

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Kelly Hagland (Chair), Carly Broom, Chris Crawley, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Wendy Parsley, Mathew Reah, Claire Sutton, Rev.Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager) and Steve Morley, Abbi Brown and Kate Di Gregoria (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 Shannon Parr and Rose Odudu (and subsequently Brett Facey – see Other Urgent Business).</p> <p>AGREED: to accept the above apologies.</p> <p>NOTED: Mark Laws apologised in advance for his early departure. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Naomi Rose (Deputy Head) who was unwell.</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair wished to raise an item in relation to future planning.</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>Decisions Taken Online In-Between Meetings</p> <p>NOTED: a majority of governors had agreed via a TEAMS discussion thread to reappoint Matt Reah as a Partnership Governor for a further four year period from 4/12/23 to 3/12/27.</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify the above online decision taken between meetings.</p> <p>NOTED: Manesh Chudasama had resigned via email from his position as Parent Governor WEF 2/1/24.</p>	
5.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. Steve Morley provided an oral summary. Mark Laws, as Safeguarding and Behaviour Link Governor, had contributed to the conclusion of the report.</p> <p>NOTED: in recent weeks, the school had been busy dealing with requests for information from the LA. The local police representative from a safeguarding project had resigned and it was hoped he would be replaced. The data contained within the report, including exclusions, was discussed. There had been an</p>	

	<p>increase in fixed term exclusions or suspensions caused by significantly challenging behaviour. The steps being taken by the school to address issues were summarised. These included parental involvement and offsite direction. In response to questions from governors, the school's strategy in relation to challenging behaviour was discussed. Following further questions, the head emphasised the school was doing everything possible to avoid permanent exclusions, including working in new ways with other schools in the town to retain pupils, while noting the school's responsibility to the rest of the students. Steve Morley intended to undertake further analysis of EDI data. The Head highlighted that schools, nationwide, were experiencing a worsening of behaviour issues</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
6.	<p>Curriculum Presentation</p> <p><i>Mark Laws left the meeting partway during the following presentation.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the Head introduced Abi Brown and Kate Di Gregorio who gave a shared-screen presentation of a project designed to address underachievement of HAT boys.</p> <p>NOTED: the presentation highlighted existing programmes designed to support high achieving pupils, such as Inspire, Nobel networking events and Aspire, and the research undertaken as part of the new project. Barriers to achievement for HAT boys included peer pressure and a feeling that it was not "cool to be clever". To counter balance this, early intervention at KS3 was required and other planned interventions including encouragement that it was "cool to be clever", individualised mentoring and a progress portfolio to evidence personal development. Intended outcomes were individual focus, staff and pupil awareness of HATS, improved grades. Methods of tracking the project's impact were summarised. The Chair thanked Abi and Kate for their informative presentation and invited questions.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors commented that the strategy was comprehensive and asked if a similar presentation could be made to governors in a year's time to highlight the impact of the project?</p> <p>NOTED: the use of data was discussed, including comparative data for pupil cohorts. A governor asked is she could meet with Abi and Kate on her next school visit?</p> <p>AGREED: the school would arrange for Abi and Kate to provide an update presentation in approximately 12 months time, including year on year comparative data for the same pupil cohorts.</p> <p>NOTED: governors asked if there were any similar successful projects or tailor made programmes the school might learn from? There were no tailor made programmes, but an example of a UK school trialling a similar approach was highlighted. Governors commended the project and the presentation and indicated their willingness to support the project practically if the opportunity arose.</p> <p><i>Abbi Brown and Kate Di Gregoria left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	MH

7.	<p>School Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the updated plan uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. Governors had had an opportunity to raise questions on the discussion threads and further updates were planned. As Naomi Rose was unable to attend the meeting for reasons of ill health, the Head suggested governors email Naomi with any further questions for her to answer when recovered.</p> <p>AGREED: governors would email Naomi with any further questions on the current version of the School Plan for her response when fully recovered.</p>	All
8.	<p>Federation Proposals</p> <p>NOTED: the detailed report as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda and feedback from the recent Federation Working Group meeting. Some governors had raised questions by email and these had received a response. The Chair asked if governors had any further questions? No further questions were raised. Governors said the document was detailed and helpful.</p> <p>AGREED: that a formal proposal to federate with Lodge Farm school should be written, in keeping with the process outlined in the report.</p>	Fed. Wrkng. Group
9.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the six policies listed on the agenda. All, with the exception of the Data Security Policy, the Data Protection and Privacy Notices and the Code of Conduct had been discussed and approved by a majority of governors online with no dissensions.</p> <p>NOTED: the Code of Conduct was not due for review until 2025.</p> <p>AGREED: online the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Policy • Careers Policy • Most Able Policy <p>NOTED: and briefly further discussed the multiple documents that formed the Data Protection and Privacy Notices and the Data Security Policy.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, the Data Security Policy and Data Protection and Privacy Notices.</p>	
10.	<p>Complaints</p> <p>NOTED: a formal complaints log had not previously been maintained by the school as it had not determined what constituted a complaint. Having consulted other schools, the Head was now happy to consider complaints, including informal ones, as a four stage process depending on the level at which the complaint was considered: a stage 3 complaint would be one resolved by the Head, a stage 4 complaint would involve the Governing Board. He advised that the clerk had recently received three complaints that had yet to be considered by the Head and, in keeping with the current complaints policy, had referred them back to the school for resolution at stage 3. He acknowledged that the school's complaints procedure would need to be adjusted to reflect this four stage approach and corresponding data would need to be captured to enable meaningful reporting to governors. He would seek to amend the complaints policy and bring it back to the next meeting of</p>	

