



MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ABBEY COURT SCHOOL

MINUTES

Date: 08.10.2021
Time: 11.00 a.m.
Location: Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road site
Clerk: Lesley Maile

Attendees

Jean Kerr – JK (Chair)
 Karen Joy – KJ (Headteacher)
 Derek Blease - DB
 Jane Heyes – JH (Vice Chair)
 Tim Walker - TW
 Claire Richards - CR
 Krystal Clark - KC
 Barry Kemp - BK
 Matthew Powell - MP
 Dave Lane – DL

A	STANDARD ITEMS	Action
A1	Administration The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting and introduced Mrs Lesley Maile as the new Clerk.	
A1	Apologies and absences. Derek Blease Claire Richards Krystal Clark	Clerk
A2	Minutes of the last meeting: The meeting was deemed to be quorate and the Minutes of the last meeting were found to be accurate, accepted and signed.	JK/Clerk

A3	Matters arising from the minutes. There were no matters arising.	
B	GOVERNING BODY MATTERS & STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES	Action
B1	Election of Chair and Vice Chair The Clerk requested nominations for the post of Chair. JK advised she was willing to stand again and her nomination was proposed by JH and seconded by MP. Governors indicated their unanimous agreement. Nominations were requested for the position of Vice Chair, JH agreed to stand for a further period. Proposed by JK and seconded by BK. Governors indicated their unanimous agreement.	Clerk
B2	Membership Discussion took place on the need for a Governor with financial experience. It was acknowledged that this post would be for an Associate Governor. It was agreed that efforts should be made to find a suitable candidate. Discussion also covered the need for the Governing Body to ensure it represented diversity. It was proposed that local companies should be approached. A decision was reached that in the first instance the Chair would write to Nat West, the school's bankers, to see if they have a scheme or suggestion whereby a suitable candidate could be found from within their company. In addition DL offered to enquire at his place of work as to whether they operated a similar scheme or could offer a suitable candidate. It was noted that DB's term of office comes to an end in March 2022 and a replacement will be required, should he not wish to serve an additional term. Recruitment could take some time.	JK to write letter JK – raise with DB before November meeting
B3	Review constitution, membership and terms of reference for Committees The Chair advised that the Finance Monitoring Committee had been inadvertently referred to as the Budget Monitoring Committee. It was noted that members of the Finance Committee attend the Budget Monitoring meetings. The decision was taken to defer allocating a governor to the Finance Committee until the afore-mentioned recruitment efforts had been investigated. JH offered to stand in on this committee for the interim. JH was thanked for agreeing to step up.	JK/KJ/JH
B4	Review Link Governor Roles Link Governor role discussed. The Headteacher suggested that BK, as a new governor should now join/be allocated to one or two committees. It was agreed BK would join both the Pay Committee and the Staff Dismissal Committee.	JK/BJ/Clerk

<p>B11</p>	<p>Governor Action Plan 2021/2022 JK thanked JH, for this document. JK asked JH if she would arrange to amend and combine the following sentence to read: “Review and combine vision”. Once amended this will be sent to the Clerk to put on the website.</p>	<p>JK/JH/Clerk</p>
<p>B12 & B13</p>	<p>Governing Monitoring Record & Governor Monitoring 2021/22 Governors’ attention was drawn to numerous gaps in this regard which require attention. JK advised she needed to undertake a school visit shortly and asked KJ if there were any additional requirements in this respect. KJ confirmed that most requirements run in line with the academic cycle but Governors do need to be strategic to fulfil OfSTED requirements. It was agreed that the visit to review monitoring of Phonics should take place prior to Christmas with the following schedule and allocation of governors being agreed for the remainder of the year: Phonics and Reading – MP Careers & Education - DL Sex Education – TW Mental Health – KC to be asked to take this on Assessment – JH</p>	<p>KJ/MP KJ/DL Term 3 KJ/TW Term 4 JK/KJ to speak to KC in this respect – Term 5 KJ/JH Term 6</p>
<p>B14</p>	<p>Consultation on Term Dates 2023/2024 Academic Year Consideration was given as to which term date option would best suit the school. The Headteacher advised that Option 3 appeared to be the preferred option. Governors confirmed their agreement and the Headteacher will arrange to advise Medway of the decision.</p>	<p>KJ Option 3 to be communicated to LA</p>
<p>B15</p>	<p>Ofsted Preparation Discussion took place on likelihood of an OfSTED inspection. KJ felt that at the present time OfSTED appeared to be concentrating on schools with particular issues or residential schools. However Governors were advised neither the school nor the Governing Body should be complacent as Inspections can take place at any time.</p>	<p>All governors</p>
<p>B16</p>	<p>Governor CPD & Induction BK was asked to confirm that he had undertaken the Governor Induction programme and then return the completed tick sheet to the JH. It was noted that KC and CR had yet to return their forms. It will then be possible to sign off all Governor Induction requirements. JH agreed to send an email to all of the above mentioned as a reminder. Governor Training & Training Record JH enquired if this was now complete. JK confirmed that she had completed Safer Recruitment training.</p>	<p>BK KC/CR JH</p>

