



SUMMER TERM (2) 2023 MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

Date 5th July 2023
 Time 19.00
 Place Holmer Green Senior School

- PRESENT:**
- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Tony Green (TG) – Chair | Liliana Minton (LM) |
| Ed Hillyard (EH) – Headteacher | Steve Pilgrim (SP) |
| Jeremy Hunt (JH) | Beccy Roberts (BR) |
| Anna Lee (AL) | Victoria Strutt (VS) |
| Melissa Miller (MM) | Anna Thomas (AT) |
- IN ATTENDANCE:**
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lynda Jackson (LJ) | Director of Finance, HR and Resources |
| Sarah Lary (SL) | Deputy Headteacher |
| Jenny Knight (JLK) | Clerk |
- APOLOGIES:** Claire Asare-Archer, Gareth Davies, Paul Davies, Lisa Swain, Kim Joynson

Action **Support** **Challenge**

Governors’ questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
1	Welcome and apologies for absence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TG welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were accepted from Claire Asare-Archer, Gareth Davies, Paul Davies, Lisa Swain and Kim Joynson. 	
2	Notification of Any Other Business LJ – Term dates 2024-25 VS – IVF	
3	Declarations of Interest against this agenda TG is a Member of Buckinghamshire Council.	
4	Minutes of the April Meeting and Matters Arising Governors approved the Minutes as an accurate record. Actions and Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff in the IT office have been asked to be more available at break and lunchtimes. 	

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints: EH confirmed that these do not have to be reported, but gave the numbers for the last two years: 53 (2022-23), 53 (2021-22). These are the total numbers of both complaints and concerns. Whistleblowing policy: Changes were made and the policy was signed off at the FPH&S meeting. All other actions were complete. 	
5	<p>Governor Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emma Starling has resigned as Governor. JK to check whether she intends to continue as a Member. SP's term of office as a Parent Governor has come to an end. Governors were keen to retain SP's skills on the FPH&S Committee and he was willing to continue, therefore it was proposed to appoint SP as a Community Governor. AT proposed SP, TG seconded. All Governors were in favour. SP was therefore duly elected for a further term of four years to 4 July 2027. With SP no longer a Parent Governor, there is now a vacancy. EH will run a Parent Governor election in September. LJ to update GIAS, Companies House and the school website with the above changes. 	<p>JLK</p> <p>EH LJ</p>
6	<p>Governor Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance training from NGA Learning Link had been circulated for Governors to complete. NGA had archived the original training but an alternative had been circulated. The training plan for 2023-24 had been circulated and was available on NGA Learning Link at the time of publishing. 	
7	STRATEGIC PLANNING	
7.1	<p>Curriculum – Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jess Watson (JW) (English teacher, primary school trained) presented on screen to Governors about the Literacy programme. EH to forward a redacted version of the presentation to JLK for sharing with the meeting papers. A new reading assessment is being used for KS3 (was Accelerated Reader (AR), now NGRT). The focus is on reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, to move students from 'learning to read' towards 'reading to learn'. AR was inconsistent in its scoring (lower than expected) due to test conditions not being robust, students not taking it seriously and attitudes towards it not positive. NGRT is an online test which gives a standard age score, a reading age, 	EH

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<p>GCSE indicators and progress measures. Individualised reports are given and reading ages are coming out on average one year higher than previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lower-level test (YARK) for SEN students and small group interventions are provided for those who need them. <p>Q – Is this purely about interventions?</p> <p>A – No, it is also being used to inform and to understand reading age accurately. Trials have gone well, both with students in top set Year 9 and those who have interventions; all are scoring higher.</p> <p>TG thanked JW for her time. She left the meeting at 19.30.</p>	
7.2	<p>Report of Headteacher and SEF</p> <p>EH had circulated his report and highlighted:</p> <p>MS Showcase School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission is going in on Friday. Thanks to all those who have made such an effort with this. • School has gone over and above on a number of the measures. If Showcase status is not achieved this time, a second attempt can be made. <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing has been challenging, with all local schools vying for a handful of Science teachers. • Lots of overseas staff have been recruited, which is a significant investment as much time is needed for induction, relocation support, visas, training to British school (and HGSS) standards. However, this is needed as there is such a shortage of British teachers (10,000 vacancies nationally). • School is also looking at its Flexible Working policy to try to help this. • EH proposed use of a professional recruitment company to help with staffing. This would be based on a fixed fee but details are not yet known. <p>Q – What was the staff retention %?</p> <p>A – 10 staff are moving on out of 70. Most are moving into new opportunities appropriate to their career progression, so this is a relatively normal number. 9 have been appointed.</p> <p>Q – Are other schools using commercial companies for recruitment?</p> <p>A – More academy secondary schools are moving towards it. There is so much time and cost involved in recruiting from abroad (visas, sponsorship, relocation support) and usually they are only employed for an initial one year contract.</p>	

