



Governing Board - Minutes

Meeting Date: 20 September 2017
Meeting Venue: TG9, Temple Grove, Gildredge House
Meeting Time: 5:15pm

Governors: Julian Mace (JM), Chair
Louise Baxter (LB), Vice Chair
Alison Allart (AA)
Paul Amos (PA)
Martyn Ashley Taylor (MA)
Steven Blower (SB)
Selene Edwards (SE)
Sara McKenna (SM)
Gabrielle Mace (GM)
Rachel Moreton (RM)
Joel Newman (JN)
Trevor Scott (TS)
Fiona Walker (FW)

Ex officio: Stuart Reeves, Head Teacher (SRv)

Also in attendance: Paul Barber (DHT) (Teaching & Learning)
Catherine Geldard (AHT-LS) (Lower School)
Danny Simmonds (AHT-B&A) (Behaviour & Attendance)
James Towner (AHT-A&C) (Assessment & Curriculum)
Janice Logan (DFA) (Director of Finance & Administration)

Clerk to Governors: Steve Quayle (SQ)

Apologies: Matt West (MW)

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Item	Discussion	Action	Date
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair welcomed Governors and SLT to the meeting. • Chair introduced newly-appointed Governors and new member of the SLT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Governors – JN, FW, MW (apologies) ○ Co-Opted Governor - MA ○ Staff Governor – SM ○ AHT – Assessment & Curriculum • Chair explained that new Governors are on a probationary period for their first two FGB meetings, after which they will acquire full voting rights. • Apologies received from MW – accepted by the Chair. • Lateness messages received from LB, RM and MA – accepted by the Chair. • Chair asked Clerk and DFA to update Companies House and Edubase list of Governors once the new Governors have completed their probationary periods. 	Clerk/ DFA	30 Nov 17
2.	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No declarations of interest were made. 		
3.	<p>Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – 22 June 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair clarified that (<i>Item 8</i>) the car park light which is insufficient is the one that covers the pedestrian crossing. • Chair clarified that (<i>Item 11</i>) references to ‘approving the school’s budget’ should read ‘approving the school’s budget <u>forecast</u>’. • The Chair annotated the above points on the hard copy and signed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting. 		
4.	<p>Action Summary Report</p> <p>PA arrived 5.25pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair walked Governors through the individual items on the Action Summary Report. The following observations were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook page – <u>Governors expressed concerns</u> that a Parents’ Facebook group may give the initial appearance of being run by the school, when it is not. SRv advised he views the group as potentially damaging to the school’s reputation and suggested that a ‘home-school agreement’ is a possible way to try to prevent unanswerable negative comments. SRv has asked people not to publicly criticise the school, but to raise issues with him and he will look into them. <u>Governors expressed</u> that they think this Facebook group is a problem; it currently has about 300 members. SRv asked Governors if they want him to join the group himself and provide responses to complaints, but all considered this wasn’t a very productive use of his time. <u>Governors asked</u> if we can get some advice from NGA about suggestions for overcoming this issue. Chair advised he will explore possible avenues, including more parental engagement, and get back to Governors with some potential solutions. <u>Governors expressed concern</u> that there appears to be lots of people who aren’t prepared to complain to the school, but who are happy to do so online. SRv pointed out that all concerns are valid but we want these to be raised directly with the school rather than being aired on social media where we have no voice. ○ Associate Governors role – Chair advised that IC has resigned as an Associate Governor as he was unable to continue from long distance. PP no longer has the 	Chair	Ongoing

