

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Kelly Hagland (Chair), Manesh Chudasama, Chris Crawley, Brett Facey, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Shannon Parr, Mathew Reah, Claire Sutton, Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager) and Steve Morley (member of staff) for parts of the meeting.

(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: the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>NOTED: apologies for absence were received from Carly Broom and Rose Odudu because of work and holiday commitments.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept the above two apologies.</p> <p>NOTED: Peter Heppelthwaite was also absent. Apologies for late arrival had been submitted in advance by Jackie Mordaunt, Mark Laws and Wendy Parsley because of a parents' evening at the school.</p> | |
| 2. | <p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: no items of AOB were raised for later consideration.</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 interest.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: the two documents uploaded prior to the meeting. The second report was almost identical to the first (as uploaded with the agenda), but contained the additional comments of the Safeguarding and Behaviour Link Governor. Steve Morley provided an oral commentary on the report. The school was currently focusing on feeling safe at school, especially in relation to bullying.</p> <p><i>Mark Laws joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>NOTED: Steve Morley detailed the process the school was adopting to address pupil perceptions of behaviour and bullying that did not always match available evidence. In terms of behaviour, a small number of pupils were causing negative behaviour issues, whilst one third of the school had received no behaviour points. Poor behaviour had resulted in 2 or 3 exclusions the previous week. Attendance was good and was currently at 93.8%. The year to date attendance figure was 92.8%. A governor asked if the school could track its attendance levels against national averages? The school compared its data to Arbor National averages as the DfE data tended to be several months out of date. Late attendance had increased since Easter, with 3.5% of pupils recorded as late that day. The national picture was also worsening in relation to late attendance. The school was taking a more rigorous approach to late arrival and had seen a</p> | |

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| | <p>marginal improvement. Steve Morley would be writing to parents regarding behaviour and attendance the following week and would circulate a copy of the letter to governors. In response to questions from governors, Steve Morley clarified the meanings of the acronyms SCR, EHE and CME.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor asked if the school had considered using an anonymous survey approach with pupils? Steve Morley said he preferred an open survey as it allowed the school to address issues of genuine concern and the small percentage of comments that were clearly vexatious. The survey results were discussed and Steve Morley answered a range of questions from governors in relation to the survey and the report relating to individual, though anonymised, pupils. Governors commented on the 141 causes of concern that had been raised since the last report. The figure seemed high and they asked if it related to 141 individual pupils or contained multiple references to individual pupils? Steve Morley said that he could not tell without checking, but it was likely to contain multiple references to individual pupils, including neglect caused by declining socio-economic factors. A governor asked if the school routinely checked the figures? Steve Morley confirmed that it did, it was just that he couldn't remember the detail that evening without checking.</p> <p>NOTED: the Headteacher felt pupil attitudes had declined post-COVID and this was reflected in the national situation. He reiterated it was a small but persistent cohort of pupils demonstrating significant behavioural issues.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p> | |
| 5. | <p>School Development Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda and the comments and questions raised by governors on the discussion thread. Naomi Rose, the document author, was not in attendance because of the Parents' Evening, but the Head undertook to answer questions as best he could. He pointed out that action on the 22/23 document was winding down and the school was already thinking about next year's SDP.</p> <p>NOTED: governors who had asked questions on the threads were beginning to receive replies. Specifically, governors had asked questions about general progress, whether the document could be RAG rated or summarised, evidence for listed outcomes, dates of specific activities, comparisons with Arbor data, lateness reporting, the impact of outcomes and the assessment of enrichment clubs. The school had moved away from RAG-ing the plan the previous year because some activities didn't start until part way through the year and it was considered misleading to RAG them red from the start. Most activities would be amber for much of the year because, until final data was available, the school could not say if outcomes had been achieved. Enrichment clubs were considered extremely successful with over 70% of students signing up to clubs. PP and SEN engagement had been slightly higher at 71%. Some clubs had low numbers, others high numbers. The school would not run clubs with very small numbers to enable staff to be reallocated to clubs with high numbers. Club attendance could be sporadic. Staff had not been consistent in taking registers and awarding ABC points. The school was considering ways in which the administration of clubs could be improved. The Chair felt there were questions to be addressed regarding how governors engaged with and monitored as large a document as the SDP.</p> <p>NOTED: the Head advised that for 23/24 the SDP would be focusing on</p> | |

incremental changes to individual teachers' practice via coaching and targeted activities resulting in fewer whole-school activities.

