

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2024 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Matthew Reah (Chair), Samuel Appiah, Sophie Cowan, Chris Crawley, Samuel Dwamena, Martyn Henson (Headteacher), Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Rose Odudu, Helen Sparks, Claire Sutton, Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Nik Thomas (Business Manager), Naomi Rose (Deputy Head) Peter Dean, Steve Morley (staff) and the Head Girl and Head Boy 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. Apologies for absence had been received from Shannon Parr, as her flight times had been changed.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept apologies for absence received.</p> <p>NOTED: potential apologies for absence or late arrival had been submitted in advance from Jackie Mordaunt (school meeting) and Rose Odudu (connection difficulties from abroad).</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: no items of other business were requested.</p>	
3.	<p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: there were no declarations in relation to the meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>Student Voice</p> <p><i>The Head Girl and Head Boy joined the meeting at this point</i></p> <p>NOTED: the Chair asked if either student had any issues they wished to highlight to governors? The Head Boy confirmed he had no issues, but highlighted the very positive support he had received from the school in relation to UCAS and university applications. The Head noted that of the 10 school Oxbridge applicants in 24/25, 7 had been offered interviews. The deadline for Oxbridge and Medical school applications was October, but January for all other universities. In response to a question from governors, the Head Boy commented on the significant step up, in terms of workload, from GCSEs to A Levels.</p> <p>NOTED: the Head Girl commented on communication between pupils, especially younger ones, and school staff. Staff communicated well and school structures were in place to facilitate communication, but many pupils, especially younger ones, found approaching a member of staff intimidating. She wondered whether additional processes could be identified to make it easier for pupils to make their views known. The Head Boy added that societal issues made it difficult for many to talk openly about feelings and issues. The meeting discussed possible tools, such as WhatsApp, that might assist the situation.</p>	

	<p>AGREED: following a request from the Chair, that both students would email the Chair with their thoughts on communication.</p> <p><i>Rose Odudu joined the meeting during the above discussion.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the Chair thanked both students for their valuable comments and insight.</p> <p><i>The Head Boy and Head Girl left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	<p>Head Girl & Boy</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>NOTED: the safeguarding report uploaded with the agenda. Steve Morley provided an oral summary, highlighting 2 new Out-County CLA pupils, staff CPD and increasing reports of pupil self-harm. Attendance, at 93.6%, was above the national average.</p> <p>NOTED: the Safeguarding link governor had added his comments to the report, following a meeting with Steve Morley. He had found discussions informative but sobering in terms of self-harm. Governors asked if data could be drilled down to provide a clearer view of how many individual pupils were involved in self-harming, as opposed to how many incidents of self-harm had been recorded.</p> <p>AGREED: Steve Morley would investigate the CPOMs reporting structure to see if it could identify how many individual pupils were involved in self-harming, rather than how many incidents of self-harm had been recorded.</p> <p>NOTED: governors were pleased to see comments from the Link Governor. Certification of the Safeguarding Course recently attended by governors was queried. Certificates had been left in the Chair’s pigeonhole and could be collected on 9 December when governors visited the school. Governors’ attendance on safeguarding courses was tracked by the school and Shannon Parr, Link Governor for training. Chris Crawley pointed out that she had attended training the previous year but had not received a certificate. As a result, the training was not reflected on the governor training record and she was being chased to repeat the training. Steve Morley confirmed she had attended safeguarding training the previous year.</p> <p>AGREED: Steve Morley would investigate the safeguarding training situation for Chris Crawley and advise her and Kim Lambert, as school record keeper, accordingly. Chris Crawley would notify Shannon Parr.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	<p>SM</p> <p>SM/ CC</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Head’s Termly Report (including Complaints Data)</p> <p>NOTED: the new format of the Head’s written report. The Head highlighted his comments in the Executive Summary including the size of the school roll (the school now had the largest number of pupils on record), the decrease in the number of pupil suspensions and the small minority of pupils involved in negative behaviour. Governors commented favourably on the format and structure of the report and its juxtaposition to the brief staff video circulated by email. The availability of text and data evidence to underpin descriptive oral comments was valued.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors queried what first class SEND and PP provision would look like, as the term was used in the report? The Head saw it as happy pupils whose needs were provided for and who were achieving good grades to the best of their ability. A governor queried the thinking behind staff well-being days and the practicalities of providing them? The strategy and the operational arrangements were explained.</p>	