	the board. He went on to describe his philosophy in dealing with complaints. The school apologised if it believed it had got something wrong.	MH
11.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. There had been three recent sports related accidents and two accidents involving staff. All had been investigated. Staff had been reminded of the correct way to handle sharp objects and the matting at the entrance at which an accident occurred had been extended in case the accident was a result of water being walked into the school, although there was no specific evidence of this. The Radiological Survey report had been received and both recommendations had been actioned.</p>	
12.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. There had been recent and ongoing issues with the drains (now believed to be resolved, but checked weekly to avoid further problems), the water supply to the school and the lift, which was currently not operational. Reasons for these issues were highlighted, including the slow response of the lift engineers to the ongoing problem. Two pupils with mobility issues had been adversely affected by the breakdown of the lift. The Facilities Team had reviewed the school's operation to identify any other potential issues that might lead to the school's closure. Governors asked what arrangements were being made for the pupils adversely affected by the lift's breakdown? A member of staff was liaising with the pupils who, when they could not access their lessons, were working in the Bridge area. Governors felt it was unacceptable that two pupils should end up being segregated from others. Whilst this was not the school's fault, the school was asked to emphasise this unacceptable impact to the contractor responsible for repairing the lift. The parents were not happy but had been kept informed. The Headteacher advised that the situation would be reviewed the following day and the school would consider re-timetabling relevant lessons, if possible, to avoid the ongoing segregation of pupils.</p> <p>NOTED: procurement activities were under review for February and it was hoped to submit a report to the next meeting of the Board. The new cleaning contract was not operating perfectly, but the Business Manager felt there had been an improvement in cleaning standards.</p> <p>NOTED: there had been no progress with regards to the Stevenage Music Centre.</p>	MH
13.	<p>Determined Admission Policy</p> <p>NOTED: the papers uploaded with the agenda. Following the Board's previous decisions regarding admissions for 25/26, consultation had taken place on the proposed changes and feedback had been received on three issues.</p> <p>NOTED: a tie-breaker was required for admission to the Sixth Form in case two pupils meeting identical admission criteria applied for the last available place.</p> <p>AGREED: from 2025/26 onwards the position of two pupils meeting identical admission criteria applying for the last available place should be resolved by an independently supervised random draw.</p> <p>NOTED: in terms of year 6 transition arrangements, two mutually contradictory responses had been received. HCC, however, was unhappy with admission priority being granted to pupils from Lodge Farm on the grounds that it would</p>	

	<p>discriminate against non-Lodge Farm pupils living closer to the school than Lodge Farm pupils. They calculated that, in previous years, this would have impacted on 17 pupils. The meeting discussed whether such a decision was likely to be discriminatory in relation to a group or groups of pupils, whether Lodge Farm should be specifically named as a feeder school or whether such a priority should be deferred until after the decision to Federate had been taken.</p> <p>AGREED: to withdraw the decision to grant priority to children who, at the time of application, were on roll at any other Hertfordshire school which was a member of a Trust, Federation or similar formal association including Nobel. Any such school to be clearly identified as such on Nobel's website. It was recommended that the decision should be considered for 26/27 onwards by the appropriate Governing Board if Federation was agreed.</p> <p>NOTED: in terms of the decision extending admission priority to children of permanent members of staff who were directly employed by any other Hertfordshire school which was a member of a Trust, Federation or similar formal association including Nobel (any such school to be clearly identified as such on Nobel's website), it was only possible to grant priority to the children of staff working at a governing body's own school. If Federation was approved, all staff working at Both Lodge Farm and the Nobel would be employees of one Governing Board.</p> <p>AGREED: to withdraw the decision to grant priority to children of permanent members of staff who were directly employed by any other school which was a member of a Trust, Federation or similar formal association including Nobel. Any such school to be clearly identified as such on Nobel's website. It was recommended that the decision should be considered for 26/27 onwards by the appropriate Governing Board if Federation was agreed.</p> <p><i>Nik Thomas left the meeting at this point</i></p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>14.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 2023/24</p> <p>NOTED: the three monitoring visit reports and the current monitoring record for 23/24 as uploaded with the agenda. Chris Crawley advised she had completed a Health and Safety Audit in the autumn term, but had omitted to forward the report to the Clerk. She would do so in time for the next Governing Board meeting. The two reports relating to Pupil Premium were discussed, including PP pupil involvement in school clubs. Rev. Kojo Wood had undertaken four school visits but had omitted to write follow up reports. He asked the Clerk to remind him.</p> <p>AGREED: the Clerk would provide regular reminders to Rev. Kojo Wood to produce his outstanding visit reports.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor stressed the importance of having regard to safeguarding, SEND and PP issues when visiting the school for other link purposes.</p> <p>NOTED: the proposal to create a link governor for Sustainability. Also, the link governor vacancies caused by the resignation of Manesh Chudasama, as noted on the 23/24 monitoring record.</p> <p>AGREED: appointment to the following link governor roles:</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>Clerk/ KW</p>

