



Education Committee – Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday 19 May 2020

Meeting Venue: Via Zoom

Meeting Time: 5:15pm

Governors: Louise Baxter, *(LB)*, Committee Chair
Gabrielle Mace, *(GM)*, Committee Vice Chair
Alison Allart, *(AA)*
Marilyn Benzing, *(MB)*
Sara McKenna, *(SM)*
Joyce Swann, *(JS)*
Fiona Walker, *(FW)*
Matt West, *(MW)*

Ex officio: Stuart Reeves, *(SRv)*, Head Teacher

Also in attendance: Julian Mace, *(JM)*, Chair of Governors
Catherine Geldard, *(DLS)*, Director of Lower School
Jemma Graffham, *(DSF)*, Director of Sixth Form
Danny Simmonds, *(AHT-B&A)*, Assistant HT - Behaviour & Attendance
James Towner, *(AHT-A&C)*, Assistant HT - Assessment & Curriculum

Clerk to Governors: Steve Quayle, *(SQ)*

Apologies: None received

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Item	Discussion	Action
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair welcomed Governors to the first ‘virtual’ Education Committee and noted no apologies. 	
2.	Declarations of Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors declared various interests in respect of their children who attend the school. 	
3.	Minutes of previous Education Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair explained the minutes of the March Committee meeting are not yet ready to be signed off but will be circulated off line and then will be formally approved during the FGB in June. 	Clerk
4.	Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHT-A&C talked Governors through the data and explained this has now been condensed to one page per year group, as previously requested. For each year group he has examined differences, considering gender, SEND and PPG, and looked at how gaps have shifted since the last data drop. Governors commented the Maths results seem to stand out. AHT-A&C said with Maths there is always an uplift at exams, and he is working with the Department to resolve the underestimation. The school have sent proposed grades to the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) for moderation and those which have come back more than half a grade out he has questioned with the Department for justification. All subjects were either on or over the FFT grading, except for Maths. Governors asked why this is. AHT-A&C said it comes down to how staff are assessing students. Maths are using a single assessment process, but they are now reviewing these using White Rose tools and the SLT are monitoring this. Primary stage Maths has increased over last couple of years. Chair asked whether there will be school reports for parents during lockdown. AHT-A&C said the Secondary reports have been based on the spring data. The SLT are reviewing the summer data because of the differences in opportunities and resources between students through lockdown. Chair said the school needs to be careful not to evaluate home schooling. DLS said as Primary staff are working from home, they will not be producing reports, but they may make videos for students. Chair asked about Phonics Screening for Year 1. DLS said they may now do this in September. Governors asked about Year 6 preparation for moving up to Secondary, particularly in relation to external students. AHT-A&C said there is great speculation about SATs and Primary schools calculating scores themselves. He advised the school needs to remember the students have been through a challenging time, so there is a need to be careful about how benchmarks are set. AHT-B&A said SRv has shared a plan for internal and external students. The Head of Year 7 has contacted all Year 6 students and will plan to provide a virtual welcome including a school tour and provide Q & As. The school is very aware of the extra challenges for the external students; SRv advised the school will set transition work for these students to engage with across the summer break. Chair asked whether there have been conversations about where the curriculum will restart and whether the school will be trying to catch students up with where they should be. SRv said this will depend on the year group; the youngest students need to have an early years’ assessment and Years 5, 6 and 10 will need to do some cramming. SRv reassured Governors that because exams are now Norm-Referenced the exam boards will adjust grade boundaries based on the results of the whole cohort of Year 10 and Year 12, to ensure the same proportion of students achieve the grades as in a normal year. Chair asked about Year 2s being asked to sit tests without having had the teaching. DLS said students will be expected to do the baseline in Reception. For Phonics Screening no guidance has been produced yet but she suspects it will be forthcoming for the statutory tests in Years 2 and 6. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT-B&A shared a virtual version of his plan. Governors queried why for Primary it shows boys unusually outperforming girls. DLS said within Year 5 the boys tend to be stronger than the girls and SRv added this is a specific year group situation which is not replicated in other year groups. • Governors asked about the decision to target FFT20 this year. SLT advised that most Departments in Secondary are targeting FFT20, while a few are targeting between FFT20 and FFT50. SRv acknowledges FFT20 is a stretching target but he believes the school will finish somewhere close. • Governors commended the improved data across the school and asked to see one more layer detailing hot spots, plus how the school is using the data to feedback into teaching priorities. SRv agreed an executive summary of hot spots is a good idea. • Governors asked how confident the school are of teacher assessments for Years 10 and 12 and AHT-A&C reiterated the school are using FFT moderation and SLT have been heavily involved. The SLT have a structure of accountability for subjects so they are confident the judgments are accurate. • AHT-A&C said some students were devastated because they had performed less well in mocks and knew they could have uplifted their grade from there but now will not have the opportunity. • Governors asked about some subjects where no students were predicted to achieve a Grade 7 or above. SRv explained that performance in those subjects tended to be lower partly due to the ability level of those students who tended to take these subjects. • Governors asked about Year 9 poor attainment and progress and whether this is related to poor behaviour. AHT-A&C reminded Governors he had advised earlier in the year there were two-year groups who were causing most of the behaviour issues and this does influence performance. • AHT-A&C advised that the SLT were already working on improving this situation prior to lockdown, however Year 9 is a cohort that the new Pastoral Support Assistants (PSA) and SENDCo will be prioritising in managing. • Governors asked if there is a disproportionate percentage of SEND students in Year 9. AHT-A&C said the prior attainment of Year 9 was lower than any other year group. Chair added this was a similar situation to Year 4 where the additional educational needs can often disrupt the teaching. 	AHT-A&C