NOTED: governors queried how the SDP was linked to the school's Strategic Plan and how governors could have a say in strategic elements? Also, how the SDP for 22/23 would be concluded and how it would be decided what would be carried forward into 23/24. Governors asked the Head how he thought the school had performed against the 22/23 plan?

The Head advised that completed actions were removed from the plan and the school determined what of the remainder was carried forward for the following year. He felt that, in 22/23, the school had achieved most of what it set out to achieve, but many outcomes were dependent on school exam results.

Jackie Mordaunt joined the meeting during the above discussion

NOTED: the Head's report at the end of 22/23 would be a video report and would include feedback and outcomes from the SDP from individual members of staff and curriculum areas. Governors asked how longer term goals were tracked across more than one year? The Head suggested governors should ask staff if they felt that teaching had improved. He was confident the school had achieved what it had set out to do. **Governors highlighted that evidence of achievements would be helpful and feedback from staff could form part of this. The views of link governors would also be valuable.**

NOTED: arising from questions from governors, the meeting discussed in detail the difference between operational and strategic matters and the need for governors to be involved in the creation and approval of strategy. The Head advised that the school wrote the SDP, but governors were welcome to comment on it. **Governors asked when a copy of the SDP would be available for 23/24?** It was a discussion document that could not be finalised until exam results were confirmed. A draft would be available in the Autumn term but unlikely to be finalised until November/ December. If governors were not happy with the draft SDP they needed to say so in October/ November. Governors could evidence outcomes by talking to key staff about exam results. Going forward, the head felt the four key areas of the plan were unlikely to change for 23/24. **Governors indicated there seemed to be some confusion between operational plans, such as the SDP, and the strategic plan. Sight of the school's overarching strategy would make it easier for governors to understand the detail of the SDP. A strategy discussion group was suggested. The meeting discussed why a strategy document was important, governors' involvement in it, ways in which this might happen, the existence of a school Business Plan, why governors did not feel as involved in the SDP as they wanted and ways in which governors might engage more thoroughly with the SDP. Governors questioned the disconnect between the plan and their understanding of its achievements and whether the school's strategic plan needed to be revisited.** The Clerk highlighted that governors had not yet managed a termly visit to each of their link areas and/or were not reporting back on their visits, as evidenced by visit records. She also concurred that there seemed to be confusion regarding strategic and operational documents. A strategic plan was an overarching document encapsulating the school's vision and direction over the next three to five years. To her knowledge, one had not been agreed for some considerable time. Documents such as the SDP, Business Plan and Campus Plan were operational emanations of it. The Head and SLT were responsible for operational plans, but governors should have oversight and involvement in the strategic direction of the school. After further discussion it was...

AGREED: Matt Reah would produce a summary document of the discussion regarding strategic planning and would share it with the Head, Chair and Clerk