	<p>time to commit to the Associate Governor role. Therefore, no Associate Governors are now in place. Clerk to send an up-to-date list of Governors to KR for insertion on the re-launched website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governor’s references – Chair confirmed decision has been made that employment references would be sought for new Governors, but that this would not be actioned retrospectively for existing Governors. 	Clerk	30 Sep 17
5.	<p>Items not already on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None reported 		
6.	<p>Chair’s correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair advised that since the last FGB he has received the following correspondence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grievance against SRv from a staff member – subsequently dropped. ○ An anonymous letter regarding traffic around the car park. ○ A letter of resignation from Neil Best as Governor due to a geographical move. 		
7.	<p>Governance Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair advised that with the new intake of Governors there is now a great deal of skills across the Governing Board and he intends to utilize these to the full this year. Chair, LB, TS and GM, as lead Governors, will be dividing up areas of responsibilities for other Governors to lead on – and Governors will be expected to take full responsibility for their areas. Chair advised he feels this is the best way to work going forwards as the workload needs to be spread out for more effective governance. Areas of responsibility will be identified from the results of the ongoing Governor’s Skills Audit and he reminded all Governors to ensure these forms are returned to the Clerk by email by the end of this month. The information contained within will inform the lead Governors about whose skills are best suited to each area and this will be confirmed at the October FGB. • Clerk confirmed there have been no applications for the position of Chair or Vice Chair. Consequently, Chair proposed himself to continue as Chair – carried. Chair proposed LB to continue as Vice Chair – carried. • Chair asked for new applications for positions as lead Governors – none forthcoming. Accordingly, Chair proposed LB to continue as lead Governor for Education with GM as her deputy – carried. Chair proposed TS to continue as lead Governor for Enterprise with PA as his deputy – carried. Chair proposed GM to continue as lead Governor for Admissions with RM as her deputy – carried. • Chair confirmed his 4 year term as Governor is coming up for expiry on 1 October 2017 and advised he would like to extend his term as Governor for another 4 year period – carried. • Chair confirmed RM to continue in her role as Safeguarding Governor – carried. • Chair confirmed the Governor’s Code of Practice has been updated as appropriate and a copy should be signed by all Governors tonight. • Chair requested all Governors complete a new Register of Business Interests form tonight. • Chair confirmed he has updated the Governor’s Structure & Terms of Reference document in light of the change of meeting structure and asked for approval to sign – carried. • Chair advised he would like to change the policy regarding the publication of minutes for the FGB so that in future they will be published on the school’s website within two weeks of being signed by the Chair at the following FGB meeting – carried. • ESCC Declaration of Eligibility forms to be signed by Governors tonight. • Governors asked if the Governing Board can revisit the ‘values and ethos’ of the school at an upcoming FGB. SRv added he too would like the Governors to produce an overarching strategic statement regarding the values and ethos of the school. Chair to schedule this at an upcoming FGB. 	All Gvnrs	30 Sep 17
		Chair	TBC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills audit – in progress. Vice Chair confirmed the lead Governors will be mapping Governor’s strengths against various priorities from the SEF. • Training Budget – DFA confirmed it is approximately £3,500. Chair confirmed the funding for the Headteacher’s Review comes out of a separate budget. • Vice Chair enquired how much of this budget is required for new Governor’s safeguarding training and other mandatory training. Chair advised this needs to be discussed with Jane Branson, Training Advisor. • Chair confirmed that, in his opinion, the ESCC Training provision is very expensive and proposed that instead we bring in external trainers to provide bespoke training as and when required – carried. Chair to look into these costs. Governors suggested speaking to Governors from other schools with a view to sharing training costs. • Chair advised that lead Governors will meet as Senior Leadership Group (SLG) termly throughout the year 	<p>LB</p> <p>Chair</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Finance Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TS walked Governors through the DFA’s annual accounts completion timetable and year-end financial forecast, highlighting that the previous forecast of a £28k deficit has been turned into a £40k surplus thanks to excellent budget controls. DFA confirmed she hoped it might even be a more improved picture than this in time. • Governors commented that the EFA has released new budget proposals suggesting an additional 7.9% increase on what we were expecting, but DFA warned she would like to see the money before banking on it as often money is deducted via other sources. Governors asked when we will know for sure about the funding increase? DFA advised we normally don’t know for definite until March. • Governors asked where the £40k surplus has come from, DFA clarified this means that we need to borrow £40k less than expected. SRv reminded Governors we were originally working on borrowing £375k, which was then reduced to £281k, and is now reduced further to £241k. He advised this has been achieved by general frugality, such as reduced printing and photocopying costs, and generally being as prudent as possible on a ‘needs only’ basis. SRv advised how he has shared the financial situation with the staff and asked them to tighten their belts and they have responded well. • Governors asked how this message was received by staff; SRv advised that staff have been fully supportive. AHT-DLS advised they have not felt it in terms of resources, but the support staff have been under more pressure. Governors asked if this approach was sustainable. SRv advised it is not and there are pressures on certain support staff. SRv advised last year the school spent 92% of its budget on staff, and this now stands at 82%, with a