

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2023 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Kelly Hagland (Chair), Carly Broom, Chris Crawley, Brett Facey, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Rose Odudu, Shannon Parr, Wendy Parsley, Claire Sutton, Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Naomi Rose (Deputy Headteacher), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager) Steve Morley and Nick Brown (members of staff) for parts of the meeting.

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

Action By:

1.	<p>To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same</p> <p>NOTED: the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>NOTED: apologies for absence were received from Manesh Chudasama, Peter Heppelthwaite and Matt Reah for reasons of a prior commitment, ill health and business commitments.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept the above three apologies.</p> <p>NOTED: apologies for late arrival had been submitted in advance by Chris Crawley as she was participating in a Nobel school trip.</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>AGREED: to consider the following items under AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Well Being 	
3.	<p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: there were no declarations of interest.</p>	
4.	<p>Curriculum Presentation</p> <p>NOTED: the screen-shared presentation from Nick Brown on the topic of Character Education. A copy of the presentation had been provided to governors in advance of the meeting. The school's aims and targets were highlighted and Nick Brown listed the many activities that formed part of Character provision.</p> <p><i>Chris Crawley joined the meeting during the above.</i></p> <p>NOTED: Character Education activities included: assemblies, house points, awards evenings, regular contact with parents, positive recognition boards, Duke of Edinburgh, Student Voice meetings and were included within staff job descriptions. The school was pleased to have been awarded the Character Quality Mark, but there were more developments still required including key staff training and a variety activities within a more structured approach. The Head commented that the awarding body was wanting more formal systems and a shared vocabulary amongst staff and students. The school was working towards this.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor congratulated the school on the award and asked what</p>	

	<p>governors could do to assist with the process? The school suggested the two relevant Link Governors, Clair Sutton and Jamie Kellett, should continue to work with Nick Brown. Jamie Kellett was interested in identifying more alumni and others from industry to serve as mentors and careers links. The Head suggested governors could present some of the awards made as part of Character provision. Governors thanked Nick Brown for a detailed presentation.</p> <p><i>Nick Brown left the meeting at this point</i></p>	
5.	<p>Safeguarding Report and Fundamentals Data</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS along with the agenda, as well as the oral report from Steve Morley. He had received emails from governors asking questions about the report in relation to governor training, an individual non-local pupil, college provision, behaviour and self-harming. He would endeavour to answer them in his talk.</p> <p>NOTED: the largest number of safeguarding concerns received related to self-harm, although this could sometimes be minor. Steve Morley explained how the school responded to incidents of self-harm. Parents might not be involved, dependent on the needs of the pupil concerned.</p> <p>NOTED: the situation regarding an individual, anonymous pupil, who appeared to be travelling long distances was discussed. The meeting also heard about alternative provision, including placements at Hertfordshire Regional College.</p> <p>NOTED: school suspensions remained low in comparison with national averages and attendance levels were good.</p> <p>NOTED: many recently appointed governors needed to undertake safeguarding training with the school.</p> <p>AGREED: Steve Morley or one of his team would co-ordinate with the Clerk over governor training. He was happy to provide a training session for governors any evening the following week from 6pm onwards or on a date to be chosen after Easter. The clerk would identify governor availability. Courses were also available on 4 and 23 May via HfL and could be booked online.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	SM/ Clerk
6.	<p>School Development Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. Governors had been invited to leave comments and questions on the discussion thread. Governors had asked questions about the Student Survey and communication with parents regarding pupil late attendance. Answers had been provided online. Governors were asked to use the School Development plan as their focus when visiting the school.</p> <p>NOTED: paper copies of the online OFSTED guide were available from Suzanne Crow</p>	
7.	<p>Headteacher's Termly Report</p> <p>NOTED: there was no written report or video as indicated on the agenda, but the</p>	