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| | before circulating it to all governors. | MR |
| 6. | <p>Financial Report</p> <p>NOTED: the reports uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda covering the funding allocation, the Capital Return and the proposed School Budget for 2023/24.</p> <p>NOTED: the main funding allocation for the school for the financial year 2023/24 was expected to be £8,993,559 revenue and £29,895 capital. When all income and expenditure was included, the school would have a turnover of approximately £10m.</p> <p>NOTED: the school was proposing a deficit budget in 23/24 of c£224k. The school had hoped to achieve break-even in 23/24, but this had not proved possible. With a full year's experience post Covid, the Business Manager had more confidence in the 23/24 budget figures than he had had for 22/23.</p> <p>NOTED: the capital allocation would be combined with the Capital carryover of c40K and would be used to fund the projects within the Campus Development Plan in priority order. The Business Manager was seeking approval of the overall Capital plans, but would seek governors' approval on individual items of expenditure as required.</p> <p>NOTED: governors asked which areas of the proposed revenue budget were the most uncertain. Staff pay was the most uncertain area because of ongoing industrial action, the impact of nationally agreed pay awards and the funding of the same. The Business Manager commented on the structuring of the staffing budgets in further detail and other elements of the proposed budget including PP and SEND funding, the new cleaning contract, energy costs and the drawing down of Lifecycle Funds to continue the school's rolling decoration plan.</p> <p>NOTED: the school's assumptions for 24/25 and 25/26 resulted in ongoing operational deficits, which were not sustainable. The school would need to review its operations, including staffing and energy costs to manage the position and reduce the forecast deficit in future years. Governors queried the 23/24 comparison with the 22/23 outturn. The Business Manager apologised for omitting it. 22/23 had seen a deficit at the high end of £200k. The Business Manager would provide further details for the June Foundation Committee or the July Governing Board. A governor raised a concern that the school was drawing on the Lifecycle Fund year on year without the ability to top it up and without the level of the fund being clearly recorded and ring-fenced. Nik Thomas challenged this and said the fund was recorded and ring-fenced in theory, even it was aggregated with reserves for budget reporting purposes. He would ensure the size of the fund was clearly and separately recorded in the 22/23 end of year report. Governors asked if most schools were experiencing deficit budgets in 23/24? It was acknowledged that many schools were finding it impossible to break-even financially.</p> <p>AGREED: the proposed 23/24 revenue budget of £10,159,424 leading to an in-year deficit of £224,100 and the proposed Capital plan.</p> | NT |
| 7. | <p>Asset Disposal and Procurement</p> <p>NOTED: the Business Manager had hoped to present the meeting with procurement requests for the new academic year, but this had not proved</p> | |

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| | <p>possible. He would submit his requests to a future meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: the keyboards and mice associated with the Mac replacement project the previous summer had been sold and just under £2k had been returned to the Capital Fund as a result.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the SEND Policy scheduled for approval as part of the agreed annual meeting schedule had been made available online for comment and approval, but an insufficient number of governors had approved the document by the time of the meeting. The document was therefore discussed at the meeting. The Chair asked if governors had any unanswered questions? There were none.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors, the SEND Policy.</p> | |
| 9. | <p>Health and Safety Update 22/23 (incl. Spring Term 23 Accident Summary)</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. The number of accidents in the Spring Term was broadly consistent with other terms. Most accidents were related to sport or games. While a couple had been potentially serious, none were foreseeable or part of a larger pattern or concern. The one incident of concern had been the pupil surge that had taken place by the entry gate when members of the teaching staff had been delayed from opening the gates. Only scrapes and bruises had resulted, but the school had taken steps to prevent it from happening again by ensuring that members of the Premises Team were always present to open the gates if the scheduled teachers were delayed.</p> <p>NOTED: there had been one reported accident to date in the Summer Term.</p> <p>NOTED: the Health and Safety Link Governor would be visiting the school again later in the term.</p> | |
| 10. | <p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the document uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. The Business Manager provided an oral commentary and project update, including details of the Computer replacement scheme and the new staff EV scheme. A governor expressed concern that computers were being replaced on a ten-year rolling cycle rather than the five years more common in business and asked whether this meant slow response times for staff and pupils. Given the introduction of solid state hard drives, the school was content with response times and the ten year programme. The use of computers in the classroom was discussed. The school felt that, with the exception of IT and Design, classroom computer use was not as great as might be envisaged and largely involved the use of Word and Excel. The Staff Governor stressed that computer use was of importance to Sixth Form pupils studying science.</p> <p><i>Nik Thomas left the meeting at this point</i></p> | |
| 11. | <p>Governance Matters</p> <p>11.1 Feedback From Governor Strategy/ Social Meeting – 9 May 2023</p> <p>NOTED: issues arising from discussions about strategy had been</p> | |

discussed under minute 5 above. Other issues arising from discussions included a request for in-person meetings at the beginning and the end of the academic year. Matt Reah offered to put together some notes on discussions.

NOTED: not all new governors had attended the meeting. The Chair therefore hoped to convene a meeting with recent governors to discuss how they were finding things.

AGREED: the Clerk would circulate an email to all recently appointed governors in order to arrange a date and venue for a meeting with the Chair.

Clerk

11.2 Governor Training

NOTED: the updated training record uploaded with the agenda. Manesh Chudasama had still to check the training events listed on the record against content available on Modern Governor. He urged all governors to keep an eye on available courses. **He queried who should retain copies of training certificates?**

AGREED: all governors were responsible for their own certificates. They should download them, and provide a copy to Manesh, as the training link governor, to evidence training undertaken. Manesh, however, did not need to retain a copy of the certificate once details had been entered on the training record.

