

**MINUTES OF A SCRUTINY MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON 18 October 2017 at 6.30pm**

**Governors Present:** Peter Heppelthwaite – Chair, Graham Blackburn, Phil Cave, Steven Chown, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), George O’Neil, Sue Padfield, Sheenagh Parsons, Robin Spicer, Craig Temple, Rev. Kojo Wood.

**Also in Attendance:** Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Barry Burningham, Christine Crawley and Naomi Rose. Dave Martin, Steve Morley and Caroline Phillips were present for part of the meeting.

**Apologies For Absence Received From:** Richard Aggus, Nick Hoffman, Amy Pearson and Hilary Rodgers

*Due to the late arrival of the Chair, the Clerk opened the meeting, but asked the two Vice Chairs to choose which one of them would chair the meeting if the Chair did not arrive before the end of item 3 (an information item).*

*(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)*

Action By:

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> apologies for absence were received from Richard Aggus, Nick Hoffman, Amy Pearson and Hilary Rodgers.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> consent for absence was given to those who had tendered apologies.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> no declarations of interest were received from those present at the time (<i>but see minute for item 8</i>).</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Faculty Presentation – English Department Update</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the talk given by Caroline Phillips regarding developments in the English Department since the previous presentation to governors in March 2017. She tabled a paper based on the one submitted to governors in March, but highlighting a range changes and developments since then. She then talked through these developments in greater detail.</p> <p><i>Sheenagh Parsons joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the examples of student workbooks and folders tabled by Caroline Phillips. There had been considerable changes to the Year 10 tests and these were being monitored on an ongoing basis to see how successful they were. Feedback from the Year 10 open evening had been 100% positive.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the ongoing emphasis on both English Literature and English Language</p> <p><i>Peter Heppelthwaite joined the meeting at this point and took the Chair.</i></p>	

	<p><b>NOTED: in response to questions from governors, how the Department was supporting other teachers in the school in the promotion of reading and language use. Also, the Department's response to and support of Premium and DA students.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Headteacher praised the work being done by Caroline Phillips and the difference this was making in the teaching of English in the school. The Governing Board thanked Caroline Phillips for her presentation and her many efforts on behalf of the school.</p> <p><i>Phil Cave joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p><i>Caroline Phillips left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
4.	<p><b>Safeguarding Report</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the presentation by Steve Morley and the fact that it covered item <b>10.3, Children Looked After Policy</b>, the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2016/17 and an initial safeguarding report on 2017/18.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Item 10.3, Children Looked After Policy</b> – had been posted in the discussion section of Moodle for written comment and agreement by governors prior to the meeting. Whilst a number of governors had recorded their agreement of the document, there were insufficient responses to reach quoracy requirements. The meeting therefore considered the policy document.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Children Looked After Policy as previously posted on Moodle.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the 2016/17 Annual Safeguarding Report as posted on Moodle prior to the meeting. Steve Morley highlighted two minor corrections to section 9 of the report that he would need to make. All staff were now trained to Prevent Level 1.</p> <p><b>NOTED: in response to a question from governors, the size of and level of detail within a Children in Need Plan and how this compared to a Child Protection Plan.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the 2017/17 safeguarding situation to date, including the low number of Prevent referrals made at the end of the previous year and into this one. Steve Morley would be meeting further with the Prevent team at the end of the week. The Prevent Team had also offered to come into school to provide further training for staff and governors. A date had yet to be arranged.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	SM/NR
5.	<p><b>Exam Results, Pupil Performance Data</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the presentation and previously uploaded report by David Martin. In particular, he explained old and new GCSE gradings and related measures for judging school performance in terms of Attainment 8. Whilst The Nobel school had many achievement scores above average, it was deemed below average for Student Progress and below average overall for 16/17. In 15/16 it had been deemed average overall.</p>	