5.	<p>Behaviour</p> <p>Primary Behaviour Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLS provided an outline to Governors and asked for questions. Chair asked when the new behaviour policy will be introduced but DLS said it was already introduced before lockdown. • Governors asked if the policy has been used throughout lockdown and DLS confirmed it has. SRv said the new policy has been very successful and lots of credit to the team and it will serve the school better after lockdown as it is more empathetic. • Chair said it feels like a better policy when we are predicting an increase in mental health and anxieties. DLS said she will be holding a staff meeting in September to review the policy. Governors asked if they should undertake a monitoring visit to view the policy in action – DLS agreed. • Governors said within the policy, one of the steps advises students to talk about their feelings at the moment of crisis and asked if this works for every student. DLS said it depends on the student. • DLS said because the students know the structure, it is not a surprise and evidence from feedback shows they feel valued. Governors asked if there is scope to introduce this policy in Secondary. AHT-B&A said it does relate to Secondary but different age groups need different sanctions. • DLS said the behaviour policy is informed by the book “When Adults Change Everything Changes” by Paul Dix. Governors asked if anything around this policy needs funding. SRv said it is about engaging with staff’s hearts and minds, so the only cost is the time for training. <p>Secondary Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT-B&A advised that the staff survey results have been circulated, as part of the behaviour review, but then lockdown happened. • He was due to have a behavioural specialist come to school to complete a review, but instead he has been conducting a virtual review which is not as good, but he has had 2 meetings now. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT-B&A explained the feedback is that for pastoral activities there is a lack of capacity to deal with low-level issues so students tend to go from nothing straight to Tier 3 which can then result in premature exclusions. This clearly demonstrates the need for the Pastoral Support Assistants. • AHT-B&A and DLS have analysed students who might fall into the PSA process and it is an extensive list so there is a substantial amount of work for these new officers to be getting on with. This will then free up other staff to put programmes in place without needing to pick up low-level issues. • AHT-B&A said the staff survey indicated that staff wanted a more noticeable SLT presence. SLT are working on a plan for this. • DLS added that in Primary teachers and TAs pick up lower level issues and they would like a PSA too. Governors asked if PSAs are just for Secondary, but SRv confirmed they are for Primary too. • SRv reiterated that having discussed the budget at Enterprise Committee the school could, at that time, only afford 2 of these posts, however since then a staff member has resigned which has freed up £48k, he would like to propose that he recruits the 4 he originally wanted. • Governors asked about the likelihood of more behavioural incidents after lockdown. AHT-B&A expects this will be the case. Governors pointed out some students will have witnessed and experienced things at home through lockdown they would not normally. AHT-B&A advised this is the reason why the PSA roles are needed now more than ever. • Governors asked which qualities are being sought in the PSA roles, and how the staff in the survey seem to be concerned about not 'owning the corridors'. AHT-B&A said he is looking ideally for people with mental health training and replied that it should be a matter of routine for staff to 'own the corridors' consistently, and in this regard support staff should be challenging behaviour too. Governors added that this includes Governors. 	
6.	<p>SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSF said a review took place with an external expert before lockdown which helped the SLT to address the SEND issues. The report showed no big surprises. She added that reopening from lockdown is a prime opportunity to relaunch the Oasis but this needs to be done with a level of sensitivity. • Chair commented the school has a significantly higher percentage of SEND students (32%) than the national average (14%). DSF agreed and said a lot are being monitoring for screening and assessments. There are some students the school treats as diagnosed even though they are not. • DSF explained the SEND register is not wholly accurate and SLT are looking at this. Chair asked if this means the figures might change. DSF said there is a crossover with behaviour so she liaises with AHT-B&A often. Some student's behaviour presents as a SEND and the PSAs will work on this. • Chair asked if the school will cope with supporting all SEND students. Governors said in the report there is a lot of emphasis on training and asked for reassurance that staff are undertaking training and CPD. DSF agreed and said more specific SEND training has been recommended by the incoming SENDCo and this is now being circulated out to the wider school staff. • DSF explained she does not however want to bombard staff with too much training and would prefer staff to buy into the new SENDCo's vision of how this is going to work. • Chair said she would like to know how the impact of training will be evaluated and DSF replied that this is about getting into the classrooms, not as a formal observation, and evaluating what is happening in the classroom. • SRv asked Governors about external reviews and whether Governors find them useful. Governors said they found the review and action plan very interesting and they are pleased to hear the school is bringing Safeguarding, SEND and Behaviour together. Chair agreed that the information in these reviews always feels objective and safe and that it can be relied upon. SRv said it gives him an extra tool and added that all reviews undertaken always tend to concur with the views of the SLT. • Governors asked about the new SENDCo, and SRv advised he is in the process of moving to Eastbourne and he has offered to come into school and work during the summer holidays. 	