11.3 Governor Monitoring and visits

NOTED: the following visit reports uploaded to TEAMS

- **Careers**
- **Sixth Form**
- **Visit & Monitoring Record 22/23 – the Chair commented favourably on the number of reports so far submitted, but reiterated the Clerk’s comment that governors should be aiming to make one visit per link area per term.**

NOTED: a governor questioned the process for visiting the school to walk around, but not necessarily have a meeting with anyone. It was confirmed that governors should be escorted on their walks and governors should therefore make arrangements with their lead link or the Head to be escorted round. If their lead link could not escort them, governors could ask them to suggest someone who could.

11.4 Skills Audit and Governor Effectiveness Working Group

NOTED: the notes from the recent Working Group meeting held on 21 April 2023. The group had discussed the new 2022/2023 Governance Effectiveness survey, which was the next item on the agenda.

11.5 Preliminary Review of Governor Effectiveness 22/23

NOTED: the anonymised summary of the preliminary 22/23 review as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. Mark Laws highlighted it had had a higher return rate than the previous survey, but as a small Governing Board the aim should be for a 100% response in future. It was a balanced set of results. **The text returns raised the issue of governors’ involvement in the school strategic plan.** As per the Working Group minutes of 21 April, a second survey would be run after

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| | <p>the end of the academic year, launching at the first meeting of the Autumn term in time for results to be considered at the December meeting.</p> <p>11.6 Governor Reappointments</p> <p>NOTED: three governors would come to the end of their term of office on 25 June 2023. All three were willing to stand for another four year term.</p> <p>AGREED: the three governors could remain in the meeting to observe the following discussion and vote, but should take no part in the same.</p> <p>AGREED: to appoint Kelly Hagland as a Co-opted governor for a four year period commencing on 25/6/23 (when her term of office as an elected Parent Governor came to an end) to 24/6/27.</p> <p>AGREED: to appoint Rose Odudu as a Co-opted governor for a four year period commencing on 25/6/23 (when her term of office as an appointed Co-opted Governor came to an end) to 24/6/27.</p> <p>AGREED: to appoint Mark Laws as a Co-opted governor for a four year period commencing on 25/6/23 (when his term of office as an appointed Co-opted Governor came to an end) to 24/6/27.</p> <p>AGREED: the school should arrange for fresh DBS checks for all three re-appointed governors.</p> <p>AGREED: the school should arrange for parent governor nominations and elections to replace Kelly Hagland as a parent governor from June 2023 onwards (the appointment to be confirmed, if possible, at the July Governing Board meeting)</p> <p>11.7 60-second round robin update</p> <p>NOTED: the following summary of activities undertaken by governors since the last meeting, not including the April strategy/ social meeting: KH – training, meetings with Head, Finance Working Group, SA & GE Working Group; MR – Finance Working Group; JK – meeting with Nick Brown, arranging to meet Barry Burningham; CS – training, meeting with Jamie Kellett, meeting with Barry Burningham; KW – meeting with Corinna Reader re. 6th Form, Finance Working Group, SA & GE Working Group; CC – training, planned June visit to school; SP – training; BF – training, planned visit with Matt McGuire; ML – visits to meet Steve Morley, SA & GE Working Group, comments on Safeguarding Report; JM – exam preparation and school activities; MC – updated training record, arranging visit with Sam Head.</p> | <p>Clerk/ NT</p> <p>MH</p> |
| 12. | <p>Future Developments</p> <p>NOTED: the Headteacher outlined recent discussions regarding possible future developments the school might consider. The school had been researching options and had eliminated some whilst discovering others.</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>Clerk/ MH</p> |

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| 13. | <p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board held on 22 March 2023</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 22 March 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 22 March 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 |
| 14. | <p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: no items of AOB were raised for consideration.</p> <p>[After the meeting, the Clerk noted that a governor visit report submitted after the agenda had been published as possible AOB had not been considered. It would be added to the agenda for the next meeting]</p> | Clerk |
| 15. | <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 5 July 2023 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.</p> <p>NOTED: Rev. Kojo Wood submitted his apologies in advance of the meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 9.10pm</i></p> | |

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
18/19th May 2023

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:5 July 2023.....

Signature (Chair):.....