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<p>Q – What is your retention strategy? A – It is about treatment (not treats), though it is important to maintain standards within this, otherwise the best are lost. The Staff Forum has a bigger voice now, with a number of requests having been acted upon – such as refurbishment of staff toilets, subscriptions to TES etc. Interviews are taking place for secondments to the Leadership Team and SENCo training. The School’s values are also important, especially for younger staff.</p> <p>Q – Will Governors see the results of exit interviews? How are these managed? A – These will be collated for the next FGB meeting. Staff have the option of meeting with EH, LJ or Liz Plascott or just sending back the electronic form.</p> <p>Governors suggested an offer could be made to departing staff to have an exit interview with a Governor. EH to facilitate this.</p> <p>Q – How many support staff are expected to leave? A – Three are leaving. One PE technician and one DT technician are moving into teacher training. Movement generally is among LSAs.</p> <p>Q – Could anything more be done to offer flexible working, such as job shares, to attract a wider range of people? A – Job shares are possible, but this works best where there is a day of overlap – which leads to overstaffing. Some staff are working on a 0.92 contract to enable them to drop and pick up their own children at school. However, this often means they are ‘out of the loop’ with staff meetings etc. Some are able to do PPA time at home. Much time is spent considering other schools’ flexible working policies to get new ideas and make this work.</p> <p>MAT Working Party EH had shared the slides from this group and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping a watching brief on this. • To set up its own MAT, HGSS would need an Outstanding Ofsted inspection in 2025. <p>BR thanked the Working Party for the huge effort they have gone to, to provide such useful information.</p> <p>Parent Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results had been circulated. • There was a drop-off in the number of responses. • Governors suggested the results should be fed back to parents to give them a chance to respond. 	<p style="text-align: center;">EH</p>

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
7.4	<p>Estates Update</p> <p>LJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally getting to the end of a long snagging list. • The walk-in fridge is now working and the warranty has been extended to the end of October. • Additional sports quality grass seeding has been requested for the sports field. • Two new Rationale ovens have been approved to replace the existing unsuitable ovens. • The problem with the extraction unit has finally been agreed: too small and fitted the wrong way round. This has been fixed. • The sports hall roof has been fixed (it was leaking due to a pierced membrane) and confirmation has been obtained that the guarantee still stands. • Railings around the courtyard have been installed and the area is now much safer. • Exterior lights have been fitted outside Reception. • An agreement has been reached to replace internal kitchen doors with inspection panels. • Overall the new facilities are making a huge difference to the school, e.g. fantastic recording studio facilities. 	
7.5	<p>School Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document had been circulated. • EH thanked all those who took part in the working group. • Governors had requested some adjustments to the KPIs and for Safeguarding to be made more prominent. • Exam results may affect the plan, once known. • Discussions about the next five-year plan will commence in 2024-25. 	
8	COMMITTEE REPORTS	
8.1	<p>HR Panels, Complaints Panels, Student Discipline Committees</p> <p>One parental complaint about a fixed term suspension has been considered. Governors supported the decision of the School.</p>	
8.2	<p>FPH&S Committee</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June had been circulated.</p> <p>SP reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-year surplus and healthy reserves at end of year. • Budget for 2023-24 leaves a deficit of £25k. However, this includes contributions to staff pensions of about £100k which, in recent years, have not been taken up. 	