target of around 78%. • SRv advised that further savings will be made as we are currently staffing the library with teachers instead of support staff. • DFA advised the annual accounts always get adjusted because they’re based on the previous year’s figures and warned that next year’s figures will show a significant adjustment because of this year’s sixth form numbers. DFA is looking at changing the way she reports to Governors to make it clearer. Governors asked about sixth form numbers from the previous year’s Pupil Number Adjustment (PNA). DFA advised this was paid back last year. Governors asked if we have the final Pupil Premium (PP) numbers yet. DFA said she felt we had been underfunded in this area so now we run a report and cross reference it on the EFA website which has resulted in us being provided with more money, but it always comes through late in the year. Governors asked when we will have the final figure, DFA advised next year, but we will have a forecast before that. Governors asked about when we will we get a report on the Pupil Premium. SRv advised by 1 March he will be able to take Governors through a review of the impact of the PP spend. Governors asked if we can have something earlier than that, as it is a statutory requirement and we are still awaiting publication on our website. SRv advised this is all ready to go on the website on 1 October when it is re-launched. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked about whether there has been any previous underspending on estates and refurbishments because of the tight financial constraints and whether there is monies needing to be spent on these areas that are now overdue. DFA advised there are a few issues across the site where we need to spend some money, such as damp and condensation problems. SRv advised there are some things coming onto the horizon, from re-decoration to renewing ICT provision. Governors asked what the shape of the central heating is, and DFA advised it was performing ok. Governors suggested the former Estates Manager used to refurbishment bits and pieces himself to save costs. SRv advised the new Estates Manager has a strategic approach regarding these issues. • Chair asked DFA to supply a narrative to accompany the financial reports going forwards. 		
9.	<p>Safeguarding update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RM confirmed the next safeguarding visit is booked for Monday, which will be going through new guidelines checklist. • Governors asked about safeguarding issues surrounding the Friday afternoon end of school day procedures. SRv advised he has new plans in operation, which were tried out on Monday and Friday this week, by splitting up different parts of the school to keep them separate on the road out of school. SRv advised that cars at the top of the driveway should only be for the disabled and for taxis, and everyone who drives up the driveway gets challenged. SLT make every effort to challenge everyone who does this. • SRv also stated he has changed the approach in the morning by holding students back at the crossing and letting 6 cars through at a time. SRv advised a planning application will be going in soon for access from Paradise Lane. • Governors asked about one of the reasons in the rationale for the changes to Prep and Twilight being improvements to safeguarding, and are the SLT now in a position to say that this has improved? DHT advised that once all the twilight registers are finalised then this will be the case. There was a fire alarm today and this showed that systems are effective. SRv advised that by the end of this week all the registers will be finalised. • Governors suggested that at 3pm both sides of Paradise Lane are being parked on and this is dangerous, and that the zebra crossing is in the wrong place, and asked if we can do anything about this. SRv asked if we can raise this with ESCC Highways. Governors commented that we have no zig-zag lines or barriers between the pavement and road, which is unusual for a school. Chair stated a governor is a serving police officer and he may be able to offer us some advice. Governors commented they had themselves witnessed students pushing other students into the road. SRv said the SLT talk to students in assemblies about this repeatedly. Chair suggested it would be a good idea to have a group of Governors leading on premises, MH and planning. Vice Chair stated that both she and the Clerk work closely with the ESCC Team Manager for Road Safety in other roles and could discuss the matter with him. Governors confirmed that it their view highways furniture and line painting should be provided by ESCC. 	SRv	ASAP
10.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv presented his Headteacher's Report; he advised he has sectioned it in the same way as OFSTED do. The new staff mentioned are mainly replacements, not new positions. SRv confirmed he will be completing a review of SEN teaching/learning over the next few weeks. As per the report, he asked Governors for a wider discussion surrounding sections 4.1 and 1.7. • 4.1 – SRv confirmed the August results of last year's A-Level were 'pleasing'. Governors asked for the number of students in each subject in the table in 4.1, SRv confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Art & Design – 2 ○ Biology – 14 ○ Chemistry – 11 ○ Classical Civilisation – 6 ○ Computer Science – 2 	LB/Clerk	TBC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drama & Theatre Studies – 4 ○ Economics – 5 ○ English Literature – 6 ○ Extended Project – 48 ○ Geography – 6 ○ Government & Politics – 4 ○ History – 9 ○ Mathematics – 15 ○ Further Mathematics – 3 ○ Music – 1 ○ Philosophy – 6 ○ Physical Education – 2 ○ Physics – 6 ○ Psychology – 4 ○ Sociology – 4 ○ Spanish – 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1.7 Chair confirmed there is a sixth form strategy/working group that includes 2 Governors. Governors asked a number of questions surrounding the number of students in the new Year 12 cohort and how the funding for this smaller number of students will affect the school's overall budget position. Governors asked SRv about sixth form personnel matters. ● PINK PAPER - CONFIDENTIAL <p>SEF & SDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SRv presented the SEF document, which he advised he has completed as if looking at the school through the eyes of an OFSTED inspector. SRv advised that 'Leadership and Management' makes everything else happens so this cannot be classed as 'Good' if all other areas are not classed as 'Good'. ● SRv stated he believes an 18 month timeframe is needed to underpin a firm 'Good' position and he