	<p>There were clearly anomalies within the new scoring system. Nevertheless, it was a disappointing result.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> last year had seen the introduction of a new maths course and, with hindsight, the school should have entered more students for the higher level as this would have improved the Attainment 8 score. David Martin felt that the school's overall score was below average because it didn't play the "scoring games" that some other schools did, but simply put the needs of individual students first.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> that in 2017/18 the school would be paying close attention to which Maths tier students were entered for and the number of data slots not filled because of the needs of students. <b>In response to a question from governors, David Martin advised that the school could fill more slots and maintain its integrity towards individual students by reviewing the curriculum pathways it made available and working closely with students to make the right decisions for them.</b> The performance of HATS/Most Able students, boys in general and the performance of disadvantaged students would also be focused on. The school would be looking at why its boys were under performing, including male students feeling it's not cool to be academically good at school. The school would be utilising peer pressure, as well as staff support, to challenge this. HATS boys had done "just enough" rather than better than enough in terms of results. Other schools expected more of their HATS students The Headteacher felt the school needed to be self-critical and improve.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> (following on from item 3) the improvement in English results.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> in light of the above, the school would be re-considering RACE and especially R1 with a view to re-writing the school improvement plan. The Headteacher felt the plan needed to be slimmed down, with greater focus on key issues.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> in response to a question from governors, that students suffering from long term illness did have an impact on the school's score, but it was not a significant impact because of averaging and because other schools were likely to have similar issues.</p> <p><i>David Martin left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
6.	<p><b>RACE Monitoring</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Headteacher advised that, as referred to in item 5, as the school would be re-visiting its school improvement plan, the reports to be presented under this item had been deferred. Further details on RACE would be presented to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> staff had made huge efforts to support students, but it had not delivered the expected results. The school needed to be smarter in its approach, including streamlining and focussing RACE and having higher expectations of students. The school needed to learn from its most successful areas and address weaknesses in its least successful ones.</p>	

	<p><b>NOTED:</b> governors recognised the hard work of staff in taking the school forward, <b>but felt that evidence was needed to show if interventions made by the school, such as the Breakfast Club, had born fruit and if not, why not? If they were successful, lessons learned need to be included routinely in the classroom so the school was not reliant on additional interventions.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> further details of areas to be addressed, including the need to look at ways of teaching memory skills to students. Evaluation methods had changed and the school was out of practice in teaching for exams and retaining information (revision strategies). Plans were in existence to address this and embed strategies.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Term 1 Finance Report</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the finance report that had previously been posted on Moodle, detailing the school finances as at 31/8/17. Christine Crawley highlighted key issues arising from the figures, including which costs were fixed and which were variable. It was possible that income in relation to the Renewable Heat Incentive might not materialise. Facility Management rebates might not be as high this year as last and lettings income was down as the school had lost a couple of bookings that it had, so far, been unable to replace. Christine Crawley felt that the End of Year figure was likely to be worse than budget and in the region of a £200k deficit as opposed to the £130k deficit budgeted for. She acknowledged, however, that she tended to be pessimistic in her predictions.</p> <p><b>NOTED: the Chair had requested that Christine provide clear and streamlined financial reports for governors, hence the change in reporting detail to this meeting.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> a decision was still awaited regarding a payment from the Life Cycle Fund to the school for maintenance work already carried out. It was possible that this would be agreed within this financial year, but there was no guarantee.</p> <p><b>NOTED: governors queried if there was a risk of financial intervention by Hertfordshire County Council given the school's worsening financial position? Christine Crawley did not believe so as the school had already put in place measures to reduce the deficit longer term and was not performing that badly compared to other Hertfordshire schools.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> The school was waiting for a new benchmarking report to come out and was hoping for a reduction in Facility Management costs as a result. The deadline for the report was the end of October and Christine Crawley hoped to have more information by the next meeting.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the term 1 finance report.</p>	

