

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON 30 January 2019 at 6.30pm**

Governors Present: Peter Heppelthwaite – Chair, Steven Chown, Martyn Henson – Headteacher, Nick Hoffman, James Kay, Sue Padfield, Hilary Rodgers, Robin Spicer, Rev Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Christine Crawley, Naomi Rose, and Head Girl and Boy, Barry Burningham, David Martin and Steve Morley (for parts of the meeting), PLUS members of the public.

Apologies For Absence Received From: Sheenagh Parsons

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

Action By:

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| 1. | <p>To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same</p> <p>NOTED: apologies for absence had been received from Sheenagh Parsons. Graham Blackburn and Phil Cave were also absent.</p> <p>NOTED: Phil Cave had not attended a meeting of the Board or submitted apologies for absence for over twelve months.</p> <p>AGREED: consent for absence was given to those who had tendered apologies to the meeting.</p> | |
| 2. | <p>Notification of Any Other Business</p> <p>NOTED: in the light of Phil Cave’s ongoing absence and related discussions at the last Board meeting, his continued membership of the Governing Board should be considered.</p> <p>AGREED: to discuss Phil Cave’s position as a co-opted governor as AOB.</p> <p>AGREED: to discuss a request for Capital Expenditure as AOB.</p> <p>AGREED: to discuss a meeting of the Budget Working Part as AOB.</p> <p>AGREED: to discuss the Health and Safety matter requested by Robin Spicer as the Health and Safety Lead Governor under the Health and Safety agenda item (item 10).</p> | |
| 3. | <p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: there were no declarations of financial interest at this point in the meeting.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>Welcome to Parent Observers</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair welcomed the parent observers to the meeting.</p> | |
| 5. | <p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: a written report had not been made available to governors for this meeting. Steve Morley reported orally that there had been no referrals since</p> | |

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| | <p>the last Board meeting, though concerns had been raised.</p> <p>NOTED: the presentation by Steve Morley on CPOMs, the new software designed to record and gather safeguarding information. At the moment the software was still being customised for school use and staff would need to be trained in its confidential use. Whilst the customisation process was not without complications, the school's ability to share information appropriately with other schools was important.</p> <p>NOTED: The biggest safeguarding issues facing the school were neglect, poor parenting and County Lines gang activity. Drug issues had not come into the school, but there were indications of gang activity amongst some students. In-school events had been arranged to highlight and address these issues before they escalated. The school took its safeguarding role seriously and wished to help students protect themselves as well as protect them.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p> | |
| 6. | <p>The Student Voice</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair welcomed the Head Girl and Head Boy to the meeting. They were invited to introduce themselves.</p> <p><i>Barry Burningham joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the views of the Head Girl and Head Boy on being Nobelians. They felt safe at the school and were proud to be part of it. Both were actively engaged in sport. The Head Boy ran at national level and confirmed he would not have done so if not for the school, which had challenged him to go beyond his personal comfort levels. It had boosted his self-confidence and given him self-discipline. The Head Girl told a similar story about her involvement in Rugby.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors asked what students thought they should be focussing on within the school? It was felt governors should be focussing on safeguarding students and both the Head Boy and Girl were impressed the Governing Board and school took the matter so seriously. Governors then asked what they would like to change about the school. Both felt they had no changes they particularly wanted to see.</p> <p>NOTED: the pros and cons of four-period subjects in the Sixth Form from both the student and school perspective. Four period classes were designed to enable students to participate in Stevenage's collegiate system and take subjects at other schools if required. The Headteacher felt the matter needed serious consideration to see if it was a benefit or a hindrance to the student experience at Nobel.</p> <p>NOTED: The Chair thanked the students for their valuable input and invited them to stay and observe the meeting for as long as they wished.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>RELIC: Headteacher's Report</p> <p>NOTED: the report previously uploaded to Moodle and the documents tabled by the Headteacher.</p> <p>NOTED: the tabled papers included results of the recent parent survey. The</p> | |