	<p>Staff appeared to appreciate it. Governors congratulated the Head on a positive initiative.</p> <p><i>Jackie Mordaunt joined the meeting during the above discussions</i></p> <p>NOTED: the SEND link governor commented on a recent meeting with the SEND team. The team were pro-active in identifying pupil needs. He had found the visit a positive experience and felt the school was offering first class provision.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair concluded discussions by commenting that the blend of the short video and the hard evidence of the Head’s written report better enabled governors to track and monitor the school’s progress, but he asked the school to let him know if this became too burdensome for staff.</p>	
7.	<p>School Plan</p> <p>NOTED: no written report had been uploaded with the agenda as information on the School Plan had been incorporated into the Head’s report. Naomi Rose highlighted the monitoring suggestions provided for each section of the plan and pointed out it would be helpful if governors could have regard to these when undertaking monitoring activities. Equality and Diversity training would be taking place on Wednesday 29 January 2025, 3.20pm - 4.20pm. All governors were invited to attend, especially the Equality and Diversity Link Governor.</p> <p>AGREED: in response to a request from the Chair, that an email inviting governors to the Equality & Diversity session, and providing some details regarding the same, should be sent to all governors.</p> <p>NOTED: governors commented that the School Plan sections of the Head’s Report were usefully clear.</p>	NR
8.	<p>School Finances</p> <p>NOTED: the documents uploaded with the agenda.</p> <p>8.1 Benchmarking NOTED: the school was paying attention to benchmarking results significantly below or above the median. The example of the number of pupils per TA was highlighted, as this was very low compared to the median, but could be explained by the number of TA vacancies on census date, apprentice TAs being employed by agencies rather than directly by the school and supply staff not being employed directly by the school.</p> <p>8.2 Register of Savings Opportunities NOTED: this was a working document that would be updated on a regular basis and would be subject to close scrutiny by the Finance Working Party and the Foundation Committee. Governors felt it was a useful tool and looked forward to seeing it develop.</p> <p>8.3 Four Year Financial Forecast and 8.4 Revised 24/25 Budget NOTED: Nik Thomas apologised for late provision of the combined report. Staff absence in key areas had required him to undertake other work on behalf of the school in the lead up to the Board meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: the oral summary of the headline figures. Income was £32k up on the 24/25 budget, but Expenditure was £87k higher than budget, leading to a £55k worsening of the budget position. Nik Thomas detailed the reasons for this variation, which included</p>	

	<p>increased staffing costs and a double-counting accounting error. Positively, the school had begun to deliver on its planned £45k efficiency savings, but this was negated in 24/25 by the budgeting error. Governors commented that this would have an impact on school reserves and the school would have to take more serious steps, more quickly to restore the school’s financial position.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor expressed concern at the late submission of the report and felt she was not in a position to fulfil her role as a governor as she had not had an opportunity to scrutinise the figures or the proposed revisions to the budget the Board was being asked to approve. Nik Thomas explained in detail the reasons for the delay. These were confirmed by the Head.</p> <p>AGREED: not to approve the revised 24/25 budget. Governors would take an additional week to scrutinise the document and the proposals, and to forward any questions to Nik Thomas via a TEAMS thread to be set up by Nik Thomas. An extraordinary meeting of the Finance Working Part would then be convened to discuss the document. It would be open to any governor who wished to attend.</p> <p>NOTED: governors queried the cashflow position, as no cashflow update had been provided. Nik Thomas felt it was difficult to quantify because of the timing of payments. The school had had to use the advance provided by HCC, but HCC owed the school a commensurate amount. HCC remained supportive.</p> <p>NOTED: the five year forecast showed an improving financial situation, but forecasting accuracy decreased for later years. Given steps taken so far, Nik Thomas felt more positive about the school’s ability to break even by 25/26. Whilst this was encouraging, the Chair highlighted governors’ concerns about the school’s dwindling reserves.</p>	NT/ All
9.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the five policy documents listed on the agenda, some of which had been approved online by governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>9.1 Children Looked After Policy</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify online approval of the policy.</p> <p>9.2 Behaviour For Learning Policy</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify online approval of the policy.</p> <p>9.3 Online Safety Policy – not provided by the school.</p> <p>AGREED: the Online Safety Policy would be submitted for approval to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>9.4 School Based Complaints</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify online approval of the policy.</p> <p>9.5 Operational Policy Approval – in keeping with the Board focus on efficiency, it was suggested fewer operational policies and procedures needed to be approved by the Board, leaving the Board to focus on statutory policies. A list of policies for Board and School Approval had been uploaded.</p>	SM/ Clerk