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% pay increase has been budgeted. It is hoped that anything agreed above this will have to be at least part funded, otherwise many schools will be in serious financial difficulties. • Governors approved the budget for 2023-24. 	
9	GOVERNOR REPORTS	
9.1	<p>Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG thanked AT for her time and contribution to the GB. • TG also thanked all those who attended the Governor Day. Some changes have been made to respond to Governors' concerns about awareness of the Curriculum. A presentation will be included at the beginning of each FGB to highlight a Curriculum focus area. • Policy reviews were discussed, and it was agreed that policies would continue to be sent out two weeks in advance, with comments returned at the meeting. • EH to indicate on HR policies which are Bucks policies. • TG informed Governors that Amersham School had made a request to collaborate on data sharing and best practice. • TG thanked School for the very successful Music Showcase evening, which he had attended, and encouraged other Governors to do the same. 	EH
9.2	<p>Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LS was not present. 	
9.3	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>SP reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful meeting with Andrew Sharp to consider the Safeguarding Audit, which took place on 20 and 29 June. The report has not yet been received but was generally positive. • SP thanked the team for all their efforts with the audit. • Safeguarding training including changes to KCSIE will be held for Governors in the October FGB meeting. EH to organize. 	EH
9.4	<p>SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD had circulated a report in his absence, including responses from the Parent SEN meetings. Governors found this useful. • EH reported that a special school is coming in to review the SEN provision. It will be RAG-rated and improvements highlighted. PD will be involved in the feedback session. 	
9.5	<p>Disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BR met with Kerri Stone last week, who has been collating case studies on disadvantaged groups. 	

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A particular point of note was the LAC attendance compared to the national figure. BR to send her report to JLK for circulation and inclusion in the appropriate folders on the N-drive. 	BR/JLK
9.6	<p>Careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BR met with Jo Selleck and circulated her report. Jo is very passionate about her role and what is going on with Careers at HGSS is really exciting. Year 12 are currently on work experience and some have had phenomenal experiences and been really inspired. <p>Q – How does School make sure they retain good people for whom they have made a significant training investment?</p> <p>A – Once a qualification has been gained, staff must stay at the school for at least a year, otherwise they have to pay back the cost of training. The careers strategy is being reviewed and a plan presented back to EH at the end of term, to make sure student experiences are different from Year 7 to Year 13.</p>	
10	Policy Reviews and Approvals	
10.1	<p>SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been re-circulated with changes made from the last meeting. There were no further changes and the policy was approved. 	
10.2	<p>Non-Examination Assessment Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been re-circulated with changes made from the last meeting. There were no further changes and the policy was approved. 	
10.3	<p>School Travel Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This new policy had been circulated. There were no changes and the policy was approved. 	
10.4	<p>Sex & Relationships Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. There were no changes and the policy was approved. 	
10.5	<p>Dog Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. Line on p.2 stating that the school ‘does not currently have a dog’ to be removed as this sets the policy in time. P.6 – Clarify what insurance dog owners must have. The policy was approved subject to these changes. 	<p>U</p> <p>U</p>

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
10.6	<p>Health & Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. <p>Q – Back to work interviews are required after three periods of absence but these are not happening. Should this be removed or should the interviews be taking place?</p> <p>A – 19 staff have been on absence monitoring since Covid, which is unusual. Therefore, it has not been practical to conduct back to work interviews with all of them. Hopefully this will not be the same picture next academic year and more of a targeted focus on back to work interviews will be possible. Staff are always offered a meeting but some don't feel the need.</p> <p>Q – Who conducts back to work interviews – line managers? – and are they documented?</p> <p>A – LJ conducts them all for consistency. Absent staff are reviewed every month via sickness & absence monitoring. The aim is to support staff back to full attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no further comments and the policy was approved. 	
10.7	<p>Flexible Working Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This new policy had been circulated. There is a white paper that will affect the policy, but it will be reviewed again once the paper has gone through. LJ to correct the page numbers in the contents table. The policy was approved subject to this change. 	LJ
11	Other Matters	
11.1	<p>Next Meeting Wednesday 11th October 2023 at 6.30pm</p>	
11.2	<p>Next year's meeting dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting dates for 2023-24 were circulated. There were no requested changes and the dates were approved. EH to confirm whether the Governor Day in November is on Tuesday 7th or Wednesday 8th November. 	EH
12	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LJ tabled term dates for 2024-25 including the 2-week half term. Governors approved the term dates. VS suggested the school consider an IVF policy. LJ agreed and suggested also a Menopause policy. LJ to look into these. 	LJ

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="411 241 1246 315">• TG thanked everyone for their time and effort over the year and wished Governors and Staff a good summer holiday. 	
13	<p data-bbox="363 356 663 392">Evaluation of Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="411 398 1198 472">• Governors agreed that the meeting had been conducted appropriately and effectively. 	

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Minutes approved by the Governing Board:

Signed

Date

Mr T Green – Chairman of the Board