

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE 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, Claire Sutton, Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager), Naomi Rose (Deputy Head) and Steve Morley (staff) for part 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 Bret Facey because of travel difficulties.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept the above apologies for absence.</p> <p>NOTED: Rev. Kojo Wood. apologised in advance for his early departure.</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: no other business was identified.</p>	
3.	<p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: there were no declarations.</p>	
4.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. Steve Morley provided an oral summary, including an update on pupil behaviour. A small group of pupils were responsible for the majority of behaviour points. Their behaviour did, however, place additional stress on staff. Other schools in Stevenage were experiencing similar issues. The school was trialling a different approach to avoid escalation of incidents. The school was also considering offsite provision for specific pupils, though there was a cost to this. The Head emphasised that poor behaviour and defiance was both a national and a local issue.</p> <p>NOTED: governors asked if the escalation of incidents was caused by pupil behaviour or staff forgetting previous training? The Head felt that either was possible. The school's focus on standards and performance in recent years might have caused some pupils to disengage from school. Pupils were also arriving at school not knowing how to behave and staff were having to support and teach them proper behaviour, rather than just disciplining them for poor behaviour. He provided examples of this and how staff response could deescalate situations. Staff training was being provided. The school was not dropping its standards, but choosing to raise them in a different manner. A shortage of specialist provision external to the school was also complicating matters.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	

5.	<p>School Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. It was brief as the school was not in a position to evaluate outcomes from the 23/24 plan and the 24/25 plan had not been finalised. The school was trying to capture data to evidence outcomes, but there was not always a direct cause and effect. The next plan would have evidenced outcomes. Plan headlines were likely to stay the same, but there would be an increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>	
6.	<p>Complaints</p> <p>NOTED: a written report was not provided for this item. The Head had received two complaints since the last meeting. One complaint related to the school's uniform policy and the other to a Year 10 pupil's mock exam results. Both had been resolved. The Head added that a parent's ability to raise matters direct with OFSTED was a source of frustration for many Heads, as it could mean that OFSTED responded to the unique views of one parent.</p>	
7.	<p>Staff Survey</p> <p>NOTED: the summary report uploaded with the agenda. There were some pleasing responses from staff, but also some areas for further consideration. Some responses appeared contradictory. 97% of staff were happy working at the school, but a lower percentage, albeit still a large majority, was happy with school leadership. Governors raised concern about the 9% of staff who felt that pupils were not safe at school. Naomi Rose highlighted that staff textual comments presented a slightly different picture, as staff concerns related to pupil vaping and pupils missing lessons by wandering around the school. The Head commented that in response to pupils vaping in the school toilets, the school had stated that no more than one pupil should be in a toilet cubicle at any one time. Enforcing the rule had resulted in an increase in pupil suspensions. Staff had commented on the teaching workload and the Head acknowledged that more had been expected of staff without a return elsewhere and the school would need to consider how to address this. A governor asked if textual comments explained any of the responses? The Head highlighted the previous response re pupil safety as an example of where textual comments created a different picture from the raw data. A governor asked if there would be group discussions for survey feedback? The school welcomed advice on how best to feedback, but pointed out the group sessions meant the loss of staff anonymity.</p> <p>AGREED: Claire Sutton would liaise with the Head and Naomi Rose to discuss feed back approaches.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor asked how the survey would influence the school plan for 24/25? Pupil behaviour management and staff workload would both be considerations. In response to governor questions about well being and mental health, the school explained how the survey had been based around OFSTED questions and questions from the Anna Freud Centre. There was some overlap and, as noted previously, some contradictory responses. For example, the response to being able to be open about mental health issues did not match the response about talking to others about mental health matters. Governors queried the responses from staff who did not feel they were treated fairly and the appearance that a small group of staff had concerns. The school felt it was in response to a long term HR issue that was about to be resolved, but that had concerned a number of individuals. Governors commented it was a good result that only 3 staff had said they were not proud to work at</p>	CS

