

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS OF MOUNT GRACE SCHOOL, held on Monday 24th May 2010

Present	Peter Baker (Head) Peter Bonner Anne Brennan Christopher Cardell-Williams	Colin Daniel (Chair) Linda King Diane Merrill Elaine Moore	Jan Southwell John Taylor Tracey Willetts Steve Wright
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In attendance: Robert Blythe (Clerk)

These minutes remain confidential until approved at the next meeting.	
<p>1. Welcome: The Chair opened the meeting at 6:08 pm and introduced Sara Bailey for her presentation on Attendance.</p>	
<p>2. To receive a presentation on Attendance from Sara Bailey, Attendance Officer. Sarah's presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is currently at its highest ever level. • The DCSF has set an absence target of 5% and we are close to it, at 7%. • The school monitors attendance and identifies Persistent Absentees (PAs) as those below 80% attendance. • The school has applied for 30 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) 9 of which have been during the current academic year. FPNs have an affect in some cases but not all. • The majority of our pupils, 378 out of 772, have 95% attendance. Most PA's fall within Years 10 and 11. • The school is now focusing on pupils whose attendance is falling to 85%, to prevent them slipping further. The first step is to write to the parents and warn them of FPNs. • Despite the school's efforts, a hardcore of PAs remains, often those who are also involved with the Youth Offending Team or the Police. • We have 8 travellers on roll and when they are off travelling, their absences count towards our absence rates. Governors thought this was an unfair way for the DCSF to collect statistics. • When pupils move to Hertswood School, perhaps through a family move, they are only admitted on certain dates in the year, so they remain on our roll until that date and count towards our absence figures. • We have an electronic attendance system which registers pupils for every lesson. It is continually up-dated and a new Parent Portal will allow parents to access attendance lesson by lesson. <p>Questions from governors clarified the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often, PA's come from single parent families in poor housing whose parents have had negative educational experiences. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance data has been correlated with exam results and this information has been presented at parents' evenings. • The school can usually distinguish between sickness and unwillingness to attend. Years 7, 8 and 9 have the best attendance records and it is hoped that they will be better attendees as they move up through the school. • When PAs attend school, they are generally not disruptive and are more likely to be apathetic. • The school cannot exclude a pupil for being absent. • FPNs may act as a deterrent to other parents regarding their children's absence. • The school is focusing its efforts on the majority of students where we can have a positive effect. <p>Governors recognised that during the 3 years since being appointed, Sara has made a huge difference to attendance. This was really appreciated by the governors. She was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting.</p>	
<p>1. To receive apologies for absence and to note the need to declare any conflicts of interest that arise during the meeting: Apologies were received from Lesley Bloomfield, Vicky Horn, Dave Redington and Christine James. Fadeke Ayoola remains temporarily absent through maternity leave.</p> <p>The Chair reminded governors of the need to declare any conflicts of interest.</p>	
<p>3. To receive notification of Any Other Business No items were received, but Peter Bonner informed governors that a draft Discipline Panel terms of reference has been created, which the Chair will take to the PA Committee.</p>	PA Agenda Item.
<p>4. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting (22nd March, 2010): The minutes were approved without amendment.</p>	
<p>5. Matters Arising from those minutes: Governors checked all action points and noted the following:</p> <p>Item 8v: Safer Recruitment: Linda King has yet to access this training on-line but Diane has attended face to face training and Anne is booked in on Thursday.</p> <p>Item 6i) Effective Governance: Attempts to arrange training to be held at the school on the Effectiveness of the GB and on preparations for Ofsted are on-going.</p> <p>Item 7b: Governor Training: The Chair has written to School Governance to thank them for the excellent quality of the training on Exclusions.</p>	

