

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 2024 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Kelly Hagland (Chair), Chris Crawley, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Rose Odudu, Wendy Parsley, Shannon Parr, Mathew Reah.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager) and Nick Brown, Martin Mienczakowski, Steve Morley, Corrina Reeder (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 Carly Broom, Bret Facey and Rev. Kojo Wood. Claire Sutton apologised for either late arrival or absence.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept the above apologies for absence.</p> <p>NOTED: Chris Crawley apologised in advance for her early departure.</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: before Chris Crawley's departure, agenda item 15.1, Election of Chair for 24/25, would be taken early and out of agenda order.</p>	
3.	<p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: Chris Crawley advised she was working for Lodge Farm School to help them achieve Foundation status.</p>	
4.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. Steve Morley provided an oral summary, including an update on the behaviour of individual, anonymised pupils. He highlighted the good behaviour and well preparedness of the majority of pupils and the defiance of a small minority.</p> <p>NOTED: the number of pupil suspensions had increased significantly, with pockets of challenge mostly in year 8, but also in year 9. The school was considering alternative curriculum provision to meet these pupils' needs. The Head stressed this was a problem experienced county-wide: not just at Nobel and not just in Stevenage. The school was continuing to apply the same behaviour standards as before, but the result was an increased number of exclusions.</p> <p><i>Corrina Reeder joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the school was working more closely with mental health support services, but alternative places were limited, so pupils remained at school. Pupil behaviour had been praised by visitors in comparison with other schools, but the Head felt that behaviour was the worst he had seen at Nobel. Governors asked questions</p>	

	<p>about the impact of pupil defiance and the potential link to pupils with SEND and PP needs. Steve Morley hoped he had answered all questions, but invited governors to email him if they wanted further information.</p>	
5.	<p>Pupil Survey 2024</p> <p>NOTED: the survey summary uploaded to TEAMS. The survey had asked questions about whether pupils enjoyed school, felt safe in school and whether the school was tackling bullying. Negative responses had been followed up with pupils. Some were genuine. Some were intentionally negative. The trend in pupils feeling safe in school was headed in the right direction. Some pupil responses were unrealistic or reflected the unique needs of a child. Notably, all pupils felt they behaved well and it was other pupils who were misbehaving.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
6.	<p>Curriculum Presentation</p> <p>NOTED: Martin Mienczakowski gave a shared-screen presentation on post sixth Form destinations. These included: 3 Oxbridge offers, 3 offers to study medicine, 1 offer to study veterinary science and 36 Russell Group offers. It was proving to be a good year. The presentation explored universities' definition of disadvantaged, which was broader than the PP definition, and the school's positive Oxbridge comparison with Eton and Hills Road.</p> <p>NOTED: the school's UCAS process and UCAS support, along with individual case studies.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair and other governors thanked Martin Mienczakowski for an interesting and impressive presentation. Governors asked what was being done to advertise the school's impressive Sixth Form outcomes? Corrina Reeder advised that much was made of destinations at the Sixth Form open evening and at Sixth Form interviews. She highlighted the school's close link with Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge. Governors asked if there was scope for pupils to dream, or if all decisions were strictly grounded in reality? Pupils were entitled to five UCAS choices, of which 2 were aspirational, 2 were safe and 1 was an "insurance" choice. Case study examples were provided.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair thanked Martin Mienczakowski and Corrina Reeder for their informative input.</p> <p><i>Martin Mienczakowski and Corrina Reeder left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
7.	<p>Careers Strategy</p> <p>NOTED: the strategy document uploaded with the agenda. Jamie Kellett explained its aim was to align the vision of the Governing Board with school practice. Some elements of the document were aspirational. Nick Brown highlighted that the school's approach varied year on year. He had had discussions with the service finding work placements for pupils or verifying those that had been self-identified. The number of placements had improved, but there was still scope for improvement.</p> <p>NOTED: governors felt it was a useful strategy document and appreciated the links to the school plan. Jamie Kellett highlighted that it was a live, evolving document and that elements of it still remained to be completed.</p>	

