

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD VIA TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2025 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, Helen Sparks, Claire Sutton and Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Naomi Rose (Deputy Head) and Nik Thomas (Business Manager), Corrina Reeder and Steve Morley (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. Apologies for absence were received from Rose Odudu (out of the country).</p> <p>AGREED: to accept apologies for absence received.</p> <p>NOTED: Shannon Parr was also absent.</p> <p>NOTED: Chris Crawley apologised in advance for her late arrival. She was accompanying a school trip.</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.</p>	
4	<p>Safeguarding Report (item 6 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the safeguarding report uploaded with the agenda. Steve Morley provided an oral summary of safeguarding issues.</p> <p><i>Corrina Reeder joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>NOTED: Steve Morley had met with Mark Laws as the Safeguarding Link Governor. Discussions explored grooming and radicalisation as there were few incidents of these compared to other concerns. Despite low incidence, the Link Governor felt the school took the matters seriously.</p> <p><i>Chris Crawley joined the meeting here.</i></p> <p>NOTED: The Chair and Claire Sutton had recently attended safer recruitment training and, as a result, had sent a list of questions to Steve Morley and Mark Laws covering reporting low level safeguarding concerns against staff (by students and other staff), the procedure and actions taken once concerns against a staff member were raised and data capture of the same. They had received a comprehensive reply and were comfortable the school had appropriate systems in place.</p>	

	<p>NOTED: after 28 years in the school, and 23 as a member of SLT, Steve Morley was stepping down as Safeguarding Lead and a member of SLT, though he hoped to continue to work with the school as an adviser and part time teacher in economics and business. The Head said that both he and the school as a whole would miss Steve Morley's input. The Head was not looking to replace Steve Morley as a member of SLT, but would be splitting his role across existing SLT members, with Naomi Rose becoming the DSL and Carl Swendell leading on behaviour. Steve Morley would be available to advise Naomi Rose on safeguarding matters if required and Tara Marshall would continue to fulfil her safeguarding role. The need to ensure financial savings was a key driver for this arrangement. In response to a question from governors, Steve Morley said he was confident the school could continue to manage safeguarding matters appropriately.</p> <p>NOTED: whilst understanding the need to make financial savings, the Safeguarding Link Governor expressed concern at the loss of a single focal point for safeguarding issues. The Head stressed this would not be happening and Naomi Rose would become the member of staff leading on safeguarding. Whilst pointing out that the school's staffing structure was an operational matter for the Head, the Head explained the structure in greater detail. The Link Governor said he was more relaxed about matters now the position had been clarified.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair thanked Steve Morley for his efforts on behalf of the school and formally passed on the thanks of the Board for his considerable service.</p> <p><i>Steve Morley left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
5.	<p>Curriculum Presentation - Curriculum Update (item 4 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: Corrina Reeder gave a detailed online presentation on the curriculum position in relation to vocational courses. Areas covered included the DfE review of vocational and post 16 qualifications and the impact of T level courses. Changes meant the school would be losing the Health and Social Care Diploma because of a lack of co-teachability. This was a loss to students considering nursing and related vocations. A summary of the national picture re. A levels and vocational courses was provided. T levels were welcomed by industry, but not appropriate for all students and nationally the take up of T levels had only been 2%.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair thanked Corrina Reeder for a comprehensive presentation.</p>	
6.	<p>Pupil Survey (item 5 on the agenda)</p> <p>NOTED: the sixth form survey report uploaded with the agenda. Whilst many of the results were pleasing, the PSHE score was disappointing. In response to an emailed question from a governor, Corrina Reeder felt there were two contributory reasons to the low score: sessions took place in period 5, when students would prefer to study at home, and students felt the sessions covered "old ground", though a recent practical session exemplified that topics were not as familiar as students believed. Nevertheless, the school would be reviewing the timing and content of PSHE sessions for 25/26. The score relating to students seeking help from someone at the school if they felt unsafe was also lower than desirable. Corrina Reeder had followed up poor responses to be told: students would prefer to speak to family and friends rather than someone at the school, students had never felt a need to talk to anyone and had therefore given a nil response, students had not meant to give a negative score.</p> <p>NOTED: governors asked questions about benchmarking results beyond the school, how comfortable staff were teaching PSHE and the school's aims for</p>	

