

# MINUTES OF FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2014

4.30 P.M. AT MAIN BASE

## Present

Claire Marshall, Denise Fountain (Acting Head), Mark Harvey, James Brown, Ben Bury, Kristina Murphy, Clive Reeves, Kacper Saar, Alison Teague, Mark Yorke

## Non Governors in attendance

Judy Hunt (Company Secretary), Jane Spilsbury (Local Authority School Support), Surinder Dhillon (Irwin Mitchell), Diane Hoban (Vice Principal), Alyson Ralphs (Clerk)

## Absent

## ACTION

### 1. Confidential Item

- Claire introduced Surinder Dhillon from Irwin Mitchell to governors.

Staff governors, James Brown and Jane Spilsbury were asked to step out of the meeting.  
Staff governors, James Brown and Jane Spilsbury re-entered the room.

- Claire introduced Jane Spilsbury from the Local Authority School to School Support. Claire confirmed she had also received good advice from Sue Twells who was Jane's line manager and Joyce Rawlinson, Governor Support. Jane works with the School Improvement Team and Teaching Schools. Jane explained the support that is available to governors. Jane had established with Claire what our commitments to other schools were and had contacted these schools to provide cover. Jane had provided the name of a person who can work with Denise and SLT to offer support. This was Clare Considine, ex Head Teacher of Bordesley Green Girls School. It was not necessary for her to have any more involvement other than to support SLT.
- Denise asked for clarification on what cover had been provided for our work with other Schools. Jane had found someone to cover the interview at St Mary and St John and made Claire aware of this. Denise explained the Head Teacher at St Mary and St John had agreed for Iain Johnson to attend. ~~Ben suggested one of the principal is taking the role more responsibility.~~
- Ben queried the acting principal role. Claire said there is a rota system already in place where the Vice Principals act up for one term.
- Denise felt it was more than acting up but didn't feel it was the meeting to discuss this.
- Denise asked if Jane was the contact for advice. Jane passed her mobile telephone number to Denise.

2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy

- Behaviour
- Diane Hoban outlined the changes to the Behaviour Policy.
- Diane had taken the DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools February 2014 along with the school policy and consulted with Leadership.  
The supportive policies were all adopted and amended in line with latest guidance from the DfE and the Local Authority.  
Staff teaching in hospitals should follow the guidance from the Hospital Trusts.
- Kristina asked if governors should be monitoring behaviour. Mark confirmed incidents are reported at each full governing body meeting. Diane said there was an analysis each year and repeated behaviour would be dealt with in the pupil behaviour support plan and pupil risk assessment.
- Governors could monitor and comment on behaviour management as part of their governor visit on the Governor Visit Form.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Behaviour Policy and supportive policies.**

**Mark proposed, Clive seconded.**

- Child Protection Policy
- Di outlined the changes to the child protection policy.
- The safeguarding statement had also been updated to reflect the changes.
- Di had spoken to Birmingham Safeguarding Board for their advice.
- It was about tightening procedures already in place.
- JBS have a robust system in place.
- Kristina queried there was a policy on managing extremism. Di confirmed it is covered in the policy, however we are awaiting the Local Authority Policy which will then be added.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Child Protection Policy.**

3. DBS Checks

- Ofsted are very clear that 3 yearly checks are not necessary and are a bad use of resources.
- We have also received legal confirmation that the checks are not required.
- Di handed out a proposed paragraph that would be incorporated within the Data Checking Sheet. This form was sent to staff every year to complete and sign.
- James queried if the responsibility would then lie with the member of staff. It was confirmed it would.
- Kristina questioned if this was included in employees contracts of employment. Di confirmed Annette Strong had checked the contracts and they did not include this.
- Di outlined the role of the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).
- Di explained that JBS have a robust induction process which covers safeguarding.
- Training is taking place in September to include sexual exploitation, child protection, behaviour, health and safety, budget, etc.

- Mark felt we had investigated the need for DBS costs and looked at all avenues.
- Mark felt governors ought to declare any convictions also.