	<p>AGREED: the Careers Strategy document, subject to further developments and document completions being brought back to the Governing Board for approval.</p> <p><i>Nick Brown left the meeting at this point</i></p>	
8.	<p>Election of Chair for 24/25 (item 15.1 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the Clerk explained the reason for the early election of Chair for 24/25 and the process to be followed. She called for nominations.</p> <p>NOTED: Matt Reah was nominated and seconded multiple times. There were no other candidates.</p> <p>AGREED: Matt Reah was elected as Chair for 24/25 until the election of Chair for 25/26, which normally took place at the end of the Summer Term. He would take up the role when Kelly Hagland stepped down in July 2024. In the meantime, the early election permitted a constructive handover between Chairs.</p>	
9.	<p>School Plan (item 8 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: Naomi Rose was currently unwell and was not present to talk to this item. The Head commented that most of his Head's report video was an update on the school plan.</p>	
10.	<p>Head's Termly Report (item 9 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: Governors commented favourably on the video, but asked if it was still the best way to present the Head's report or whether it was a burden for staff? Staff were willing to contribute to the video. Governors especially liked the fact that the video was split into two parts, which made for ease of watching. They asked if, in future, it could be split into its component parts, rather than made continuous? The Head agreed to speak to colleagues about the future production of short, topic focused, videos, rather than one, long one.</p> <p>NOTED: governors commented that a previous video had included the views of sixth form pupils and asked if the pupil voice could be captured on video in the future, preferably at least once per year? The Head agreed to speak to colleagues about the timing of pupil input.</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>MH</p>
11.	<p>Approval of Policies (item 10 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the three policies listed on the agenda.</p> <p>NOTED: the Physical Activity Policy was not due for review until 2025.</p> <p>AGREED: to renew the following existing policies and postpone their review until the Autumn Term 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships and Sex Policy • Dealing With Allegations of Abuse Against Staff 	
12.	<p>Complaints (item 11 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the oral summary of complaints provided by the Head. 9 complaints relating to 6 pupils had been received since the last meeting. One had concerned the absence of a member of staff, many had referred to pupil placement in sets. Of</p>	

	<p>the 9 complaints, the Headteacher had dealt with two, the rest had been handled by SLT. One complaint relating to bullying was ongoing and had not yet been resolved.</p> <p>NOTED: the Head had also met with a variety of parents, but not in relation to formal complaints. The school was continuing to log complaints formally received. No complaints had been received via OFSTED.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor asked if, in future, the information could be provided as a simple table of data with brief, textual bullet point commentary?</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair highlighted that the school had intended to amend its Complaints Policy in light of the four stage approach outlined to the previous Board meeting and queried progress? The Business Manager advised that the school intended to trial and embed the four stage process before amending the policy when it was next scheduled for renewal. Governors asked if there was a correlation between pupil defiance and parental complaint? The Head advised there was some correlation and provided examples.</p> <p><i>Chris Crawley left the meeting at this point. The meeting remained quorate.</i></p> <p>NOTED: governors asked if pupil complaints were logged? The Head explained the anonymous system available to pupils to raise issues, whilst adding that some were confident enough to knock on his door to raise concerns. He did not maintain a record of pupil issues, but the pastoral team did, as issues raised included child protection and mental health issues. It was therefore difficult to quantify which would be considered complaints.</p>	MH
13.	<p>Health and Safety Update (item 12 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS. There had been 3 accidents since the last report, 2 involving pupils, 1 involving a member of staff. The details were noted.</p> <p>NOTED: Chris Crawley had undertaken the annual governor health and safety audit the previous week. The Clerk confirmed her monitoring report would be submitted to the June Governing Board meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: statutory and preventative maintenance work was ongoing and scheduled, including light servicing and lift maintenance.</p> <p>NOTED: Jim McGuigan would be retiring as Premises Manager in the summer after a period of 28 years long service to the school. Governors wished him all the best for his retirement and thanked him for his service.</p> <p>AGREED: governors would send him a card via the Headteacher, thanking him for his service.</p>	MH
14.	<p>School Business Plan (item 13 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS. The school had interviewed for Jim McGuigan's replacement and had appointed Jenny Cavell as Premises Manager. A handover would take place in the Summer term.</p> <p>NOTED: the school had appointed Fusion for Business (FFB) as its agent for the supply of electricity and gas from October 2024. The installation of LED lights, as</p>	