	<p>Headteacher provided an oral report. The school's current focus was being OFSTED ready, but the Head was concerned that too much emphasis could be placed on an OFSTED outcome, when it was only one of many measures of a school's achievement. The education community had been devastated by the death of Ruth Perry in the face of a poor OFSTED result and the Head hoped that people would come to realise the potential negative impact of an OFSTED inspection. Nevertheless, the school was preparing itself. Year 11 mock exam results were positive and whilst the school believed in ongoing and constant improvement, he felt it was ready for an OFSTED inspection. The Chair concurred with the Head's comments.</p> <p>NOTED: the School Effectiveness Adviser from HfL had visited the school the previous Friday and had found the school improved since her last visit and ready for OFSTED. She was pleased with the teaching seen and would be making other visits to consider the Sixth Form, SEN and one other area.</p> <p>AGREED: the Chair and other interested governors would be invited to meet the School Effectiveness Adviser during her next visit.</p> <p><i>Chris Crawley left the meeting just before 7.30pm because of connection problems.</i></p>	MH/ Chair
8.	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>NOTED: the reports uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. Governors had emailed questions to the Business Manager regarding the Term 2 Finance Report. Questions related to allocated budget, and specific budget codes covering Professional services, Special facilities and premises. Answers had been provided by email and involved HCC deductions, an inappropriate code title and approved expenditure from the Lifecycle fund. The Term 2 outcome was not as positive as expected, with catering income down and Exam, premises and utilities expenditure increased. Nik Thomas was discussing the catering position with the Catering Manager.</p> <p>NOTED: the Cash Monitoring Report had been scrutinised by the Finance Working Group. The downward trend was consistent with the approved deficit budget.</p> <p>NOTED: the SFVS return drafted by the Business Manager on behalf of the governors. Both he and the Clerk stressed this was a Governing Board statement, rather than the school's and needed to be approved by the Board as its statement for submission by 31/3/23. The draft document had been discussed with the Finance Working Group. The response to questions was the same as per the previous year. A fully compliant response had been provided to all questions except question 9, where only partial compliance was recorded as the Governing Board had historically and intentionally set a deficit budget. Kojo Wood, on behalf of the Finance Working Group, said the Group was satisfied with the SFVS return. The meeting thanked the Group for their input. Approval of the 2023 SFVS document was put to the vote.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, the SFVS return for submission by the deadline of 31 March 2023.</p>	
9.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: 2 policies had been scheduled for approval as part of the agreed</p>	

	<p>annual meeting schedule. Both had been made available online for comment and approval, but an insufficient number of governors had approved the documents by the time of the meeting, even when taking into account Chris Crawley's texted approval after she had lost connection with the meeting. The documents were therefore discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>9.1 Physical Activity Policy AGREED: the Physical Activity Policy.</p> <p>9.2 Local Area Visits Policy Policy NOTED: governors queried the tone of the policy's language in some places, in particular the reference to staff "judged competent", which seemed harsh as all staff were, presumably, competent?</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors, the Local Area Visits Policy, subject to alternative being used in relation to the current phrase "judged competent".</p>	NT/ NB
10.	<p>Health and Safety Update 22/23</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. There had been two accidents since the last Board meeting, both related to sports and neither were out of the ordinary. The member of staff involved in the previous RIDDOR reportable accident was back at work.</p> <p>NOTED: a pupil surge had taken place by the entry gate the previous week after the Health and Safety Report had been written and uploaded.. The school was aware of the incident and was looking into it. It would be included in the next Health and Safety report.</p>	
11.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the document uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda for information and as recently submitted to and discussed by the Foundation Committee.</p>	
12.	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>12.1 Governor Training</p> <p>NOTED: Manesh Chudasama was not present to talk about the item and had not provided the Clerk with an updated training record. The Chair highlighted that a Premises Management Course was available online, as that had been identified by the recent Skills Audit as one of the weaker areas of Board knowledge. Safeguarding training was essential and was being arranged as per minute 5 above.</p> <p>12.2 Governor Monitoring and visits</p> <p>NOTED: the following visit reports uploaded to TEAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers – Jamie Kellett had submitted a written report to the last meeting. He had visited the school since then and would provide another written report in due course. As noted previously, he was considering ways of expanding the mentoring and careers advice network available to the school and invited all governors to suggest individuals who could contribute. The value of involving school alumni because of the additional level of connectivity was stressed by 	