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| | <p>school was pleased with the results.</p> <p>AGREED: Governors should be provided with parent survey results showing both percentages and numbers responding and indicating whether the responses were broadly spread across the whole school or more localised.</p> <p>NOTED: the focus on a healthy school, with Caley Hills and Joe Blight leading on the matter including mental health. In response to a question regarding governor involvement in the promotion of a healthy school, it was suggested that both members of staff could be invited to a future meeting to talk to governors</p> <p>AGREED: to arrange for Caley Hills and Joe Blight to attend a future Board meeting to talk about achieving a healthy school.</p> <p>NOTED: the role that catering could play in encouraging healthy eating and the governors' role in appointing catering contractors.</p> <p>NOTED: the school's involvement in the Great Expectations Project. The school would be contributing to a book at the end of the project.</p> <p>NOTED: the Head apologised for removing the planned teaching and learning item from the agenda, but advised the meeting that a RACE report on teaching and learning would be uploaded to Moodle the following day for governors' information.</p> <p>AGREED: the new Assistant Head should come to the next meeting with Corrina Reader to talk about her role at the school.</p> | <p>MH</p> <p>MH</p> <p>MH/ Clerk</p> |
| 8. | <p>Progress Data</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded in advance to Moodle and the presentation by David Martin highlighting where regularly updated dated could be found on Moodle outside of meeting reports. He described the use of data at KS3 and how data was being used to help target students, close performance gaps and stretch achieving students.</p> <p>NOTED: the year group data for training groups and the way in which data was being made available to parents. Governors queried how data was used to assist middle level students and David Martin went on to explain the creation of challenging targets and the role of the individual teacher in assuring challenge within each lesson.</p> <p>AGREED: Year 10 data would be available in February and would therefore be presented to the March Board meeting.</p> | <p>DM/ Clerk</p> |
| 9. | <p>Determined Admission arrangements 2020/21</p> <p>NOTED: the reports previously uploaded to Moodle, including the recent consultation on admission arrangements in relation to children looked after abroad and the resultant changes to the Admissions Statement for 2020/21.</p> <p>AGREED: the proposed changes to the Admissions Statement.</p> | |

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| 10. | <p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: a report had not been uploaded to Moodle as there had been nothing to report since the last Board meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: as per item 2, Robin Spicer, as lead Health and Safety governor, stated that he was pleased with the school's approach to Health and Safety.</p> | |
| 11. | <p>Benchmarking</p> <p>NOTED: the report previously uploaded to Moodle. The Benchmarking data was based on the previous year and therefore still reflected the high cost of the FM contract, but expenditure figures would decrease in subsequent years as the new contractual arrangements impacted on the school budget. Christine Crawley did not feel the benchmarking exercise had highlighted anything the school did not already know. The exercise would be repeated in 2020 so that the school could build up a year on year comparison for governors.</p> | |
| 12. | <p>Four Year Financial Forecast</p> <p>NOTED: the report previously uploaded onto Moodle. The forecast echoed that contained with the revised budget submitted to the previous meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: the school's forecast operational deficit position and its steady improvement over the next few years, although it was felt the fourth year forecast was too nebulous and distant to be meaningful. Christine Crawley did not, however, predict any significant risks in achieving the forecast. In response to a question from governors, it was confirmed that the repeated approval of a deficit budget could result in a school losing its delegated powers and if the generated surplus did not rise to the 5% level the school would remain a cause for concern.</p> <p>AGREED: the four year forecast as presented.</p> <p><i>The Head Girl and Head Boy left the meeting at this point.</i></p> | |
| 13. | <p>Fund Raising Initiatives</p> <p>NOTED: a report had not been uploaded onto Moodle as there were no fund raising initiatives to report. The Capital Expenditure request agreed as an item of AOB, however, related to a fund raising initiative and the meeting therefore agreed to consider the tabled report at this stage of the meeting. Quotations had only been received from some builders that afternoon in relation to the Caretaker's House, so it had not been possible to place an item on the agenda or circulate papers in advance.</p> <p>NOTED: the details of the quotations received for the repair and redecoration of the Caretaker's House. The Chair was not convinced all the quotations were compatible, as some included elements not apparently included in others. The quotations needed to be reviewed by a smaller working group.</p> <p>NOTED: expenditure of up to £42k was required to make the house habitable, but the school believed it could be reclaimed by renting out the property for three years or more. At the moment the house was deteriorating and costing the school approximately £100 per month. Christine Crawley favoured renting</p> | |