	<p>part of the contract, would take place over the summer. The summer works programme was being drawn up as part of the budget formation process. Issues being considered were the upgrade and replacement of school computers.</p> <p>NOTED: Nik Thomas would be meeting the school's solicitor in order to move the Music Centre lease forward.</p>	
15.	<p>Finance (item 14 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the Statement of Internal Controls, as listed on the agenda, was now an integral part of the SFVS. The draft SFVS had been uploaded to TEAMS. The proposed response was largely the same as the previous year. The school was fully compliant in all but three year budget planning, with which it was partially compliant. It was expected the situation would improve from the 24/25 budget onwards.</p> <p>AGREED: the SFVS for 2024 as an appropriate and accurate statement of the Governing Board. Nik Thomas would submit the document by the end of March.</p> <p>NOTED: the Term 2 finance report and bank balance tracker (cash monitoring) as uploaded to TEAMS. There was a decrease in reserves but the school was crafting a balanced budget for the following year. Drain clearance and lift maintenance works had proved costly and with only a minimal refund from the lift maintenance company, maintenance budgets were likely to be overspent.</p> <p>NOTED: the largest impact on the budget in 22/23 had been the back dated pay award for support staff. The school was likely to be facing a similar position in 24/25. Negotiations were ongoing nationally and were unlikely to be resolved by 1/4/24.</p> <p>NOTED: governors thanked the Business Manager for a comprehensive report. The increase in staff costs was highlighted and governors queried whether schools would be expected to fund nationally approved awards in 24/25. Nik Thomas explained the government's approach to funding pay awards and pension contribution changes. Although money was provided, the percentage of any award covered was dependent on the number and type of staff employed by a school and where they sat on the pay scales. Some schools were adequately covered, many were out of pocket. In 24/25 contributions to the TPS were increasing.</p>	NT
16.	<p>Governance Matters (item 15 on the agenda)</p> <p>16.1 Election of Chair for 24/24 – see minute 8 above.</p> <p>16.2 Governor Monitoring and Visits 23/24</p> <p>NOTED: the multiple visit reports uploaded with the agenda and recorded on the 23/24 Governor Visit Record. The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work, but pointed out there were still gaps on the 23/24 record where monitoring had not taken place or reports had not been written. She encouraged everyone to undertake at least one monitoring activity for their area in the Summer Term if they had not already done so. Dates should be booked as soon as possible, even if meetings were further into the term. If they experienced any problems they should contact her or the Head.</p> <p>16.3 Governor Training</p>	All

	<p>NOTED: the updated training record as provided by Shannon Parr. She apologised for its late publication, but she had experienced software problems. The record was now up to date based on certificates forwarded to Shannon Parr. Gaps where governors had not undertaken training were visible and the Chair encouraged those governors who had not undertaken key training to do so.</p> <p>16.4 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: (JM) – a short, busy term with Year 11 mocks, A Level mocks, external vocational results, in-school University Challenge, Cultural Lunch, UCAS Fair and other activities; (JK) – Careers Strategy meetings with Nick Brown; (ML) – BCP action; (MR) – PP visit, Federation Working Group, Foundation Committee; (RO) – monitoring visit planned for 30/4/24; (SP) – updated training log, visited school to meet with Steve Morley, planned visit to meet with Naomi Rose in summer term; (WP) – practical exams, mock exams, exam preparation, parents’ evenings; (KH) – Federation Working Group, Foundation Committee.</p> <p>NOTED: there were gaps in the Action Tracker has uploaded as part of item 19 on the agenda. The Chair encouraged everyone to read the tracker and to carry out agreed actions and advise the clerk so she could update the tracker to show more agreed actions as completed.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
17.	<p>Careers and PP Updates (Standing Item) (item 16 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: PP had been covered within agenda items 4, 6, 9 and 15.2</p> <p>NOTED: Careers had been covered within agenda items 7 and 15.2</p>	
18.	<p>Federation Working Group (item 17 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the Federation Working Group had met on Monday 25 March 2024. The Head advised that Nobel was working closely with Lodge Farm and he was working with Lodge Farm’s Acting Head. Lodge Farm had experienced a period of flux, but was in the process of recovery. The Working Group would be meeting again in July 2024. The process of potential Federation was slowing down to give Lodge Farm an opportunity to gain Foundation status and to resolve its leadership issues. It was hoped to resume the Federation process in the Autumn Term. A governor highlighted that the development of a detailed written Strategic Plan for Nobel had also been put on hold until decisions regarding Federation had been made.</p>	
19.	<p>Minutes of previous Foundation Committee Meeting held on 28 February 2024 (item 18 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 28 February 2024 and the accompanying summary of Committee decisions taken at the meeting as uploaded with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 28 February 2024.</p>	
20.	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board Meeting held on 24 January 2024</p>	

	<p>(item 19 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 24 January 2024 and the accompanying Action Tracker document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>NOTED: the Action tracker had briefly been discussed as part of agenda item 15.4 (minute 16.4 above)</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held 24 January 2024 as a true and correct record. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p>	Clerk
21.	<p>AOB (item 20 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: there was no other business to be discussed.</p>	
12.	<p>Date of Next Meeting (item 21 on the agenda)</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 5 June 2024 at 6.30pm via TEAMS. The following July meeting of the Board would be Kelly Hagland's last meeting as a governor and as Chair.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 8:30pm</i></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
28 March 2024

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:5th June 2024.....

Signature (Chair):.....