

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**HELD ONLINE VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH AT 6.30PM**

**Governors Present:** Peter Heppelthwaite (Chair), Steven Chown, Christine Crawley, Kelly Hagland, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Nick Hoffman, James Kay, Mark Laws, Rose Odudu, Wendy Parsley, Matthew Reah, Robin Spicer, Rev. Kojo Wood.

**Also in Attendance:** Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Naomi Rose (Deputy Headteacher) and Andrew Mesher, Steve Morley, Corrina Reeder (teaching staff) – for parts of the meeting.

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

Action By:

1.	<p><b>To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> all governors were present and the meeting was quorate. Apologies for late arrival were received from Wendy Parsley because of the concurrent parents' evening. Members of staff attending the meeting would also be late for the same reason.</p>	
2.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> no matters of AOB were requested.</p>	
3.	<p><b>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there were no declarations of interest.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Safeguarding Report</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report uploaded to Teams with the agenda. The school was currently dealing with two historical safeguarding cases and had recently taken on three more CLA pupils. Year to date attendance was 96.51%, which was above national average. The school had operated a rigorous attendance process during lockdown, which Steve Morley explained to the meeting. There had been some online behavioural issues during lockdown, but nothing significant. Steve Morley provided an update on pupil health and well-being. The school had appointed an Education Mental Health Practitioner as part of a national scheme and would be working closely with St. Nicholas Primary School. <b>The Safeguarding Link Governor stressed the need for the school to work closely with the EMHP and utilise her time as much as possible.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the school had decided not to submit a Restraint Policy to the Board for approval under item 8.2 on the agenda, as previously agreed by the Board, as it wanted key staff to be trained in restraint techniques before a procedure, rather than a policy, was drawn up.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Headteacher advised that, as the Safeguarding report contained attendance and behaviour statistics that the school regarded as Fundamentals data, there was no separate Fundamentals Data report for item 6 on the agenda. <b>Governors agreed that the data in the report was sufficient.</b></p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	

5.	<p><b>Head's Termly Report and COVID 19 Issues</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there was no written termly report (or video) as indicated on the agenda. The Head said he would provide a termly report for the Summer Term. He reported orally on the current situation, including the re-opening of the school and the provision of lateral flow tests. Everyone at the school had been offered three tests and only a very few had declined. Pupils would now be expected to test themselves at home every Wednesday and Sunday. If they tested positive for COVID they would have to self-isolate unless they subsequently received a clear PCR test. The Science technicians led by Caroline Goldsmith had organised school testing effectively and scientifically and the Head was very proud of their efforts. <b>In response to a question from a parent governor, the meeting discussed how parents of children currently self-isolating could obtain lateral flow tests for use at home.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> in the absence of formal summer exams, the school would assess pupils with maximum integrity. The Headteacher summarised the school's process for assessing pupils, with teacher assessment being internally quality assessed by senior staff. School would finish at the May Half Term for pupils who would have sat external exams, but the school was planning on using the second half of the summer term to provide bridging work and prepare pupils for A levels and Vocational Qualifications for those staying on into the sixth form. The level of internal applications to the sixth form had increased considerably this year, including positive recruitment to Further Maths.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Parent evenings were working well online. <b>A parent governor commented that more time with the teachers, for example ten minutes rather than five, would have been appreciated.</b> The school was sympathetic but advised this was physically impossible. Parents wanting a more detailed discussion, however, could email the member(s) of staff concerned. <b>Other governors who were parents said they appreciated the short focused input provided by five minute slots.</b></p>	
6.	<p><b>Fundamentals Data</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there was no written report as indicated on the agenda. As per minute 4, the Headteacher advised that, as the Safeguarding report had contained attendance and behaviour statistics that the school regarded as Fundamentals data, there was no separate Fundamentals Data report.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Curriculum Presentation – Maths Teaching</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> as Andy Mesher had been delayed by the parents' evening, this item would be taken later in the agenda.</p>	
8	<p><b>Approval of Policies</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the four policies listed on the agenda:</p> <p><b>8.2 Staff Health and Attendance Policy</b> – uploaded to Teams for approval. <b>Governors had asked questions online regarding the policy and these had satisfactorily been answered.</b> Over half the Governing Board had approved the document online.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Staff Health and Attendance Policy as uploaded to Teams.</p>	