**Governors agreed that 3 yearly checks will not take place.**

**Clive proposed, Alison seconded.**

4. Apologies/Declarations of Interest

Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

- No apologies.
- All staff governors and James Brown declared an interest in item 13.
- Minutes were checked for accuracy.
- Alyson had checked her records and Mark Yorke had sent apologies prior to the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014. Alyson apologised for this oversight and the minutes were changed to reflect this.
- The staff election cannot take place due to the percentage of community governors. Alyson confirmed we needed to appoint 2 further community governors before a staff election can take place.
- Names had been added to the groups under the restructure item.
- Budget is on the agenda.
- Irwin Mitchell quick call – Claire confirmed we have a contract for the year so we could use them for a quick call service.
- Asset Management plan had now been approved by SLT.

**All governors present accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 as a true and accurate record.**

**Claire proposed, Ben seconded.**

5. Policies Update

- Finance policies – finance committee had approved all policies.
- Governing Body Code of Conduct, Governing Body Allowances and Governing Body Confidentiality to be reviewed to add DBS notes and refer to governors handbook and brought back to governors in September 2014.

**All governors present agreed to adopt all the finance policies except for the three mentioned above.**

- LGPS Discretions Policy  
Judy had obtained an exemplar but no-one in school had pensions knowledge, therefore Browne Jacobson had written the policy. Annette Strong had made some comments. Judy to look at these comments and bring back to governors.

- Confidentiality Policy had been reviewed by the Staffing, Pay and Safeguarding committee.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Confidentiality Policy.**

- Working Time Policy had been reviewed by the Staffing, Pay and Safeguarding committee.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Working Time Policy.**

6. Budget

- Judy outlined the figures on page 3 of the budget hand out.
- Judy is in contact with the EFA regarding the £321,250 and the £126,000 and we should hopefully have answers by next Friday.
- Audit advised that we can only set the budget on what we expect to receive.
- Judy will keep working on the budget until the end of August 2014.
- Judy suggested taking the £126,000 out of the staffing budget.
- Ben queried if this meant redundancies. It was confirmed there would be no redundancies but this would be from money allocated to vacancies. Denise gave an example of the ICT vacancy at Ardenleigh.
- Claire asked if we could use the reserves money.
- Discussion took place around which budgets could be used, e.g. reserves budget, carry forward or the working environment budget.
- Judy hoped to have answers by next Friday.
- Judy to communicate with Mark Harvey, James Brown, Claire Marshall and Denise Fountain.

**All governors present agreed in principle to use £100,000 from the working environment Budget and £26,000 from the staffing budget and using reserve money to fund working environment.**

- St Thomas Building
- Waiting for EFA funding £150,000.
- Local authority want us to provide the education but the authority haven't got written authority from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
- Clive asked why the building was needed. Denise explained we have an additional 12 pupils for September 2014, a primary and secondary class at Dovedale. The new pupils will move into the portacabin at Dovedale and Pathways need to move to the St. Thomas building.
- Kacper questioned where the money would come from if the EFA do not approve the places. Mark confirmed JBS would have to fund the refurbishment in the unlikely event the EFA did not approve the additional places. EFA have to agree the expansion and Birmingham City Council need confirmation from EFA to release the funds.
- Ben challenged if we should be taking on any further risk.
- Finance recommended we take the risk as it was felt it was low.

- Judy asked governors which budget should be used if the money is not received.
- It was agreed that the reserves budget or the working environment budget could be used.
- Clive asked if it was an issue between the EFA and Birmingham City Council. Claire confirmed it was but the reserves budget could be used.
- Clive asked for clarification of the working environment budget. Denise confirmed this was for the asset management. Asset management would be prioritised if the funds were to be used elsewhere.

**Governors agreed to continue with the refurbishment of the St. Thomas building.  
Mark proposed, Alison seconded.**

Cover for finance

- Finance committee recommended Judy look at the 3 options for covering the School Business Manager (SBM) role.
- Denise felt no decision on the finance cover is leaving the school very vulnerable.
- Clive asked what the comparable salary would be. It was confirmed it was a lot less.
- Clive felt this should have been brought to governors sooner.
- James felt some of the jobs on the list were not relevant to a SBM. Denise confirmed the list of jobs had been re-allocated to internal staff for the short term. The role will then need looking at again.
- Claire asked governors if it would be worth agreeing to one term and then look at again.
- Kristina asked why we had a process of 3 quotes and then not adhere to it?
- ~~Claire pointed out it was more EFA policy.~~
- Governors agreed there was a risk in making the decision without the 3 quotes.
- Mark Harvey asked governors to vote on the following;  
A - wait until next week when we have the 3 quotes.  
B – agree the DRB service without the three quotes.
- There was a show of hands and the majority voted to go with DRB.
- Claire and Mark abstained.