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| | <p>the property out while longer term development issues were considered. She confirmed that funds were available within the capital allocation to meet expected expenditure</p> <p>AGREED: in principle, to expenditure of no more than £42k in terms of improvements to the caretaker's house. Authority to make a decision regarding the details of the work and the acceptance of a quotation was delegated to the working group of The Chair, The Headteacher, Rev. K. Wood and Christine Crawley as set up at the Board meeting of 5 December 2018.</p> | CC |
| 14. | <p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report as previously uploaded onto Moodle. Christine Crawley talked through the updates made to the plan since the last meeting. In particular, the school was drawing up an ICT strategy. The meeting discussed the role of ICT, including smart phones, in the delivery of the curriculum. The cost of maintaining current ICT levels was noted, as was the need to train teaching staff in its effective use. The additional funding promised by Phil Hammond to schools would assist in the implementation of the final ICT strategy.</p> | |
| 15. | <p>ICT Disposal Report</p> <p>NOTED: the report previously uploaded onto Moodle.</p> <p>AGREED: the level of PCs to be returned to Hewlett Packard as per the report.</p> | CC |
| 16 | <p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>16.1 B4L Policy 16.2 Accessibility Policy 16.3 Governor Appointment Procedure</p> <p>NOTED: all policies had previously been uploaded onto Moodle for discussion and agreement. Governors in excess of the current quorum had approved the documents online.</p> <p>AGREED: to the above three policies.</p> | |
| 17. | <p>Review of Governor Skills Audit</p> <p>NOTED: as per the Action Tracker, completion of the Governing Board Skills Audit was outstanding. The Board had planned to complete it by the end of January 2019, but not all governors had completed their personal skills audit forms as previously agreed and planned training, such as Critical Friend training, remained outstanding.</p> <p>AGREED: Christine Crawley would re-send the current skills audit returns to the Chair so that he could chase up the outstanding skills audit returns from individual governors as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>AGREED: Once a full return had been obtained, the Chair would consult with the Clerk regarding the drawing up of a Board level summary Skills Audit and its implications for future governor recruitment.</p> | <p>CC</p> <p>PH</p> |

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| 18. | <p>Succession Planning</p> <p>NOTED: the natural conclusion of governor terms of office had led to the Board carrying a growing number of governor vacancies. This agenda item had been agreed to enable future planning to avoid the build up of vacancies in succeeding years. The possibility of considering succession planning at SLT level had also been envisaged.</p> <p>NOTED: the Board plan of current governors identifying possible future governor candidates had not been successful to date, though the school had identified an encouraging number of parents willing to stand for the parent governor vacancy or to take on a co-opted governor role. The Chair was therefore hopeful that the Board could fill its outstanding vacancies at the next meeting. The number of current vacancies and their nature were summarised by the Clerk. She pointed out that several more governors would reach the end of their term within the next few months and highlighted the Board's statutory obligations to fill vacancies as soon as possible after they had arisen.</p> <p>NOTED: that although Sheenagh Parsons would soon be stepping down as a governor soon, she had agreed to undertake a formal handover to the governor taking over the role as safeguarding lead, once identified.</p> | |
| 19. | <p>Governor Visits</p> <p>NOTED: there had been no recent governor visits.</p> <p>NOTED: governors repeated their request that a specific week be allocated for governor visits in the school calendar and that formal invitations be issued to governors for specific events. The Headteacher advised that a week for governor visits had been identified in January, but as no governor was aware of it, something had clearly gone wrong in terms of communications. He apologised and said he would identify another week for visits and notify governors accordingly.</p> <p>AGREED: that a week for governor visits should be clearly identified and communicated to all governors.</p> <p>NOTED: governors were disappointed that RACE information was no longer on Moodle as they were unable to access the shared drive in order to view it on Office 365. The importance of governors having access to data and RACE information to inform their visits to the school was stressed.</p> <p>AGREED: the school should either resolve governors' access to the shared drive or make the information available on Moodle.</p> | <p>MH</p> <p>CC/ BB</p> |
| 20. | <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 5 December 2018</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 5 December 2018 as a true and correct record. These were duly signed by the Chair.</p> | |
| 21. | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>21.1 Request For Capital Expenditure</p> <p>NOTED: This had been taken as part of item 13 on the agenda.</p> | |