	<p>Sustainability: Jamie Kellett Governor Training: Shannon Parr Culture of Scholarship: Claire Sutton</p> <p>NOTED: The Chair was considering other possible future changes to the link governor schedule, but not for the time being. She would endeavour to update the training record in accordance with Action Tracker requirements before passing the current training record to Shannon Parr.</p> <p>14.2 Annual Review of Governor Effectiveness 22/23</p> <p>NOTED: the completed version of the annual 22/23 governor survey as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: that the 23/24 survey should also be conducted in two parts; the first part to be concluded around the start of the 2024 summer term to capture in-year views and the second part to be concluded in the 2024 Autumn term to capture full year views.</p> <p>14.3 Governor Training</p> <p>NOTED: the updated training record as provided by Manesh Chudasama before his resignation. It had not been remodelled to match current training pathways, but included all certificates notified to him. Chris Crawley commented that the certificates she had forwarded had not been included, but she would resubmit them to Shannon Parr as the new training link governor.</p> <p>14.4 60 Second Round-Robin Governor Update</p> <p>NOTED: governors provided the following updates on actions undertaken in relation to Nobel since the last meeting: (KH) – Federation meetings, planned SEND meeting the following week; (MR) – Federation meetings, PP visits; (KW) - four monitoring visits including 2 assemblies, international day and certificates evening; (CC) - Federation meeting, Health and Safety Visit; (CB) - 2 training sessions undertaken, 2 booked, Equal Opportunities Policy reviewed and emailed Deputy Head to discuss plan; (JK) – Federation meeting, careers visit to school the following week (CS) – planned visits (JM) – supported year 11-13 exam groups, focus on destinations for year 13, UCAS and apprenticeship cycles, Year 11 Sixth Form interviews; (WP) –year 10 panto performed for feeder schools, completing drama units, year 11 and year 13 mocks.</p>	<p>G.E. Wrkng. Group</p> <p>CC</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Careers and PP Updates (Standing Item)</p> <p>NOTED: PP visit reports had been considered as visit reports at this meeting, but this new standing item was intended to keep PP and careers on the agenda when visit reports did not cover them. Closing the PP gap was an issue for Nobel, while Careers accreditation required consideration of the topic at every meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: the Careers Link Governor was considering ways in which governors might provide additional support to careers provision at Nobel.</p>	
<p>16.</p>	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board Meeting held on 29 November 2023</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 29 November 2023</p>	

	<p>and the accompanying Action Tracker document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held 29 November 2023 as a true and correct record. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p>	Clerk
17.	<p>AOB</p> <p>17.1 Additional Apologies for Absence</p> <p>NOTED: Bret Facey had submitted apologies for absence because of a meeting clash by email in advance of, but close to, the start of the meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept his apologies as tendered.</p> <p>17.2 Succession Planning</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair advised she intended to step down as both a governor and Chair at the end of the school year 23/24 for personal reasons. She was hoping a replacement Chair could be identified before the final meeting of the year so a supported handover could take place. Governors, including the Head, expressed their gratitude for her successful efforts as both a governor and Chair.</p> <p>AGREED: anyone potentially interested in becoming Chair should email Kelly Hagland in the first instance, and before the next meeting, so that interest could be assessed and possibilities discussed. Kelly Hagland would circulate an email to all governors so that those not present would be aware of her intentions and the possibility of seeking to stand for Chair in her stead.</p>	All KH
18.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 8:30pm</i></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
26 January 2024

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:27 March 2024.....

Signature (Chair):.....