**It was agreed by majority vote that we go ahead with the service level agreement from DRB.**

7. Local Government Pay Award 2014

- Provision already allocated in the budget for the 1% increase.
- Governors felt the pay award should be more and would not want to prevent staff from receiving the increase.

**James abstained due to his declared interest.**

**All governors present, except James agreed to pay the local government pay award.**

**Claire proposed, Clive seconded.**

8. Annual Elections/Nominations/Appointments for September 2014

• Election of Chair

- Governors agreed to appoint the Chair for a period of 1 year.
- Claire put herself forward as Chair and withdrew from the meeting.
- No other governor put themselves forward.
- Alyson asked governors to vote.
- Denise abstained
- **Governors voted unanimously to appoint Claire Marshall as Chair of Governors.**
- Claire Marshall re-entered the room.
- Claire asked governors to think about standing for Chair next year so Claire can start thinking about succession planning.

• Election of Vice Chair

- Mark was happy to remain as Vice Chair.
- No other governor put themselves forward.
- Governors were asked to vote.
- Denise abstained.
- **Governors voted unanimously to appoint Mark Harvey as Vice Chair of Governors.**
- Clive would be interested in looking at Vice Chair next year.

• Committees

- Committee memberships were discussed.
- The following committees were agreed:

Finance Committee to consist of:-

- Mark Harvey (Chair)
- James Brown
- Kristina Murphy
- Principal
- DRB to attend committee meetings

Staffing, Pay and Safeguarding

- Clive Reeves (Chair)
- Claire Marshall
- Alison Teague
- Principal
- Vacancy

Dismissals, Discipline and Appeals

- Mark Harvey (Chair)
- Kristina Murphy
- All other governors except staff governors

- Link Governors
- Governors discussed and agreed link governors as follows:-
  - Governing Body Development – James Brown and Kacper Saar
  - SEN – Alison Teague and Ben Bury
  - Safeguarding (inc. Children in Public Care) and Single Central Record – Mark Harvey
  - Equalities – Kristina Murphy
  - Remove International link governor
  - Pupil Premium – Claire Marshall
  - Teaching School – Clive Reeves
  - Specialist Provision (Ardenleigh, Newbridge and Oleaster) – Mark Harvey
  - Hospitals (BCH, Woodlands, Heartlands, Good Hope and City) – Mark Yorke
  - Home Teaching and Dovedale – Clive Reeves
  - Parkway and Northfield – Alison Teague and Kristina Murphy
  - Willows – Kacper Saar and Mark Harvey
- Company Secretary Role
- Browne Jacobson offer the service at approximately £180.

**All governors present agreed to buy in the Services from Browne Jacobson for the Company Secretary Role and review again next year.**

11. Remits

- Finance remit had been approved earlier in the year.
- No changes to Staffing, Pay and Safeguarding committee remit.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Staffing, Pay and Safeguarding committee remit.  
Claire proposed, Alison seconded**

- New remit had been approved for the Restructuring committee.

**All governors present agreed to adopt the Restructuring Committee remit.  
Claire proposed, Clive seconded**

12. Dates for next academic year

- The calendar had been sent with the agenda.
- Finance felt they needed more time to sign off financial elements.
- Mark was not comfortable with agreeing financial items by email.
- **Alyson to add a further 3 finance committee meetings to the calendar so they meet half termly.**
- **Governing Body Allowances were discussed. Alyson to look into whether childcare claims have to be with registered childcare.**

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13. Principal's Report

- Refer to hand out.
- Mark thanked Denise for stepping into the Acting Principal role.
- Denise briefly went through the report.
- The report clearly shows the hard and successful work going on in school.
- Temporary DT post has been postponed – staff member may be coming back.
- School Improvement Partner – Denise confirmed Justine Sims, Head of Victoria and Cherry Oak had been working closely with JBS. Denise asked governors if they were happy to continue with Justine Sims.
- Clive queried what the SIP partner role was. Denise explained it was looking at the strategic decisions in the school with the Principal.
- Claire felt further discussion was needed on this.
- Clive felt we should stay with the current SIP provider.