<p>Item 8: Fashion Show: This was a great event and governors were pleased to see it featuring in the local press. It also raised a lot of money for charity.</p> <p>Applied Learning: Chris has met with Nancy Horne and will attend the Inset in the summer to launch lesson planning. He will be looking to governors for their input from their business backgrounds. One advantage of Applied Learning is that students will develop a feel for where their aptitudes lie as they progress through the school.</p> <p>Item 8vii: Traffic Calming: HCC is surveying Mount Grace Road with a view to measures being introduced.</p> <p>Item 8vii: Press liaison: The Head has discussed this with a member of the senior prefect team and it is hoped this will lead to increased press coverage. Also, news is reported in Amazing Grace and on the website.</p> <p>In future, the new Head Prefects attending GB meetings will be Clare Smith and Lauren Bartlett. The Chair has written to thank Megan and Leah for their involvement with the GB. The Chair received a letter from Martin Tate thanking us for allowing him to present his work to the GB.</p>	
<p>6. To approve the 2010/11 School Budget: Peter Bonner presented the key elements to the Governing Body. The 2009/10 carry forward was £109,000, equally split between revenue and capital funding. The 2010/11 budget of £5.4 million includes provision for the 2.3% pay award for teaching staff and improvements to the Reception area and Kitchen. Numbers in the VIth Form have increased, but there is a lag before additional funding is received. There is concern regarding funding and budgeting in 2011/2 and 2012/3. The Budget was approved.</p> <p>Thanks were recorded to Ann Pickford for her excellent work to monitor the accounts and prepare budgets in a way that governors can understand.</p>	<p>2010/11 School Budget approved.</p>
<p>7. Governor Business:</p> <p>a) To receive reports from:</p> <p>i) Pupil Achievement Committee: The committee is due to meet on 14th June.</p> <p>ii) Human Resources Committee: The committee is due to meet on 21st June at 5:30.</p> <p>iii) Resources and Premises Committee: As well as the 2010/11 budget, the committee looked at the School Fund account, which is generally used for school trips, which are generally self funding. A benevolent fund of £1300 has been used to help a number of</p>	

students to attend trips.

The Statement of Internal Control was approved and lettings charges increased by 1.2% and a simplified structure of charges agreed.

Kitchen improvements will take place over the summer holidays, project managed by Mouchel.

The Governor Induction Pack was considered.

John Taylor completed a walk-round, taking photos of unsightly/dangerous areas with a view to re-instigating the Premises Committee to oversee these issues.

Asked about parental covernance, the Head said that information is in the Year 7 pack, but this coincides with parents having to contribute towards Sandymouth, buy new school uniform and pay the utilities fund, so it is pushed later during the Year 7 parents evenings and this has brought a better response. Parents are also asked to Gift Aid their contributions.

b): Governor Training:

The Exclusions training event was well attended by governors. The Chair intends arranging self evaluation training and a briefing on Ofsted inspections next.

He tabled papers showing an example of an Inspection report including sections on 'How effective are leadership and Management?' 'What does the school need to do next to improve further?' and an accompanying letter to students.

The Head is expecting us to be inspected in September 2010 and feels we need to look more closely at Community Cohesion and produce a policy that reflects our current practice. The GB is keen to ensure that it is meeting all its statutory duties in all areas and may be able to use the section on judgements at the end of the SEF or Inspection report as a checklist.

Given that student outcomes are a limiting factor for inspection grades, it is harder for us to achieve Outstanding as we have students with attainment on entry at a lower level than the national average.

b) Governors' Visits:

The Chair and Elaine Moore attended the Fashion Show, where the enthusiasm, organisation and attendance were impressive.

Elaine attended the Year End concert and was impressed by the awards given and the students' enthusiasm. The Head contrasted the good natured end to the academic year in stark contrast to what took place a few years ago. The Prom is set to take place on a boat on the River Thames on 2nd July.

