

HOMEWOOD COLLEGE
GOVERNING BODY
MINUTES

Meeting of:	Full Governing Body
Date/Time:	17 th November 2022 4pm
Location:	Virtual – Teams – JJ Host
Distribution:	Governors, Website
Quorum:	For decisions to be binding for Homewood College at least half the number of governors in office are required to be present. The meeting was quorate throughout.
Present:	Governors (voting) Jo Adams (JA) Luke Burstow (LB) Co-chair of governors and chair of the meeting Rachel Carter (RC) from 4.19 pm Kasie Jeewon (KJ) Linda Newman (LN) Co-chair of governors Pam Ridgwell (PR), Interim Headteacher, from 4.24 pm Sue Shanks (SS) Other (non-voting) Janet Johnson (JJ) Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Claire Martin - accepted Ruth Turner-Murell - accepted

DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS	
1.	WELCOME + CONSIDERATION OF APOLOGIES LB opened the meeting and apologies (work/illness) were considered. PR was yet to arrive so some changes to the order of the agenda would be made. LN would provide cover for safeguarding governor if required.
2	PROCEDURAL MATTERS 2.1 Consideration of interests No new interests were declared when invited. LB's spouse was headteacher at a local special school. LN was on the board of other local schools. No withdrawals from discussion or voting were anticipated. 2.2 Annual declarations and mandatory governor training update. Governors were reminded to complete any outstanding items needed for compliance and JJ would send a reminder. 2.3 Membership matters LB's term expired this academic year. Vacancies remained and recruitment in the current circumstances was expected to continue to be unsuccessful. LB's contribution was highly

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	<p>valued and he was willing to continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Luke Burstow was re co-opted. <p>2.4 Recommendations from any governor training attended. LN had attended governor safeguarding training with a group of 30 governors at a different school and found it very useful. LB had found the NSPCC safeguarding training useful. No recommendations for change were made. LN was attending health and safety training that evening and would follow up by reviewing the health and safety checklist with PR.</p>
3	<p>MINUTES Papers: Draft minutes from FGB 5th October 2022 and FGB 9th November 2022</p> <p>Both sets of minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and approved accordingly.</p>
4	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The headteacher contract had now been signed. The behaviour policy had been circulated and noted. The CCTV policy had been circulated. No issues had been raised. No other matters were raised.</p>
5	<p>GOVERNOR REPORTS</p> <p>5.1 Chairs' actions <i>(if any) for ratification</i> No decisions had been taken</p> <p>5.2 Chairs' recommendations <i>for consideration</i> LB and LN continued to meet regularly with Regan Delf and Mark Storey to ensure the interactions with the local authority were as smooth as they can. There were no recommendations for consideration.</p> <p>5.2 Visits <i>(if not reported elsewhere)</i> A greater focus on visits was proposed. RC arrives 4.19 pm. There was a need to ensure they were at times that would not create issues for the school.</p>
6	<p>POLICIES/DOCUMENTS Papers: Model pay policy and adoption notes.</p> <p>6.1 Pay Policy The Homewood policy had not yet been received. Attention was drawn to the procedure for pay progression on the model policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Governors directed the school to adopt the local authority policy, with the allowable amendments being made in consultation with LN and bring to the next FGB for ratification. <p>6.2 Policy Review A large number of policies had been circulated and reviewed during the summer. The review had now been completed. PR had informed the child protection policy was being updated to accommodate the latest procedural changes. LN would contact governors should alterations require urgent attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The policies as previously circulated were approved. <p>[List in appendix]</p> <p>6.3 Health and Safety</p>

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PR arrived 4.24 pm
The current policy was based on the local authority 2019 model. LN would check that this was the current version and if any action was required by governors following her training session, LN would contact governors as a matter of urgency.

HEADTEACHER REPORT

PR gave a verbal report.

Staffing

Daily checks were needed to see if it was safe to open the school the next day. Staffing was currently at crisis point due to sickness absence and unfilled vacancies. Sickness was due to a range of reasons including injury, stress and personal issues. Recruitment of the extra teaching assistants permitted by the local authority had been thwarted by the now short length of the offered contract and higher levels of pay available elsewhere. Agency staff offered had in the main been unsuitable, some had never even worked in a school. This was having a large detrimental impact on teaching as time was taken up with managing behaviour.

A governor confirmed this had been reported to Regan Delf and Mark Storey who were doing their best to get help from the local authority. Governors were aware recruitment was an issue amongst schools generally.

They enquired whether there might be creative solutions, perhaps with other schools, such as using part-time teachers or discussing with other headteachers, such as at Patcham, noting it could be a development opportunity for their staff. PR pointed out some difficulties with that and added she now had 3 or 4 supply agencies who were prioritizing Homewood and a self-employed option was £200 per day.