	<p><b>8.2 Restraint Policy</b> – no document had been uploaded to Teams. As per minute 4 above, the school had decided not to submit a Restraint Policy to the Board for approval, as previously agreed by the Board, as it wanted key staff to be trained in restraint techniques before a procedure, rather than a policy, was drawn up.</p> <p><b>8.3 Physical Activity Policy</b> - uploaded to Teams for approval. <b>Governors had asked questions online regarding the policy and these had satisfactorily been answered.</b> Over half the Governing Board had approved the document online.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Physical Activity Policy as uploaded to Teams.</p> <p><i>Naomi Rose joined the meeting during this item</i></p> <p><b>8.4 Grievance Policy</b> - uploaded to Teams for approval. <b>Governors had asked questions online regarding the policy and these had satisfactorily been answered.</b> Over half the Governing Board had approved the document online, however, <b>following email discussions with a governor offline,</b> the school wanted to recommend further changes to the document. These were summarised as follows: all communication must remain respectful; the Chair would not be involved in any first line grievance hearing, so they could be involved in any subsequent appeals hearing; a neutral venue would be made available for grievance hearings if requested; new evidence could be submitted at the Appeals stage provided it was relevant to the Grievance Hearing decision and no additional grievances were added; a section on minuting of hearings and record keeping to be added to the policy.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Grievance Policy as uploaded to Teams, including amendments as described orally to the meeting.</p> <p><i>Corrina Reeder joined the meeting during the above discussions.</i></p>	
9.	<p><b>Health and Safety Update</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the reports uploaded to Teams with the agenda, including the updated COVID Risk Assessment. After School Clubs could now operate. <b>Governors asked if external lettings could now resume?</b> The school advised that After School Clubs were part of the School’s operation. External lettings were not yet possible, though it was possible that outdoor external lettings might be permitted from April onwards subject to government guidance.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Financial Reports</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the reports uploaded to Teams with the agenda.</p> <p><b>10.1 SFVS</b> - the deadline for completion of the document had been put back. Chris Crawley was hoping to convene a meeting of the Finance Working Group in the near future to consider the SFVS and the draft budget for 2021/22. <b>The Chair advised of his non-availability in the short term.</b></p> <p><b>10.2 Statement of Internal Controls</b> – the statement was no longer mandatory, but the school continued to produce it in order to provide added reassurance to the Governing Board. <b>Governors queried whether this created unnecessary work for the school and a duplication of information?</b></p>	