	<p>future results. Benchmarking beyond the school was not available, staff were mostly content teaching PSHE and the aim was to get all positive responses above 90% next year. Teaching experiences at other schools were noted. The approach to character development in assemblies as opposed to taught PSHE was explored.</p> <p>NOTED: governors thanked Corrina Reeder for her informative input.</p> <p><i>Corrina Reeder left the meeting at this point</i></p>	
7.	<p>School Plan</p> <p>NOTED: a summary overview of the school plan had been included within the Headteacher's Report. Naomi Rose had not received any questions outside the meeting. Governors commented that recent visits to the school had enabled them to see the School plan in action, meaning they had few questions at this stage. The questions/ prompts provided in the plan for governors to ask during their visits were exceedingly helpful.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair commented that eight governors had been in the school on the previous Monday for a variety of reasons, which was indicative of how committed current governors were. He thanked all governors for their efforts. The Head also commented on the success of the current Governing Board.</p>	
8.	<p>Headteacher's Report (including complaints update)</p> <p>NOTED: the written report uploaded to TEAMS. Governors found the report clear and helpful and useful in providing a full view of the school in conjunction with video reports.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor noted the Head's comment about "not introducing anything new over the coming months, rather making sure that we achieve all the targets we set at the beginning of the academic year, to leave a 'blank canvass' for our new headteacher" and asked whether the school would be losing out as a result? The Head stressed the school would not lose out in any way, as focus would continue to be on getting the best results for pupils and the school. It was only planning for something that he would not be around to implement that was on hold until a new Headteacher had been selected. Governors highlighted the high quality of staff as selected by the Head and the improving Progress 8 scores as a solid foundation from which to build further. The Head praised the culture of the school and the voluntary work undertaken by staff including lunch duties and school clubs. This was not the norm for many schools. Governors acknowledged the positive culture of the school and the Head's role in creating and shaping it.</p>	
9.	<p>School Finances</p> <p>NOTED: the documents uploaded with the agenda, including the report on the Finance Working Group meeting on 13/2/25. The meeting had considered the 2025 SFVS, recent financial audits and budget preparation for 25/26. Income was up because of increased pupil numbers and a growing sixth form, but the school would need to budget for an additional £75k to cover increased NI costs, as the increase had not been fully funded by central government. Contract costs were also increasing because of NI and minimum wage increases. FWP members felt it was a good summary of the meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors' concerns about declining bank balances had been factored into the draft 2025 SFVS. A governor felt the document was correct but they were not comfortable at the school's apparently worsening financial position.</p>	

	<p>Information presented to the Board appeared retrospective rather than forward forecasting. They queried the FWP's view of the situation? FWP members felt they were working with the school to manage the situation. Discussions about future forecasting were taking place, including changes to the Bank Balance Tracker. The Opportunities Register also addressed aspects of this. Governors asked if the register could be presented to every meeting. The Business Manager pointed out that it was currently in flux because of budget setting, but would be presented in future. The Clerk queried the SFVS statement that the school did not use committees, given the existence of the Foundation Committee and the financial remit within its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>AGREED: the draft 2025 SFVS for submission by the end of March 2025 deadline.</p> <p>NOTED: the request to write-off an overpayment to a member of staff who had recently died.</p> <p>AGREED: to write-off the overpayment of salary of approximately £200.00.</p>	NT
10.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the three policies listed on the agenda. Physical Activity and Local Area Visits had been included in the annual meeting and agenda schedule, but had subsequently been delegated to the school, subject to any material changes being notified to the Board. The Clerk had not been notified of any material changes.</p> <p>AGREED: the Clerk should continue to list all policies on the agenda, including those where approval had been delegated to the school, so the Board could maintain oversight.</p> <p>NOTED: the Parent Code of Conduct uploaded for approval. Naomi Rose summarised the reasons for the code, which was based on a model from The Key. The Code would not have a regular renewal period, but would be brought back to governors for approval when a change was required.</p> <p>AGREED: unanimously, the Parent Code of Conduct.</p> <p>NOTED: the Business Manger would ensure the school's updated policy schedule was available for all governors to access via TEAMS/ Sharepoint.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>NT</p>
11.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda detailing recent accidents. There had been a subsequent fracture since it had been written. Even when playground accidents seemed genuinely accidental, the school reviewed conditions to see if any changes were necessary. No changes had been made as a result of recent incidents.</p> <p>NOTED: no further information was available about the insurance claim reported to the Foundation Committee at its last meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: a recent building evacuation had gone well.</p>	
12.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the School Business Plan as previously submitted to and discussed by the February meeting of the Foundation Committee.</p>	