7.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSF advised many Safeguarding concerns are coming through. Staff are logging concerns as a result of welfare calls. The school has identified 154 Secondary and 55 Primary students who are on a vulnerable list, incorporating SEND issues, home situation, lack of engagement, or wider safeguarding concerns – those families are receiving weekly calls from the wider pastoral team. • The calls made are logged and it serves as a good check-in point for those families. There is an increase in the engagement with both students and parents every week that passes. All other Secondary students have email correspondence with their tutors which is centrally tracked. • DSF advised the school is working with ESCC who are sending through the details of the cohorts of students they are focusing on – the school is feeding back on these and ESCC always want to know everything about the contact the school has had with them. The SLT have done many welfare visits. Students with social workers have visits decided by Children’s Services about who should carry out these visits. • Governors asked from a Primary perspective how the school are ensuring safeguarding is consistent across all year groups and teachers. DLS said teachers complete a register which is checked to ensure all students are contacted. DSF added this is also done in Secondary. • Chair asked what happens if the school has not heard from a student. DSF advised that if there has been no contact for a week then she will go and knock on the door personally. • Governors said they had heard some anecdotal feedback that there is inconsistency in Primary and some parents have reported no call being received when expected. DLS said there have been instances where staff have offered to phone students and parents have turned them down. • DSF said she will look into this via the logs but she and SRv expressed surprise to hear this and wondered if this is from parents who the school knew were coping well and so they were not focusing on them. Governors said they were just asked to raise it, which they have now done. SRv said he has read every piece of feedback from the 800+ people who have responded to the survey and that feedback does not match the feedback he is hearing tonight. • Governors said if parents who are not getting a call want one, they should email teachers to confirm this. Chair said the messaging and information and communications seem to be good. Chair said that Governors just needed reassurance about welfare checks and this has now been confirmed. • AHT-A&C said the SLT have been mindful of staff wellbeing too and have contacted all staff at least once since 20 March. Chair asked if any staff are shielding. SRv said there are some and the school are working with them closely, and he is not expecting them to come back to work yet. • Chair asked if staff have the right technology to work from home. SRv said yes and that 1050 training courses have so far been completed at home. Governors asked to see the list of what courses the staff have undertaken. DSF said very few staff who have not completed any, and this is mostly those who are still doing their job full time. SRv said it would be an HR issue if staff refused. • DSF said she is hopeful she can defer the ESCC visit to monitor Safeguarding to September. The report was positive even though DSF is so new to the role – they witnessed rigour and attention to detail and this fed in nicely to the self-review which must be sent to ESCC. • Safeguarding Governor advised that DSF is focusing on the areas that need work and she is very self-critical and has identified areas for development. 	
8.	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv advised that schools reopening is the hot topic and teachers are getting some negative comments in the national press. Gildredge House has worked with the unions. • Two-thirds of staff are able, willing and healthy to return to school, and he is supportive of those who cannot. A risk assessment has been developed and shared with the unions to support these individuals. • SRv is meeting Eastbourne Heads to talk about plans as they would like to work together in unison. Some local authorities have been outspoken but ESCC have not and are not dictating to schools. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv explained that as an all-through school there is a need to coordinate more closely. He is still waiting to see the promised Secondary toolkit to see how this interacts with the Primary toolkit. The SLT need to think about one-way systems and floor signage; but a lot has already been done. • SRv said the school wants to get this right. Chair said the school do not yet know what the Government expects other than Reception, Years 1 & Year 6 returning, all subject to union approval. SRv advised the Government are making a final review on 28 May. He has had some information from his union, and he has written a letter of his personal view about it. • SRv said schools have been advised no rota systems are allowed. Chair said it is difficult for Governors to form a conclusion when the final review is still outstanding. SRv said the parent survey indicates 45% are happy to for students to come back. It was agreed to wait for EGM next week. • Governors asked how with 25% of teachers shielding the school have the necessary specialist teachers teaching their subjects for Years 10 and 12 without offering online lessons. SRv said