	<p>JK will send her certificate JH.</p> <p>DL confirmed he had some online training this week via his work and will let the Vice Chair know if this is relevant. The Vice Chair advised that it would be helpful if governors would let her know as a matter of course, should they undertake any safeguarding training at their place of work or via any other route.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the training record is held at the school by the Clerk.</p> <p>JH requested feedback on the powerpoint safeguarding training provided to governors. Governors confirmed they had all been able to access the powerpoint and the focus was felt to be appropriate.</p> <p>JH advised she will also prepare a document as part of the evaluation. Governors were advised that JH had also prepared a document on Sexual harassment and this will be provided to governors in due course. It was agreed that JH will provide a powerpoint document in this respect each year.</p> <p>The re-working of the training record document is currently in process. Governors were reminded that Safeguarding is an absolute priority.</p> <p>Support & Training for the coming year</p> <p>JH advised that she had approached the NGA with a view to undertaking an external review of Governance. There is to be a meeting including KJ, JK & JH. The NGA will undertake an online appraisal of documentation and then decide whether they need to observe a Governing Body meeting, a committee meeting or deliver a training session. It is hoped this will be done in January.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that this is necessary in order to fulfil not only governance roles but also for OfSTED.</p>	<p>JK</p> <p>All governors</p> <p>JH</p> <p>JH annually</p> <p>JH/JK All governors</p> <p>JK/KJ/JH</p>
<p>B17</p>	<p>Chairs Correspondence and Action</p> <p>JK drew governors' attention to the fact that the office staff are under a lot of pressure at the present time. Governors were asked to be mindful of this when making any requests.</p> <p>Reference was made to document provided by JH. KJ confirmed that the data related to March statistics.</p> <p>JK suggested that it would be helpful if a list of appendices could be put on the website for governors. Governors could then be alerted when these items become available. This would help to reduce the amount of work involved in producing paper copies and unnecessary admin for office staff. It is more important that time is spent on supporting the children than staff producing reams of paperwork.</p> <p>The Chair also asked the Headteacher to consider what other ways might assist in reducing the amount of data provided.</p>	<p>All governors</p> <p>JK/KJ</p>

	<p>TW advised that there appeared to be two elements to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality • Generation of documentation <p>If information is already available it would seem sensible just to upload to the website for governors. If more detailed data is required, then it could be provided to governors at the meetings or in advance</p> <p>KJ advised she would be happy with this arrangement.</p>	KJ
B18	<p>Policies for Review</p> <p>Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>Governor Code of Conduct</p> <p>Charging Policy</p> <p>Staff Development Policy (inc Performance Management)</p> <p>Complaints Policy</p> <p>TW asked how often policies are required to be reviewed.</p> <p>KJ advised only statutory policies have to be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Governors confirmed they had read and accepted all the policies provided.</p>	JK/KJ/JH
B19	<p>Finance</p> <p>It was confirmed that a meeting had still to take place but was scheduled for 4th November.</p>	KJ/JK
C	LEADERSHIP MATTERS	Action
C1	<p>Headteacher Report</p> <p>Annual Report on Complaints</p> <p>Governors were referred to this document. It was noted that some parents had found it difficult to accept the necessary restrictions imposed due to COVID. The Chair advised that this is, and continues to be dealt with as and when it occurs and naturally can also involve an element of fear during these exceptional times.</p> <p>Performance Management Report (inc Headteacher's Pay & Performance)</p> <p>Noted and complied with.</p> <p>Pupil Attendance Statistics</p> <p>Governors were advised that where necessary the Local Authority have been involved regarding attendance issues.</p> <p>An item under this heading was deemed to be confidential and recorded in Part II of the Minutes.</p>	