	<p><b>AGREED:</b> unanimously that the school need not produce a statement on internal controls in future.</p> <p><b>10.3 and 10.4 Term 2 Finance Report and Cash Monitoring Report</b> – the school’s financial position was looking more positive than expected, largely because of savings in relation to lockdown. <b>Governors asked what the school planned to do with the increased surplus?</b> The Headteacher acknowledged he would want to spend more on staffing. Chris Crawley hoped to put some funding back into the Life Cycle Fund as previously agreed by the Governing Board, but was hesitant to say if this would be possible until the end of the financial year. The LA was looking for the school to build up reserves of between 5% and 7%. With the forecast improvement, the school would achieve a reserve of 5%, so utilising that reserve might not be prudent. <b>The Board thanked Chris Crawley for an informative report.</b></p>	
11.	<p><b>Curriculum Presentation – Maths Teaching (Item 7 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><i>Andy Mesher had joined the meeting by this point and provided the presentation on Maths Teaching listed as item 7 on the agenda.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the presentation delivered via screen sharing. It included an overview of staffing in the department, the reason for mixed ability teaching below the top set, the use of Maths Mastery and the value of joint planning of lessons. <b>Governors asked why Maths Mastery had been chosen and whether it was purely a financial choice?</b> Andy Mesher advised that the additional buy-ins the school had discarded had not proved helpful and did not deliver value for money. It was felt that Maths Mastery delivered added value to the school.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the presentation reflected on the less than positive 2019 data and the steps taken by the department in response to this, including routine assessments and interventions and the production of pupil booklets in keeping with the rest of the school. The booklets had proved helpful during lockdown. Department data showed improvement since 2018, notwithstanding the issues of 2019. It was felt that 2021 would be a good year with pupils demonstrating improved learning. The focus was on increasing 5+ and SPI data. A level performance was also demonstrating an improvement.</p> <p><i>Wendy Parsley joined the meeting part way through the presentation.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED: governors asked if the department would be sharing its successful interventions with the rest of the school?</b> Andy Mesher said he would want to see tangible outcomes before promoting any of the department’s actions to others and acknowledged that the department had often copied the strategies already used by other departments in the school. The Head and Deputy Head highlighted the value of a transparent curriculum and sharing across subject areas. <b>Governors commented that the Board’s review of school data had identified Maths Progress 8 data for 2017-2019 had been on the wrong side of 0. They asked what key changes had been made by the department to improve this?</b> Andy Mesher summarised the use of Maths Mastery, sharing good practice, increased team experience, use of Share Point and regular pupil testing. He hoped Maths scores would be on the right side of Progress 8 when next formally evaluated. <b>The Board thanked Andy Mesher for a detailed presentation.</b></p> <p><i>Andy Mesher and Corrina Reeder left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	

12.	<p><b>School Business Plan (item 11 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there was no written report as indicated on the agenda. Christine Crawley advised there had been no change to the School Business Plan since last considered. The Cleaning Contract was coming to the end of its third year and the school had the option of continuing it for a further two years. The school was happy with the contractor's performance and recommended continuing with the contract. <b>Governors commented on the good performance of the current manager and supervisor. Governors also questioned why, given the school's commitment to bringing most facilities operations inhouse, it was not choosing to do the same with the cleaning contract?</b> The school explained its reasons for continuing to outsource cleaning, but said that a closer partnership arrangement with an external provider would be considered when the matter next went out to tender. The proposal to extend the current cleaning contract for another two years was then put to the vote.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to extend the current cleaning contract for a further two years.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Chris Crawley was obtaining quotations for refreshing the Wi-Fi system at the end of the academic year. She would report back when further information was available.</p>	
13.	<p><b>School Development Plan (item 12 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the RAG rated plan uploaded to Teams with the agenda. Most actions were amber because of delays created by the lockdown. As there were no external exams this summer, the school would shortly begin development of the 2021/22 Development Plan so it could be shared with the Board in the Summer Term and the school would start 2021/22 with a plan already in place, making it easier for governors to monitor. <b>Governors asked why, as English GCSE was doing better than Maths, it was allocated an extra one hour slot?</b> The school confirmed that English consisted of two GCSEs whilst Maths was only one.</p>	
14.	<p><b>School Curriculum Plan (item 13 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report uploaded to Teams with the agenda, including changes brought about by the pandemic.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Governance Matters (item 14 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>15.1 Governor Training</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the governor training record uploaded to Teams with the agenda. Kelly Hagland, as the training lead governor, highlighted the increased focus on governor training. Online training sessions took between 20 – 40 minutes and had been prioritised in 3 phases for governors to undertake. Governors were encouraged to sign up to stage one training sessions via The Governor Hub, undertaking at least those courses highlighted in blue by the beginning of the Autumn Term 2021. On completion of a session, governors could claim a certificate, which should then be forwarded to Kelly Hagland as lead governor on training, so she could update the training record. The Clerk would share the current version of the record on Teams under Guidance Notes and Key Documents so all could check on progress and the provision of certificates. Two governors had yet to sign up to the Governor Hub despite repeated</p>	