there will be no normal Secondary lessons before the summer holidays. • SRv said he will separate Year 10s into 3 groups – those who are coping well with home working, those who need to come in for gaps, and those who have not engaged. That said he has not seen the Secondary Toolkit for advice and guidance and whatever is done will have an impact on Primary. • DFA is overseeing the H&S regime and cleaning in order to allow Primary to restart in June. • SRv said staff are aware the SLT are taking things slowly and carefully and some have thanked him for a careful response. Some staff have defied their union because they have confidence in the SLT. • DLS said the school needs to get communication out to parents and asked what the plan is. SRv said parents will be informed this week. • Governors asked whether the school will close if it has a diagnosed Coronavirus case. SRv said he would refer to Public Health England for advice and would probably close initially and reassess the position, but he will not be abiding by PHE's advice not to share the news with parents. • Governors agreed to set up a smaller sub-group of Governors to look at the effectiveness of home schooling, and to understand the educational side of the challenge and the health risk, and agreed to conduct a school visit before reopening. • Chair said the school needs to be mindful of staff welfare as they will be needing to teach and also provide work for home-schooling at same time. SRv said this is something the SLT are looking at. • Governors asked when the plans will be finalised. SRv said some Secondary staff could teach outside of their area, but he needs to bear in mind their expertise levels. SRv acknowledged many challenges for the both teachers and students. • SRv said he is not targeting 1 June as a reopening date and would prefer 8 June and then build up the year groups gradually, however this does mean some year groups will only get 3-4 weeks of school. He would also like to have some level of a virtual farewell of the school year for students. • Governors agreed between them that MW, GM, JM, AA, LB will make up the working group. Chair said these 5 Governors should attend the school together in a group at an agreed time and date. • Governors asked about the student rota issue. SRv said there is an argument that the Government think that if those children who are least able to socially distance (ie. Reception and Year 1) do not cause a spike then there will be no argument against other year groups not returning. • SRv said that Governors have seen from the survey that there is a split in the school community between those who want to send their children back and those who do not. Chair agreed it is a very fluid situation at the moment. • Governors said the school is going to have to manage expectations carefully where students cannot come back yet. Governors said the proportion of keyworker parents who the school thought would send their children in as has been a lot lower than expected and asked if the school expects an increase in these numbers. DLS and DSF said there is already an increase. SRv said there are 150 such students listed but so far less than one-third have accessed the provision. • DSF said the school has contacted some parents to ask them to send their vulnerable children in and this has happened. DSF added that when teachers come back to work their own children will become key worker children too. 	<p>MW, GM, JM, AA, LB</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv said the school has been trying to review the home schooling and said the feedback from parents has been very positive. Some parents would like live lessons, but the school considers there are safeguarding issues. Chair said the same question has been asked of Governors and they have also fed back it is a safeguarding issue, but some parents are not happy with this response. • DSF added there are some exceptions to this for Sixth Form – they have not adopted live lessons per se, but they have looked to incorporate some work within MS Teams, closely monitored. • Variations to the home schooling have been made at the request of parents. Where there have been IT access difficulties the school has tried to overcome this with work drop-offs, but the feedback for the pastoral support and academic support has been overwhelmingly positive. • DLS said she has changed homework being set from a Monday to a Friday in response to requests from parents. She added lockdown has developed the staff's IT capabilities greatly. Governors said we need to keep in mind that many parents are working from home too and they are not educators. <p>Project Volunteer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonia Lucas has asked for a Governor to work with her on a community project working towards reducing the number of car journeys in Eastbourne. JS volunteered. <p>Prep & Twilight Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors said we are not in a position to consider this currently and would like to delay this with until a future date. SRv said he has thought about this a lot and wonders if the school should focus resources on mental health and catch up work and so tweak the focus of these sessions. Chair said there are undoubtedly going to be lots of unintended consequences as a result of lockdown. 	