	<p>governors and the school. A governor pointed out that both she and family members had contacted the school to offer to become involved but had never heard back. Jamie Kellett agreed to follow up the matter. The Head apologised, said it should not have happened and promised to resolve matters. Governors queried how many other potential contacts might have been lost and whether a “re-set” of the process was desirable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback – the report was noted. Brett Facey commented favourably on how far the approach to feedback had come since he was at school. • Enhancement – Claire Sutton had visited the school again since the report was written to meet with the Character assessment team. Her last report had been used as a way to verify her knowledge. This had emphasised to her the importance of the Link Governor role. • Safeguarding – Mark Laws had attended a useful workshop with Steve Morley on OFSTED preparedness. <p>12.3 Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group</p> <p>NOTED: the notes from the recent Working Group meeting. The group had led on the new 2023 Skills Audit and the Governance Effectiveness survey, both of which were items on the agenda.</p> <p>12.4 Annual Review of Governor Effectiveness 21/22 and 22/23</p> <p>NOTED: the summary of the 21/22 review as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. The results were positive, but only five governors had responded for a variety of reasons as indicated in the report. For 22/23 it had been decided to set up a spring questionnaire to establish a meaningful baseline and then run it again at the end of the academic year for a full review of the year</p> <p>AGREED: Mark Laws would upload to TEAMS a revised version of the 21/22 report with the Clerk’s footnotes attached.</p> <p>AGREED: Mark Laws would work with the Clerk to launch the initial online review questionnaire for 22/23. All governors, including the Head and staff governors, should complete it by the end of April 2023.</p> <p>AGREED: the Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group should meet again just before the end of April to consider questionnaire results so far received, prior to Mark Laws submitting a report to the May meeting of the Board.</p> <p><i>Carly Broom left the meeting during the above discussions but returned later.</i></p> <p>12.5 Governor and Other Feedback</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair had requested email feedback from governors as to how the Board was operating, but had received no responses. Feedback was still welcome, either in the meeting or by email afterwards. A governor suggested it might be helpful to consider matters in the light of the School Development plan and feedback thoughts in relation to governor contribution to the plan. An in-person meeting without an agenda or minutes was suggested, enabling governors to discuss strategic matters or matters of concern to them and to ask questions informally. A governor felt it would be helpful to have a brainstorming session around the SDP. Other governors favoured an informal discussion meeting with a social aspect.</p>	<p>ML</p> <p>ML/ Clerk All</p> <p>Clerk/ ML</p>
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<p>AGREED: the Clerk would liaise with Nik Thomas to arrange an in-person discussion evening after the Easter holidays.</p> <p>12.6 Biennial Governor Skills Audit 2023</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. The clerk thanked all governors for contributing to the audit report. She stressed the report identified the weaker knowledge and skills areas of the Board, not weaknesses per se. The areas of weakest knowledge were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding legal responsibilities in relation to equality • Purchasing • Premises/ Facilities Management • Contracting or Contract Management • Legal Issues • Marketing • Children’s Services <p>Areas where governors with least experience exceeded those who had the greatest experience were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of a Board or Committee • Interpreting Budget Monitoring Reports • Knowledge of how to meet the Board’s legal and compliance responsibilities • Handling Complaints, Exclusions, Mediation, Negotiation • Using data to identify and resolve issues relating to inequality • Safeguarding and Child Protection • Health and Safety • Quality Assurance <p>AGREED: the outcomes of the skills audit would be used to inform future governor recruitment activities and governor training. Governors should consider further training in safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity, finance for governors, quality assurance, exclusions, complaints and the governance framework. All new governors should continue to complete the skills audit on appointment and their results aggregated with the existing audit. All governors should routinely complete the skills audit every two years – the next full audit would be undertaken in February 2025 for completion by March 2025.</p> <p>NOTED: the two current Board vacancies were for a Co-opted (Staff) governor and a Co-opted Governor. The Chair was considering standing as the Co-opted Governor when her term as a parent governor came to an end in the summer, thus leaving a Parent governor vacancy to be filled by nomination and election by parents at the school. The clerk reminded the meeting it could also appoint Associate Members to add to its skill and knowledge pool.</p> <p>NOTED: in response to a question from governors, and further to discussions at the previous meeting, the governor training record had yet to be updated following a full review of training courses available online.</p> <p>12.7 60 second round robin update</p> <p>NOTED: the following summary of activities undertaken by governors since the last meeting: CS – training, visited school, planned link meeting</p>	<p>Clerk/ NT</p>
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	<p>with JK; JK – training, 2 school visits, planned link meeting with CS; RO – nothing to report; KW – was to have attended cultural event but dates changed, Finance Working Group, Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group, school visit re. 6th form; BF – training, met two members of staff ; ML - Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group, Safeguarding Workshop at school, SP – training, CB – training, read articles, liaising with school staff, JM – training, met with KW re. 6th form; WP – school trip and assorted school-based activities; CC (in her absence) - school trip; KH – visited school, meeting with Head, Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group, training, Chairs’ Strategic Briefing.</p>	
13.	<p>Future Developments</p> <p>NOTED: the Headteacher outlined possible future developments the school might consider. The meeting discussed possibilities. There were no strong objections and governors felt it was worth researching options further. The Head would be having further discussions in the near future.</p> <p>AGREED: an item on Future Developments should be added to the next Governing Board agenda. In the meantime, given the provisional nature of discussions, the matter should remain strictly confidential to the Board.</p> <p><i>Nik Thomas left the meeting around this point.</i></p>	Clerk/ MH
14.	<p>Minutes of Foundation Committee Meeting held on 22 February 2023</p> <p>NOTED: the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 22 February 2023 and the accompanying decisions document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 22 February 2023.</p>	
15.	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board held on 25 January 2023</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 25 January 2023 and the accompanying Action Tracker 22/23 document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held 25 January 2023 as a true and correct record. These would be signed electronically by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p>	Clerk
16.	<p>AOB</p> <p>16.1 Staff Well Being</p> <p>NOTED: a governor queried where staff well being was discussed and whether it should be a standing item? The Foundation Committee’s remit included staffing, and governors had previously discussed staff well being, but not as a routine, standing item. The Head commented that the school did a good deal to support staff well being, as previously reported to governors</p> <p>AGREED: Naomi Rose would submit a report on staff well being to the next Foundation Committee meeting and information would then be cascaded to the</p>	NR

	Governing Board.	
17.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 17 May 2023 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended at approximately 9pm</i></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
23rd March 2023

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:17th May 2023.....

Signature (Chair):.....