	<p>invitations.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the clerk would attempt to send further governor Hub invitations to the two governors in question.</p> <p><b>15.2 Additional Link Governor</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Headteacher proposed that Mark Laws be appointed as the Link Governor for the creation of the School Development Plan, as the school had found his input to date to be helpful.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> that Mark Laws should be appointed as Link Governor for the creation and formatting of the School Development Plan, but that all governors retained joint responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the plan once written and approved by the Board.</p> <p><b>15.3 Governor Visits and Monitoring Reports</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the teaching and learning monitoring report uploaded to Teams with the agenda. The Clerk highlighted that a number of promised monitoring reports, including those relating to safeguarding and attendance at staff meetings, were outstanding.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> The Safeguarding Link Governor and all governors who had attended a recent staff event as reported to the Foundation Committee should produce brief governor visit reports for the next Board meeting.</p> <p><b>15.4 Governor Vacancies and Appointments</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Board was carrying five vacancies: 1 LA Governor, 3 Co-opted Governors and 1 Partnership Governor. The Chair was currently in discussion with one possible Co-opted Governor who was ineligible to be a Partnership Governor. Employees of the LA or parents of pupils at the school could not be Partnership Governors, who were expected to represent the local community. All governors were asked to consider whether they knew any suitable Partnership Governor candidates.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Robin Spicer would come to the end of his term as a Parent Governor in May 2021. He was prepared to stand as a Co-opted Governor for a further four years and his appointment would be considered at the next Board meeting. The school would need to arrange for fresh parent governor elections. The Headteacher said he would seek parental nominations via the next school newsletter with a view to holding a ballot after Easter if necessary. <b>The meeting discussed the value of postponing elections to the new academic year to give new parents a voice, but it was felt that the delay and resultant vacancy would not be desirable and there were other mechanisms for involving new parents.</b> The Chair and Steven Chown would be coming to the ends of their terms of office in June 2021. Peter Heppelthwaite was prepared to stand again as a Co-opted Governor if appointed by the Board. He would speak to Steven Chown regarding his intentions. The Chair highlighted that when the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair(s) was considered in the Summer Term it was expected that new candidates for the role of Vice Chair(s) would be needed.</p> <p><b>15.5 Biennial Governing Board Skills Audit</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report uploaded to Teams with the agenda. The Clerk highlighted</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>ML</b></p> <p><b>RS + others</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>MH</b></p> <p><b>PH/SC</b></p>
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	<p>that the next Biennial Skills Audit was due in June. She outlined various possible mechanisms for updating the current Skills Audit.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Clerk should upload the current full Skills Audit, displaying individual governor responses, to Teams under Guidance Notes and Key Documents so all could check their personal assessments and revise them if necessary by the end of May 2021. The clerk would then compile a revised skills audit for consideration at the Summer Board meeting.</p>	<b>Clerk/ All</b>
<b>16.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Foundation Committee held on 24 February 2021 (item 15 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021 and the accompanying summary of Foundation Committee decisions as uploaded to Teams with the agenda.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to ratify the minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021.</p>	
<b>17.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Governing Board held on 13 January 2021 (item 16 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 13 January 2021 (erroneously listed on the agenda as 2 December 2020) and the accompanying Action Tracker document as uploaded to Teams with the agenda. Mathew Reah had requested a change to minute 6 to indicate, "Open Bucket results were below national average and improving" rather than "below national average and flat".</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 13 January 2021, subject to the above amendment to minute 6, as a true and correct record. These would be electronically signed by the Chair.</p>	<b>PH /Clerk</b>
<b>18.</b>	<p><b>AOB (item17 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there were no items of other business.</p>	
<b>19.</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting (item 18 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 5 May 2021 at 6.30pm via TEAMS video link.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the May meeting would be Robin Spicer's last meeting as a parent governor.</p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts  
**Clerk To The Governors**  
**19 March 2021**

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

**Date:** .....

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