9.	<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA talked Governors through her monitoring visit. Chair asked for comments; none forthcoming. • AA added that it was Year 11's last day when she conducted the visit and they were having a great time with a good atmosphere across the school, despite the circumstances. SRv added he would like to thank the team for pulling together a farewell day for Year 11s with about one days' notice. 	
10.	<p>Any other urgent business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair proposed that Governors who are visiting the school regarding reopening should also consider the sixth form, especially regarding finance, and there might be some Enterprise Committee Governors who would like to attend too on this basis. • SRv said he predicts the number of sixth form students may increase next year because there will many who do not want to risk public transport every day. He said the school can accommodate 25 more than expected with no difficulty, but if this number increases significantly capacity problems may arise. • SRv said the school has proved that some virtual learning would be possible, as well as some recorded learning and independent work so the SLT will need to think very quickly on their feet in September once the numbers become clear. An option would be 4 lessons per day with the 5th and 6th lessons being virtual. DSF said several new sixth form applications have been received this week. 	
12.	<p>Confirmation of future meeting dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair confirmed there may be an EGM before 4 June, and Chair of Governors advised the final decision should rest with the FGB. SLT will meet on Thursday with the unions. • SRv said that some parents know the SLT met yesterday and are meeting with Governors this evening so there is a need for an EGM on Friday or Tuesday so we can announce to parents what is going to happen. Governors said the school should issue a holding message before half term and SRv agreed. SRv reiterated that 28 May will be the date the Government announce if schools are definitely able to reopen. Chair asked if the plan was for all students to return on opening day but SRv said it needed to be more controlled. Some parents will want to see the risk assessment first. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors said 8 June is a far more realistic reopening date and asked if communications should go out now saying the school will not open before then. SRv said the other way to present it is that we are reopening on 1 June subject to what happens on 28 May. Chair added that the students also need to be mentally prepared along with their parents. • SRv asked for views of Governors. Governors held a general discussion around 1 or 8 June. Governors expressed concern around not knowing how many students will return and there will not be time between the Government announcement and 1 June to gauge feedback. DLS said there is no actual need for the reopening to be on a Monday, it could be any day that week. • Governors discussed the advice received from Government that schools are not permitted to have a rota. Governors said if the Government says students can return on Monday then the community will be expecting the school to open every day. Governors countered that there is a limit on staff availability. Some Governors said the school should not open at all if it cannot open full time. • Chair said Governors should delegate this decision to the Governor working group and should send out comms to parents to say the risk assessment is being done and that the school will be in touch as soon as a decision has been made. Whatever the decision the FGB can then ratify that decision at its 4 June meeting. Governors commented that they did not feel well enough informed currently. • Governors said the school needs to consider the emotional impact on students of suddenly restarting back at school with no notice. Governors asked if SRv will know what other local schools have decided to do and if that will influence his thinking. SRv said the relationships between Eastbourne schools have got stronger throughout the pandemic. He has shared his plans with the other schools, and they are in agreement; there is a general feeling of not rushing back for 1 June. • SRv added there have been requests from some schools to hold off opening for a week after 1 June, and he would prefer to go back on 8 June knowing the school has done more thinking about it. He added that he only knows of 2 other Eastbourne schools who are reopening on 1 June. • Governors said part of the issue is not doing something out of step with the other schools locally as this will cause a lot of work in fending off challenges. Governors said they would feel happier about all schools delaying together in unison, especially those schools that are set up more like Gildredge House. DLS asked if ESCC will issue a directive, like has happened elsewhere. SRv said they have already issued guidelines thanking and praising schools for supporting each other. • Chair agreed to delegate the decision to the working group, to be ratified at the EGM. • Governors asked if the SLT can feed back to staff that the school is not rushing to come back. SRv said he will communicate with them tomorrow. • Governors agreed to organise an EGM on 26 May. • Governors talked about mental health first aider training and how this is very helpful and useful and provides a lot of knowledge of where to signpost people in crisis. <p>Chair closed the meeting at 7.55pm</p>	<p>SRv Clerk</p>
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