	<p>Pupil Premium & PE & Sport Premium Expenditure</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>Noted and accepted.</p> <p>School Development Plan Approval</p> <p>Governors indicated their approval and acceptance of the above. KJ reported that the local authority had undertaken a “light touch” review of safeguarding where the school scored 30/30. JK enquired if there was to be another review of safeguarding. KJ advised that the NSPCC would be undertaking a further review this term.</p> <p>Further information on an alleged Safeguarding issue was provided but deemed to be confidential and recorded in Part II of the Minutes.</p> <p>Whole School Performance Report</p> <p>JK wished to record a “very well done” regarding the current vacancy position. Governors were advised that the Headteacher had received resignations during the Summer break in some degree due to Brexit and also parent working hours and conditions changing due to COVID. Even a 10% turnaround of staff has a significant impact. This tends to be an ongoing theme in respect of recruitment.</p> <p>Governors were advised that adverts are placed in a range of publications as well as online. Recruitment can be more an issue of quality rather than quantity and applicants also do not always understand how hard working in a school can be. TW added his thanks for all the work the KJ had done during the Summer to ensure full staffing for September.</p> <p>JK wished the Governing Body’s congratulations to be noted in respect of Claire Richards obtaining a first class foundation degree this summer in Early Childhood Studies. KJ requested to pass these congratulations to member of staff.</p>	<p>KJ</p> <p>KJ/KR</p> <p>JK/KJ</p>
<p>C2</p>	<p>Page 7</p> <p>10. COVID Update</p> <p>JK enquired regarding the impact of COVID on learning.</p> <p>KJ advised that it did not appear to have impacted as much as feared. There was always going to be some impact as parents had had to take over the teaching and delivery.</p>	

D	CONCLUDING MATTERS	Action
D1	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Polling Station</p> <p>KJ expressed concern that the school had had very little say in the premises being used as a Polling Station during the Summer holidays. The Local Authority had not been very considerate. This had impacted on a backlog of work which had arisen during COVID and the Summer break would have been the ideal time for site staff to catch up.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chair would write to the Local Authority advising that the school would not be available in future for such events.</p>	JK
D2	<p>Confidentiality and Intellectual Priority Agreement</p> <p>KJ advised that she has been pushing the Local Authority HR dept to provide this. This has finally been forthcoming and the paperwork has been forwarded to the school's Solicitors. KJ will continue to monitor and chase as appropriate.</p>	KJ
D3	<p>Governor Newsletter articles</p> <p>Governors were reminded of this requirement and it was agreed these would be provided by Governors as follows:-</p> <p>December MP/KC</p> <p>March BK</p> <p>May DL</p> <p>June/July TW/DB (if still in post)</p>	JK/All Governors
D4	<p>Additional items</p> <p>a) Retirement</p> <p>Governors were advised that John Bosley would be retiring on 17th December having given 25 years' service. It was proposed that following coffee and cake that morning between 9.30 and 10.30, Governors should give their own thank you by way of a special farewell.</p> <p>b) Defibrillator</p> <p>The Headteacher requested Governors' agreement to the purchase of a defibrillator for the Farm. Governors agreed.</p> <p>c) Letter from Mr D Blease</p> <p>A letter was read out to Governors, which has been received from Mr Blease expressing his concern regarding the challenges which have been faced by the Headteacher in the recent past and particularly as the school is still going through a period of change/expansion. Governors were asked to be aware of the importance of staff wellbeing and proposing that where possible paperwork for governors should be</p>	JK/KJ KJ JK

	<p>streamlined as much as possible. JK advised she had responded and acknowledged the very relevant and important issues DB has raised.</p> <p>d) Mrs Harle, PA had enquired regarding presentations for the next Governing Body meeting. It was agreed that there should be a presentation on CPD at the November meeting.</p>	<p>KJ</p>
	<p>Confidential Items</p> <p>There were four confidential items. These are recorded in Part II of the Minutes.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
	<p>Dates of next meetings</p> <p>Term 2 30.11.21 at Cliffe Road</p> <p>Term 3 25.01.22 at Rede Court Road</p> <p>Term 4 15.03.22 at Cliffe Road</p> <p>Term 5 10.05.22 at Rede Court Road</p> <p>Term 6 05.07.22 at Cliffe Road</p>	<p>All Governors</p>