and GDPR is included in induction for new staff.

The completion of the Information Register is outstanding.

## 18 HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Accidents:** There had been two accidents within the science department; none were reportable but practices and procedures had been changed as a result. One student had been taken to hospital as a precaution.



Governors noted these incidents and the link to the Science presentation which had highlighted the increased use of practicals.

**H&S Audit:** The majority of the actions highlighted in the audit are complete or underway. The H&S Governor includes a review of progress in the programme of visits. There will be 6 visits across the year, each focussing on a different area. The Autumn 1 visit had been completed.

## BOARD MANAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS

### 19 GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT

The Parent Governor campaign had been launched, closing date 22 November.

Governors considered including a question on the back of Parents Evening feedback forms to gather intelligence as to who may be interested in becoming a Governor in the future; this would only be of use if the feedback forms were not anonymous.

### 20 GOVERNOR ALLOWANCES

The Business Manager confirmed that there had been no claims made under the allowance scheme.

Governors asked if the availability of allowances had been included in the Parent Governor information.

**After meeting note:** The availability of allowances is not included in the model documentation. The Clerk will amend the letters for use next time.

Clerk

### 21 GOVERNOR TRAINING

Safer Recruitment Training is available through IHASCO.

The Chair had completed WRAP (Prevent) refresher training.

#### Action:

- **Governors to contact the Business Manager to access SR training.**

Governors

### 22 COMPLIANCE

Mr Cardoso had completed the website audit and shared his findings on GHub. The majority of the website is up to date (90%) with the remainder needing minimal work to update. The main body is present or underway.

With respect to each of the areas highlighted related to recommended content:

- Governors agreed not to include frequently asked questions.
- Governors **agreed** to include a 'jargon buster' available from the NGA.
- Governors considered that there was sufficient information on the website relating to transition but that the inclusion of student quotes would be useful.

**ACTION**

**Action:**

- **Clerk to provide the website manager with a jargon buster and advise of the decision of the Board.**

**Clerk**

## **23 POLICIES**

Policies reviewed in line with the school's management schedule had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Governors agreed the:

- **Business Continuity/Emergency Plan**
- **Health and Safety Policy** (noting that the LA had not yet updated the model policy)
- **Charging and Remissions Policy**

## **24 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates and times of future meetings had previously been agreed:

**All Governors**

- **Thursday 5 December 2019 at 600pm – English**
- **Thursday 16 January 2020 at 6.30pm – Curriculum and standards**
- **Thursday 13 February 2020 at 6.00pm – 6<sup>th</sup> Form**
- **Monday 9 March 2020 at 6.30pm – Finance**
- **Thursday 26 March at 6.00pm – subject tbc**

All Clerked.

## **25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **25.1 ALPS REPORT**

The Chair gave a verbal update on ALPS and the way forward for the current year. A priority is to review the strategic vision of ALPS and to ensure stakeholders and interest groups have a good understanding of what is happening in ALPS and how it is benefitting students.

**ACTION**

As a starting point Foundation Governors from partner schools are to be invited to a workshop at Turnfurlong Infant School on 13 or 16 January (tbc) proposed timing 4-7pm. The date will reflect the majority attendance; 16 January coincides with a Board meeting; timings will be adjusted if necessary.

Raising awareness with the wider stakeholder groups will be undertaken when activities are more developed.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed Alan Sheppard Date 5/12/19  
CHAIRMAN