**Governors agreed to stay with Justine Simms for the time being.**

- Exam figures are looking good.
- We are closing the gap for vulnerable groups.
- Confident that teachers are good at predicting working at grades.
- Mark asked what impact this had on the pupils. Denise confirmed this involved challenging teachers to ensure pupil progress is made. JBS do not expect anything less than good teaching. This involved streamlining teacher appraisal using the new Teacher Appraisal Annual Statement (copy included in the agenda pack).
- Clive asked if we had the tools to go into a new term.
- Denise confirmed SIP and SEF need to be finalised.
- Alison challenged when the Speech and Language Therapist would be in place. Denise confirmed we were waiting for the NHS to appoint new staff. Diane Hoban is managing this. Clive asked what the stumbling block was and could we appoint our own. Denise confirmed we cannot appoint as a stand-alone because there has to be professional monitoring in place.

**Alyson to ask Di Hoban to contact Mark Harvey regarding Speech and Language Therapist.**

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- Mark informed governors he had sat on the panel for the new Mental Health Practitioner who had been appointed to work with our pupils. Mark was impressed by the calibre of the candidates.
- Teaching School Alliance work – Denise read out an email that had been received from Veronica Fenlon, Head Teacher at St Mary and St John. Veronica confirmed the Lead HMI was impressed with the work JBS had provided with the PIP's and the HR provided. Acknowledgement should be made for the work Nicky Penny, Iain Johnson and Annette Strong had put in to help the school move from requires improvement towards a good.
- James asked Denise if in order to maintain and continue the success of the school Denise had sufficient resources to carry on. Denise said no, in particular it is not feasible to do two roles, the loss of ER support from Annette is a problem and that the SLT felt vulnerable.
- Denise did not feel the ER support offered by Birmingham City Council was very good. Denise had grave concerns moving forward.



James asked who had made the ER decision, was it Nicky? Denise confirmed Annette ended her contract after receiving an email from Claire Marshall today asking for a quotation which would be reviewed alongside 2 other quotations.

Claire confirmed she had asked what Annette's costs would be to extend the contract until the end of term.

Denise said Annette was very sorry to leave the school but didn't feel she had to tout for business when her costs were already known.

Clive asked what support could be put in place. Denise felt this was hard to answer at the moment as she is carrying out two roles.

14. Restructure

- The restructure did not reach its conclusion.
- Job descriptions did not go out to wider governors and the second meeting did not happen.
- Claire had met with the Vice Principals and there were concerns around the capacity surrounding the ER/HR. Questions were sent around job descriptions and these still need answering. The restructure cannot go ahead as is.
- Claire outlined the timeline for the restructuring.
- Ben asked about the new alignment of sectors. Denise confirmed this was addressed previously and was not part of the restructure. It was a day-to-day management decision to re-align the sectors of the school.
- Ben queried if there would be a financial element to this. Denise confirmed no.
- Claire confirmed it would be unfair to continue with the restructure without Nicky's input and Claire felt uncomfortable in pushing the restructure through.
- Finance has been discussed.
- Denise has concerns about the retention of staff by putting the restructure on hold. Feedback was very positive from the staff and there was a chance we could lose good staff who are looking for promotion. Staff are asking questions about the restructure.
- Clive felt there was some fine tuning to be done on the restructure.
- Denise stated that unions had said it was one of the best restructures they have seen.
- Clive felt the restructure still seemed positive in the room.
- **Mark felt there should be some communication with staff. Denise to send a communication to staff outlining the new timeline when it is known. DF**
- Clive asked if it was Nicky's vision should it be driven by her.
- Ben felt whoever was taking on the role of acting Principal could take the restructure on.
- There are still questions around the ER/HR job descriptions and costings.
- Denise stated it wasn't just Nicky's vision as it had been discussed in depth with SLT, governors and staff were positive.
- Kristina felt the restructure should continue to avoid pressures.
- Restructure committee to meet and agree next steps and timeline early next academic year.

*C. Mill 29/9/14*

15. Governing Body Development

- Refer to hand out.
- There are 5 governors interested in joining JBS.
- Claire asked for support in appointing new governors.
- James and Kacper offered to help Claire.

16. Governing Body Briefing Report

- Refer to hand out.
- No additional comments made.

17. Any Other Business

- A confidential item was discussed.
- Clive again asked Denise if there was anything governors could help with until the end of term. Denise felt there were several imminent ER issues that needed dealing with.
- Meeting to be convened next week Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 4.30-5.30.

James and the staff Governors were then asked to leave the room.

18. Confidential Item

- Leadership of the school.
- Support in relation to ER function of the school.

**The meeting ended at 9.15 pm**