Linda King attended the Strictly Come Dancing event run by the Extended Schools consortium. Despite the two very good teachers, it was poorly

<p>attended, although the school hopes that it will eventually take-off.</p> <p>c) Ratification of Policies: The following policies recently up-dated by HCC were ratified by the Governing Body: HCC Model Policy for Grievances HCC Model Staff Disciplinary Policy</p>	<p>Policies ratified.</p>
<p>8. Questions and Comments on the Headteacher's Report: Tabling his report, the Head drew attention to the section on staffing. Although sorry to see the Head of Maths leave, the school has been lucky to have benefited from her work for the years that she has been here. Her successor offers a lot of promise. The newly qualified teachers offer a blend of experience from other walks of life or gained through supply work, with high academic quality based on 1st Class Honours Degrees. The school is mindful of the structure of the Senior Leadership Team and is aware of the need to pass on their expertise through shadowing and other means as part of succession management. A recent analysis of personality types and decision making styles undertaken by Arcadia as part of their sponsorship of the school showed that the SLT covered all 8 areas and had the ability to flex between styles. Arcadia's sponsorship is worth the equivalence of £9,000 in training opportunities.</p>	
<p>9. Building Schools for the Future: The number of pupils has grown to almost reach the capacity of the building (1076 pupils) and this will be exacerbated when the school leaving age is raised. Over the years, various teaching areas have been lost to things like reprographics, never believing that space would become an issue. Already, there is a need for two additional classrooms, probably in the form of mobiles, with the school having plenty of space to site them.</p> <p>With the BSF funding looking very uncertain, consideration was given to selling some land. This has been considered previously, with part of the cricket pitch being the most likely area.</p> <p>Our status was also considered. We are a Foundation School but to become a Trust with academy status or a new 'Free School' we would need to be deemed outstanding.</p>	
<p>10. To receive an up-date on the Squash Club lease: Robert Curry, the independent valuer, is due to present his report to governors at the school on the 9th June and his advice will be used to move the process forwards. Governors will soon receive an invitation from Shirley Lee.</p>	
<p>11. Strategic Conference 2010: (Monday 8th November) The Head informed governors that the conference this year aims to re-</p>	

<p>position the school having achieved most of the intentions from the original plan. These were to enable the school to serve the community of Potters Bar and to lead on Vocational (now Applied) Learning. Consequently, the next big idea is needed. Input is needed from all sources – governors, students and staff. Possible examples include Buildings Issues, including the capacity and condition, or to become re-designated for Applied Learning.</p> <p>Another idea for consideration is to change the school’s admission rules. We are surrounded by schools that have partial selection. We may wish to take action so that we have a truly comprehensive range of ability. Our present attainment profile shows we have approximately 15% in the upper quartile and 35% in the lower one. Partial selection might be by ability, by banding or by lottery. 17 places would be selected by whatever method is chosen, leaving 154 places available for the local community, sufficient to offer a place to every child in Potters Bar. Any such changes would take 5 years before it would impact on exam results at GCSE.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Admissions Committee would meet before the Strategic Conference to produce proposals.</p>	<p>Governors invited to November’s Strategic Conference</p> <p>Admissions Committee to meet.</p>
<p>12. To discuss any other business:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governors Handbook: The Chair would like to up-date the Governors’ Handbook/Induction Pack for new governors. Diane and the Chair agreed to action this. 2. Premises Committee: The Finance Committee proposes resurrecting the Premises Committee as there are many issues that cannot always be dealt within the time available to the Finance Committee. The Chair would welcome volunteers to attend a meeting before the end of July so that its Terms of Reference can be established for its reporting back to the Finance Committee. 3. John Taylor expressed his wish to stand down as a Community Governor, once a replacement is found. He is willing to offer his expertise to the school on an Associate Member basis. Furthermore, Tracey Willets has expressed her desire to leave as a parent governor and it intended to circulate the vacancy early in the autumn term. Elaine Moore’s term of office as a parent governor will end on the 1st September. 4. Model Policy on Governors’ Expenses: The draft policy will be taken to the Human Resources Committee for approval. 	<p>Chair & Diane to action.</p> <p>Volunteers for Premises Committee sought.</p> <p>Governors to find new Community Governor.</p> <p>Human Resources Committee Agenda Item.</p>
<p>13. To confirm the date of the next meeting:</p> <p>The date of the meeting was confirmed as from Monday 12th July 2010 at 6pm. The meeting closed at 8:04 pm and was followed by a Part II confidential item.</p>	