would like to ask Governors to contribute to next year's SEF creation. Governors advised that OFSTED expect to see there has been a rigorous process regarding the SEF and this has perhaps been lacking in the past. ● Chair advised that SPG meetings will be the perfect forum to discuss the SEF, because Governors must approve the SEF so need to be more involved. SRv suggested in the next two weeks there will be the first opportunity for Governors to contribute to the SEF, because Governors are coming in to the school to see the first data drop. AHT-LS advised Bill Ruddock ESCC Advisor asked for a SEF to be completed for the Lower School only, which has now been completed. Chair advised he likes new format of the SEF. Governors asked if we need a separate conversation to define Governors' forward involvement in the SEF. SRv advised that Governors need to hold senior leaders to account more than has been done in the past and so we need a Governor's Plan which sits underneath the Strategic Plan. ● SRv advised that the SDP is linked to the SEF. It is designed for individuals to be accountable for specific areas. Governors asked if we are satisfied with the 18 month timeline for improvements. SRv reported that as a school we are OFSTED-exempt from the normal cycle. This means there is no immediate pressure. SRv said if results aren't good then schools simply don't have a chance of being rated as 'Good'. SRv advised if OFSTED came tomorrow they would be looking to see if we are still 'Outstanding' or not. Governors asked if the Pupil Number Adjustment with the EFA about the sixth form numbers could trigger an OFSTED inspection. SRv reiterated we have a plan for improvement and everything is in place for that to happen over the next 18 months, after which we will be a strong 'Good'. SRv advised that when we have confidence in the data next week and the second data drop later in the year we will get more confident in what we're predicting, then we can start to change data and figures on the SEF, but OFSTED would want to see internal and external data backing that up. The data is currently not robust enough to back this up. Governors asked again how we can sustain our 	<p>SRv</p> <p>Chair</p>	
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	<p>Outstanding judgement – SRv advised we would need three years of good results throughout the school to achieve this again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors approved the SEF and SDP 		
11.	<p>Behaviour Management Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv walked Governors through the new Behaviour Management Policy. Governors commented that it is clearer, more concise, better structured and robust. SRv advised that from Year 7 and above there is a small problem with low level disruption interfering with learning. SRv added that even despite this, GH remains the best behaved school he has ever worked in, but even so, we are trying to set the bar very high and the new policy has been accepted and welcomed by the staff. SRv confirmed that the policy is not just punitive, there are rewards included as well. • Governors asked if there have been any changes to the Lower School with the new policy. AHT-LS advised that the lower school students have now implemented the sanctions regime, which is new to them, but the main part of the policy is the same as it was before. • AHT-B&A advised that previously staff were using their own skills to manage class behaviour with very differing results, but this new policy was introduced on the September INSET as the way forward. This was followed up with student assemblies informing the students of the new system. So far there has been good feedback about it from the students and staff who have advised it helps teaching and learning. DHT has witnessed improvements already. • SRv advised the ‘On-Call’ process, which is used for students who overstep the mark, was being overused last year. A process called ‘Transfer Parking’ happens before they escalate to ‘On-Call’, and as a result of the new policy the ‘On-Call’ process has seen a reduction. SRv asked for feedback from any of the Governors who are parents. Governors responded they were aware of a couple of playground fights which have been dealt with, but that lesson disruption has improved. AHT-B&A confirmed that his current focus is on behaviour during unstructured time. • Chair asked if the sanctions regime is now consistent. AHT-B&A advised that he stringently follows things up with Year Heads. Governors asked about teachers entering behaviour data onto SIMs. AHT-B&A advised further training is needed and planned. • Governors asked if it is legally permissible for SEN students to be excluded, SRv confirmed it is. Governors asked about uniform enforcement. AHT-B&A replied it is in hand. • SRv advised he reacts to any reports about student’s bad behaviour outside of school and has built up relationships with neighbours and local shops, etc., so they can approach him directly about problems – which he then deals with immediately. Governors expressly thanked SRv and SLT for their work in this regard. • Governors suggested the policy should also include the other ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act, not just racism and sexism. SRv acceded this is a valid point and advised these will be included the document and it will be re-published. 	SRv	ASAP
12.	<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair thanked LB for her work on compiling the draft monitoring schedule report. Chair advised that lead Governors will work on identifying the best Governors to oversee each area by the next FGB. If governors have any preferences please let LB know. 	Lead Gvrns	Oct FGB
13.	<p>Any other urgent business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 		
14.	<p>Confirmation of upcoming meeting dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017/2018 remaining FGB dates confirmed as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wednesday 18 October ○ Thursday 7 December 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Thursday 1 February 2018○ Thursday 1 March○ Thursday 22 March○ Thursday 3 May○ Thursday 21 June○ Thursday 12 July <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair advised that to provide the SLT more time to compile papers he would like to shorten the timeframe between the papers being sent to the Clerk and the date of the following FGB. Accordingly, it was agreed that all papers must be sent to the Clerk by email by the <u>absolute latest of 7 days before the next FGB.</u> <p>Meeting concluded at 8.00pm.</p>		
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