8.	<p><b>Aged Debtors List</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Peter Heppelthwaite declared an interest in this item and took no part in the discussion. He offered to leave the room for the item, but the Governing Board did not deem it necessary.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report that had been posted on Moodle. Christine Crawley advised that the debts were as a result of slow payments rather than default and all were slowly being paid off.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Given the operational nature of the subject, a governor queried whether it was necessary to receive this report. Christine Crawley advised that such reports were required as evidence that the school was managing its finances appropriately.</b></p>	
9.	<p><b>ICT Asset Disposal Report</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> no report had been submitted as there was insufficient ICT kit to dispose of at this present time.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Approval of Policies</b></p> <p><b>10.1 Relationships and Sex Policy</b>  <b>10.2 Target Setting Procedure</b>  <b>10.3 Children Looked After Policy – agreed as part of item 4</b>  <b>10.4 Freedom of Information Publication Scheme</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the policies as previously uploaded onto Moodle for written comment and agreement by governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> that whilst a number of governors had recorded their agreement of the documents, there were insufficient responses to reach quoracy requirements. The meeting therefore considered and discussed the documents individually.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Relationships and Sex Policy as posted on Moodle.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Target Setting Procedure as posted on Moodle.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme as posted on Moodle.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the frustration of one governor that Moodle was not being fully utilised as originally agreed. Currently its usage was half and half, which was very frustrating. The Chair commented that he did not like the paperless approach and had raised the possibility of hard copy agendas and reports being sent out in advance of the meeting. Other governors asked if reports could be sent out by email and if personal email addresses could be used in addition to or instead of school emails.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> that the agenda and reports were routinely uploaded onto Moodle a week before meetings and the Clerk sent an email to all governors and SLT members advising them of the forthcoming meeting and the availability of papers online. Governors could print off reports if they preferred hard copy versions. Documents for discussion and written agreement in advance were highlighted and were posted in a</p>	<p><b>NR</b></p> <p><b>NR</b></p> <p><b>NR</b></p>

	<p>separate section of Moodle to achieve a visible and recorded audit trail. Governors could raise questions about these reports and agree them online in advance of the meeting to save time at meetings. Their agreement could then simply and quickly be ratified at the meeting, but the audit trail would prove to Ofsted and governors that the reports had been appropriately considered. Technically any decision had to be made by a quorate full board.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> Christine Crawley to check the possibility of creating a group email containing governors' private addresses to permit governors' notification of school matters via their private addresses and also permit voting via email with a viewable audit trail.</p>	<b>CC</b>
11.	<p><b>Governor Attendance Record 2016/2017</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report previously uploaded onto Moodle and the annual data also available on the school website. The Clerk advised that the figures did not differentiate between absences approved by the Board and those that were not, although this could be shown in future years if the Board wished it.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> that Head Boys and Girls did not attend meetings very often. <b>The Chair felt that the student voice was being lost. A discussion of the value of the Head Boy and Girl attending meetings into which they felt they had little valid input then ensued.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> that appropriate items should be placed on future agendas to encourage the attendance of the Head Boy and Girl from time to time and to enable the student voice to be heard clearly at Governing Board Meetings.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair (assisted by the Clerk) should speak to governors with low attendance figures and no given reason for the same.</p>	<b>MH/PH</b>  <b>PH</b>
12.	<p><b>To Agree the Minutes of the Previous Meeting of The Board held on 20 September 2017 and discuss any matters arising, including actions from the tracking sheet</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the minutes of the Strategic Board meeting held on 20 September 2017 as a true and correct record. These were duly signed by The Chair.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the following matters arising from the minutes and action tracking sheet-</p> <p><b>Item 5 – Behaviour For Learning Policy:</b> Steve Morley had posted the revised policy as agreed in the discussion section of Moodle for written comment and agreement by governors. Whilst a number of governors had recorded their agreement of the document, there were insufficient responses to reach quoracy requirements. The meeting therefore considered the policy document.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the revised Behaviour For Learning Policy as previously uploaded onto Moodle</p> <p><b>Item 6 – Future School Developments:</b> the Clerk advised the meeting</p>	<b>SM</b>

	<p>that she had received no further emails from governors regarding school strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><b>Item 13 – Governance Matters:</b> the Clerk reminded governors that a number of personal data returns were still outstanding. Additional completed documents were passed to the Clerk at the meeting.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> Anyone who had still not returned all their completed and signed data documents to the school was encouraged to do so as a matter of urgency.</p> <p><b>Item 15 – AOB, Foundation Committee:</b> The Clerk advised that Steven Chown had volunteered to serve on The Foundation Committee. There was still a space on the Committee for a further volunteer.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> membership of the Foundation Committee as Peter Heppelthwaite, Martyn Henson, Steven Chown, Hilary Rodgers, Robin Spicer and Rev. Kojo Wood.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
13.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there was no other urgent business to be discussed.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the date of the next Scrutiny meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 13 December 2017 at 6.30pm.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the date of the next Foundation Committee Meeting as Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at 6.30pm.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> apologies for absence were received in advance for the Foundation Committee Meeting from Rev. K. Wood.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts  
**Clerk To The Governors**  
**21 October 2017**

**Approved by The Board of Governors on:**

**Date:** .....

**Signature (Chair):**.....