	<p>AGREED: the responsibility for approving policies as set out in the list subject to the following additions/ amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions Policy – to be approved by the Governing Board • Data Protection and Security Policies to be approved by the Governing Board rather than the school <p>AGREED: policies approved by the school would be available in an online staff folder for governors to read.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor asked the Board to be notified should any significant issues necessitate a change in school-approved policies. A governor queried whether the school should have a policy for handling social media misinformation? Governors suggested that governors with a professional knowledge or expertise could be invited to contribute to school approved policies.</p> <p>AGREED: Jamie Kellett would discuss misinformation handling with Nik Thomas. Governors who felt they could help with specific policy documents should reach out to the lead member of staff for the document.</p>	<p>NT</p> <p>JK/ NT All</p>
10.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda detailing recent accidents and the 23/24 summary. Accident figures were low, but a change in how incidents were captured and reported might see an increase in future terms.</p> <p>NOTED: a periodic site inspection had taken place on 7/10/24. There were no outstanding actions. Minor changes had been made to testing and unlocking procedures following a fire risk assessment.</p> <p>NOTED: an unscheduled building evacuation had taken place as a result of water penetration of an alarm censor. The evacuation had happened quickly and efficiently . A governor asked if there was damage to the censor or likely to be a repeat of the problem? Alarm censors in the area were being reviewed and protected from further water damage.</p>	
11.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the School Business Plan uploaded with the agenda, as considered by the Foundation Committee on 6 November 2024.</p>	
12.	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>12.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 24/25</p> <p>NOTED: the revised monitoring reporting system. Only two governor reports had been uploaded by the time documents were uploaded for the Board. A number of other governors advised they had undertaken visits but had not yet reported on them. One governor queried why his uploaded report was not included on the record, but it was noted his report had been uploaded after the deadline for Board reports. The Clerk reminded governors that reports had to be available a week before a Board meeting (usually by 9.30am).</p> <p>NOTED: governors commented that the two available reports clearly recorded what governors saw and the link to the SDP. The Chair highlighted governor reports formed key evidence of school performance and encouraged all governors to record their monitoring activities as soon as possible.</p>	<p>All</p>