	<p>the school. All other staff were. Governors also raised questions about staff development opportunities and the use of an anonymous survey for staff, when the pupil survey had not been anonymous. As the pupil survey dealt with safeguarding issues, the school felt it was important to be able to follow up on pupil responses.</p>	
8.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS, including the Spring Term summary. There had been 6 accidents in the Spring Term, none of which were significant or indicated poor health and safety controls. Nik Thomas summarised the nature of the accidents.</p> <p>NOTED: the school's Lockdown Procedure was being reviewed and a routine visit by the Fire Brigade was expected, though might be delayed to permit planned repairs to the fire alarm system and a faulty smoke detector. A governor asked if lockdown procedures were ever tested? HCC advice was not to run lockdown drills with pupils, but to carry out a desktop evaluation. The school was planning to do this.</p>	
9.	<p>Finance (including Budget Approval for 2024/25)</p> <p>NOTED: the finance reports uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda. The documents had been scrutinised by the Foundation Committee, but, as its meeting had been inquorate, the Committee had been unable to agree a formal recommendation to the Governing Board.</p> <p>NOTED: the 22/23 budget outturn had been very close to budget, leaving the school with reserves of £333k. Capital expenditure for the year was noted.</p> <p>NOTED: details of the school's funding allocation for 24/25. The impact of the July 2024 General Election was unknown. The proposed school budget for 24/25 would result in an in-year deficit of £219k, reducing reserves to £113k. With 3 staff leaving at the end of the academic year there would be some in-year savings and the situation would improve for 25/26, but the 24/25 budget would still have to bear five months of salary costs before they left. Further savings were difficult given that 83% of expenditure was staffing. Despite the planned reduction in reserves, cash reserves would remain positive across the five year forecast period. Budget assumptions for 24/25 were highlighted, as was planned capital expenditure.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, the budget for 24/25 resulting in an in-year deficit of £219k and a reduction in reserves to £113k.</p>	
10.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded to TEAMS as previously shared and discussed with the Foundation Committee.</p>	
11.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the two policies listed on the agenda and approved online by a majority of governors.</p> <p>AGREED: the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships and Sex Policy • Dealing With Allegations of Abuse Against Staff 	

<p>12.</p>	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>12.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 23/24</p> <p>NOTED: the Health and Safety and Mental Health and Well Being reports uploaded with the agenda and recorded on the 23/24 Governor Visit Record. The Chair pointed out that the record also highlighted where monitoring reports had not yet been provided.</p> <p>12.2 Governor Training</p> <p>NOTED: the updated training record as uploaded to TEAMS. It reflected training that had been undertaken. Both training undertaken and yet to be undertaken was summarised at the bottom of the report.</p> <p>12.3 Governor Effectiveness Survey 23-24: Part I feedback</p> <p>NOTED: a written report had not been provided for this item as, to date, only 9 responses had been received. Mark Laws invited the remaining 4 governors to complete their returns as soon as possible so the results could be discussed by the Governance Effectiveness Working Group and submitted to the next Governing Board meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: as Kelly Hagland was standing down as a governor before the end of term, the Governance Effectiveness Working Group would require a new member.</p> <p><i>Rev Kojo Wood left the meeting during the above discussions.</i></p> <p>12.4 60 Second Round–Robin Update</p> <p>NOTED: governors provided the following updates on actions undertaken in relation to Nobel since the last meeting: (CC) – was arranging a Health and Safety Visit for the term; (CS) – hoped to visit the school soon; (JM) – was involved in exam season, the school prom on 16/6/24 and Duke of Edinburgh activities; (JK) – was discussing data capture for Work Experience placements; (ML) - was co-ordinating the Governor Effectiveness survey and discussing safeguarding with Steve Morley; (MR) – had visited the school to discuss Finance and PP, plus attendance at Finance Working Group and Foundation Committee meetings; (RO) - had visited the school on 21/5/24 to look at curriculum and would submit her report to the clerk shortly; (SP) – had updated the governor training record, undertaken safeguarding training and planned to visit the school shortly; (WP) – was involved in exam season and the recent school production; (KH) – had been handing over the role of Chair to Matt Reah.</p> <p>12.5 Kelly Hagland’s Last Meeting</p> <p>NOTED: Kelly Hagland advised she would be standing down as a governor, and therefore as Chair, slightly earlier than originally envisaged. This would therefore be her last meeting and Matt Reah would take over as chair with effect from 6/6/24. She thanked everyone for their support and commitment and wished the Governing Board and school all the best for the future.</p> <p>NOTED: Matt Reah thanked Kelly for her work on behalf of the Governing Board and the friendly, engaging atmosphere she had created at meetings. He had learnt much from her. The Head echoed Matt Reah’s thanks,</p>	<p>All</p>
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	highlighting how Kelly had taken on the role of sole Chair unexpectedly when the school needed it. A bunch of flowers had been sent to her as a gesture of thanks.	
13.	<p>Careers and PP Updates (Standing Item)</p> <p>NOTED: PP had been covered within agenda item 12.4. A monitoring report would be submitted to the next meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: Careers had been covered within agenda item 12.4.</p>	
May	<p>Minutes of previous Foundation Committee Meeting held on 15 May 2024</p> <p>NOTED: and accepted the provisional minutes of the inquorate Foundation Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024 .</p>	
15.	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board Meeting held on 27 March 2024</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 27 March 2024 and the accompanying Action Tracker document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held 27 March 2024 as a true and correct record. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p>	Clerk
16.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: the school would shortly be holding parent governor elections as there were four candidates for the two parent governor vacancies. The Head had also met a prospective Co-opted governor and would be referring them to Matt Reah as the new Chair.</p>	
17.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as Wednesday, 3 July 2024 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 8pm</i></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
6 June 2024

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:3 July 2024.....

Signature (Chair):.....