13.	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>13.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 24/25</p> <p>NOTED: the governor reports uploaded in time to be presented to the Board. The reports covered: SEND, Nobellian Community and Business & Finance. A Health and Safety report had been uploaded but was no longer visible. The Chair would look into its disappearance.</p> <p><i>Chris Crawley left the meeting at this point</i></p> <p>NOTED: resources issues raised by the SEND report in terms of laptop provision. The Head pointed out the matter had not been raised appropriately within the school. Samuel Dwamena would contact Nik Thomas by email to discuss matters.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors commented favourably on recent visits and undertook to provide written reports in time for the next meeting.</p> <p>13.2 Governor Training</p> <p>NOTED: an updated governor training record had not been received by the Clerk and she had not heard from the Training Link Governor in response to her recent emails. The Chair said he would try to contact her.</p> <p>13.3 Governor Skills Audit</p> <p>NOTED: the clerk had circulated an email inviting all governors to complete the Skills Audit for 2025. So far, she had had two responses, but hoped to submit the outcomes of the complete audit to the next Board meeting. She summarised the uses the audit would be put to. Governors did not have any questions regarding the process and undertook to complete the audit by the deadline of 21 April 2025</p> <p><i>Nik Thomas left the meeting around this point</i></p> <p>13.4 30 Second Round Robin</p> <p>NOTED: the following recent governor activities - (MR) Headteacher recruitment, training; (KW) Disciplinary Hearing, Finance Working Party, planning 6th form visit; (SA) Disciplinary Hearing, PP discussions, Foundation Committee; (SC) Foundation Committee, Oaks Visit, Headteacher recruitment; (SD) SEND; (ML) Disciplinary Hearing, Safeguarding Visit; (HS) Headteacher recruitment, Foundation Committee, training; (JK) Headteacher recruitment, enrichment; (CS) Headteacher recruitment, school visit, training; (JM) teaching, assessment, mocks, 6th form.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair repeated his comments about the commitment demonstrated by current governors, as evidenced by recent activities. A governor responded by highlighting the Chair's commitment and positive impact on the work of the School Governing Board.</p>	<p>MR</p> <p>SD/ NT</p> <p>MR</p> <p>All</p>
14.	<p>General Careers and PP Updates (Standing Item)</p> <p>NOTED: the Careers Link Governor commented careers had been covered by the Head's report. He highlighted the careers and enrichment activities taking place, but observed it was difficult to envisage metrics to record and measure them.</p>	

	<p>NOTED: the PP Link Governor commented PP had been covered in the Head's report. The PP strategy document had been updated and would soon be published on the school website. PP funding was down by 5% meaning the school would have to work harder to maintain outcomes. Nick Brown would be leading on PP as Naomi Rose would be leading on Safeguarding. The link governor thanked Naomi Rose for her efforts in relation to PP.</p>	
15.	<p>Minutes of Previous Foundation Committee Meeting held on 26 February 2025</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 26 February 2025 as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 26 February 2025.</p>	
16.	<p>Minutes of Previous Governing Board Meeting held on 22 January 2025</p> <p>NOTED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 22 January 2025 and the accompanying Action Tracker document as uploaded to TEAMS with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held 22 January 2025 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>Key Updates</p> <p>17.1 Development of School Strategy NOTED: positive discussions in December and February. The process would pause to allow SLT to reflect on points raised and pending the selection of a new Headteacher.</p> <p>17.2 Headteacher Recruitment Process NOTED: the Chair advised that a good number of high quality applications had been received. The selection panel of Matt Reah, Chris Crawley, Claire Sutton, Jamie Kellett, Helen Sparks, plus Herts for Learning and the School Effectiveness Adviser had shortlisted the previous Monday. Five candidates had been invited to the assessment day on 31 March and it was planned to take two to three candidates through to the interview day on 1 April. Staff and all governors would have an opportunity to meet candidates. The need for as many governors as possible to attend the extraordinary Board meeting on 1 April was stressed. The meeting needed to be quorate in order to make an appointment to the post of Headteacher.</p> <p>17.3 Rebecca Llewelyn NOTED: with deep sadness, the early death of Rebecca Llewelyn. Her commitment and contribution to the school was highlighted. The school was closing the following afternoon to permit staff to attend her funeral. The Head commented that she had been a lovely colleague and a good teacher. Her death at 41 after repeated bouts of cancer had hit her colleagues very hard.</p>	
18.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: there was no other business to be discussed.</p>	
19.	Date of Next Meeting	

	<p>AGREED: the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors as <u>Wednesday, 4 June 2025 at 6.30pm online via TEAMS</u> but an extraordinary meeting of the Board would take place the following week on <u>Tuesday, 1 April 2025 at 6.30pm online via TEAMS</u>.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended at approximately 20:20</i></p>	
--	---	--

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
27 March 2025

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date:4 June 2025.....

Signature (Chair):