	<p>12.2 Governor Training</p> <p>NOTED: the recently uploaded governor training record. The Chair congratulated governors on the amount of training undertaken and stressed the importance of continuing to undertake it, especially topics marked in yellow indicating a link to an individual’s link governor role. Governors were encouraged to email Shannon Parr with any corrections to the record.</p> <p>12.3 Annual Review of Governor Effectiveness 23/24</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the most recent Effectiveness Working Group meeting and the completed survey deck for 23/24. Mark Laws explained the process that had gone into producing and finalising the deck. The Board would be moving from two surveys per year to one per year in the summer term. It had been disappointing that so few governors had completed the survey, but possible reasons for this were noted within the survey document. The importance of <u>all</u> governors feeding back via the survey was stressed. Areas where the working group had drilled down into governor responses were highlighted and any further comments welcomed. Responses that had been received were largely positive and the working group had explored those that were not.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair hoped that responses to recent and ongoing changes to Board practice would be captured in the 24/25 survey, but stressed that governors should not wait to the summer term to feedback any positives or negatives about governance activities. They could email him at any time.</p> <p>12.4 30 Second Round Robin</p> <p>NOTED: [because of time constraints, this item was taken out of agenda order, but is minuted here for convenience] the following governor activities since the last Board meeting – (MR) Federation Working Group, Foundation Committee, Effectiveness Working Group, meetings with Headteacher; (ML) Effectiveness Working Group, meeting with Steve Morley on safeguarding, finalisation of 23/24 survey deck; (SA) Foundation Committee, training – completing emerging modules, visited school; (JK) sustainability discussions with Nik Thomas, several careers related visits, planned further visits; (HS) Foundation Committee, training, planning on visiting the school before Christmas; (CC) Foundation Committee, Federation Working Group, Finance Working Party, planned Health & Safety audit cancelled because of staff sickness; (KW) Foundation Committee, Effectiveness Working Group, Finance Working Party, Headteacher appraisal, Disciplinary panels, appeal meeting, 6th Form event, International Day event, awards evening and other visits – will produce visit reports in due course; (SD) SEND visit, training; (RO) Foundation Committee, training, video for Black History Month; (SC) Foundation Committee, training with further training planned for January, visit to school; (JM) Year 11 mocks, years 12 &13 exam prep, 6th form open evening, form tutor event, planning for KS 5 awards evening; (CS) Discipline panel, Foundation Committee, visited 6th form event as parent, monitoring visit planned for New Year. The Chair praised the large amount of activity taking place and reminded everyone to evidence these activities by a brief monitoring record.</p>	All
13.	<p>General Careers and PP Updates (Standing Item)</p> <p>NOTED: Samuel Appiah was now leading on PP.</p> <p>AGREED: the Clerk would ensure this was reflected on future agendas.</p>	Clerk

	<p>NOTED: Samuel Appiah reported on a positive meeting with Naomi Rose earlier that day. He summarised the school strategy on PP and felt good progress had been made and evidenced in terms of closing the PP achievement gap. He commended the work of the school in this area.</p> <p>NOTED: careers matters had been covered by the school video previously circulated by email.</p>	
14.	<p>Minutes of previous Foundation Committee Meeting held on 6 November 2024</p> <p>NOTED: the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024 as uploaded with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024.</p>	
15.	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board Meeting held on 9 October 2024</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 9 October 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 9 October 2024 as a true and correct record. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p> <p>[The 30 Second Round Robin as minuted above took place at this point in the meeting]</p>	Clerk
16.	<p>Federation</p> <p>NOTED: the notes of the recent Federation Working Group meeting held on 10 October 2024 as uploaded with the agenda. The Chair summarised possibilities open to the Nobel School in terms of Federation with Lodge Farm and steps so far taken. A pre-proposal document was being worked on, involving due diligence actions. It was planned to present this to the Board at its January 2025 meeting. If appropriate, the Board would be asked to approve the creation of a formal proposal for submission to the Spring Governing Board meeting. Consultation would take place over the summer with Federation taking place, subject to consultation, at the earliest in September 2025. Nik Thomas was working through the necessary Due Diligence activities. One piece of work was outstanding. For this reason, he had not presented a report to the Board at this stage. The Head advised he had yet to share potentially important developments, of which he had only recently been made aware, with the Chair. The Clerk reminded the meeting that the next Federation Working Group meeting was scheduled for 15 January 2025 and she would begin work on the agenda prior to or during the Christmas holiday period, as the agenda would need to be published on 8 January. She asked to be notified in good time of any issues that might impact on the agenda or the timing of the meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: the Head and/or Chair would notify the clerk before 6/1/25 (and ideally before 1/1/25) of any issues that impacted on the planned Federation Working Group meeting.</p>	MH/ MR
17.	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair provided an update on the ongoing development of a full, written strategic plan. A meeting was taking place at the school on 9 December 2024 between SLT and governors to discuss this. It was hoped as many governors</p>	

	as possible would attend, but those unable to make the date and time would still be able to contribute.	
18.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: there was no other business to be discussed.</p>	
19.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>AGREED: the date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors as <u>Wednesday 22 January 2025 at 6.30pm online via TEAMS.</u></p> <p>NOTED: the Chair commented on the substantial volume of activities being undertaken by governors and thanked everyone for their efforts on behalf of the school.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 20:40</i></p>	

Drafted by: Jacque Watts
Clerk To The Governors
6 December 2024

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:22 January 2025.....

Signature (Chair):