The staff governor was asked how safe staff felt, compared with the time of the last Ofsted and also whether staff felt that the adoption of Teamteach and the management of behaviour was appropriate and applied consistently. She drew attention to the higher rate of injuries she perceived when staffing levels were low. Staff were tired. This had not changed. She gave her opinion on safety and thanked PR for the great curriculum, running the school well and being attentive to staff needs. She felt staff were confident from the training and monthly refreshers but there was still a need to have someone else present as a witness and assist with de-escalation.

Governors were somewhat reassured and were thankful for all staff efforts.

Have you considered closing in the last couple of days re sickness? PR: I close the school if I think we could not cope with a number of incidents and if I think we will not be safe. There are problems with covering PE at the moment and we are not effective as a school at the moment. We do have lockdown and better communications now. JA agreed that communications, the radio was much better and PR added that it gave an extra level of safety and acknowledged it assisted with the prevention of escalation.

How is long-term sickness managed? If there is a process can it be escalated? Staff were needed in school for pupils. PR confirmed it was imperative to follow the process, which was made more difficult in the absence of clear records. She confirmed there was now a secure process for the recording of absence; however, there were difficulties in completing the return to work interviews in time. Line management and those structures were being rebuilt. She considered that they could get the staffing back and recruit effectively, it will improve but currently, she had never known it worse in a school.

Governors acknowledged the impact of absence at the school, heightened by virtue of low numbers in the first place. There was a need to have staff, including management numbers that built in resilience and they supported the move to request the local authority to allow the contract term for new recruits to be extended to Easter rather than December.

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	<p>Numbers on roll PR gave the good news that she was expecting 6 pupils to consider for admission which would then exceed the current admission numbers of 40. There were two definite joiners and one pupil was staying on to do a year 12. If we could get to 50 we would not have a deficit.</p> <p>Pupil attendance What is the current rate of attendance? Around 57% so higher than at some points but it is difficult for pupils whose parents will never bring them to school. For these, we are going down the legal route. Governors supported the punitive route with the parents whilst at the same time engaging with the local authority for provision that suited the children.</p>
8	<p>STRATEGIC DIRECTION Academisation was now not likely to be before the latter half of next term. It appeared the delay was primarily due to the academy bidding for building funds.</p>
9	<p>FINANCE UPDATE Paper: Budget monitoring Excel doc</p> <p>9.1 Budget monitoring LN recapped that they had been told in July that the budget had been spent and there was no confidence in the robustness of the budget figures. The new school business manager took over and at an emergency meeting with the local authority they said they would approve all expenditure. During half-term Regan Delf and Mark Storey agreed we could start to recruit in the run up to Christmas but recruitment is now difficult. Conversation with them recently had finally resulted in them acknowledging that the funding for the school was not delivering the structure it needed. The focus on funding per pupil was not appropriate for a school of this size. It needed to be on the provision of 5 classes and a base to support a gradual return. Because the PAN had been reduced it could not work with the funds received. This had the effect of the local authority undermining its and the school's efforts. The situation was now that the local authority understood this.</p> <p>Those who had been governors for some years recalled the issue predated PR and that the local authority had always known the structure did not work. It had been extremely helpful for Pam to have built the evidence and communicate it to make it clear.</p> <p>PR added that at a recent meeting with the local authority, including commissioning staff, they appeared to have the realisation that Homewood could take on more pupils and seemed relieved.</p> <p>There was still work to do and governors lamented the diversion of PR's focus to the need to manage staffing and budget and away from school improvement.</p> <p>In discussion around costs and demands on Councils increasing nationwide, the comment was made that increasing the PAN did not incur a cost and that even if the school were not in special measures the budget would still be the pressing thing.</p> <p>9.2 Financial matters for ratification There were no matters for approval.</p> <p>9.3 SFVS and Compliance</p> <p>LB assured the figures and predictions on the Excel document were correct. The local authority could be comfortable we know what is happening and the pay rises had been</p>

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	<p>included.</p> <p>Next year's budget planning was now imminent and he was hopeful they would obtain the agreement of the local authority to the funding changes that would be made.</p> <p>SFVS. It was proposed and agreed LN and LB would review the SFVS. JJ informed the local authority had recently put back the date required to 24th March.</p>
10	<p>SAFEGUARDING and HEALTH and SAFETY update LN would discuss this with PR during the week and report back.</p>
11	<p>STAFFING + STAFF VIEW Staffing had been discussed at item 7.</p> <p>Have staff raised any issues? A member of staff had asked if when governors visit they could speak with staff. Some did not know who the governors were. In discussion governors agreed it would be useful to meet informally and it was important staff knew the staff governor was listened to and taken very seriously but if there were concerns these should be addressed in line with the processes in place. PR would let governors know the dates of upcoming informal meeting opportunities. Governors agreed staff get-togethers were important for team-working.</p>
12	<p>ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY CHAIRS (AOB) Governors to sit on a panel were required and LN RC SS with KJ as back up put themselves forward. JJ would liaise accordingly.</p>
13	<p>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS (if any) There were no confidential items for discussion.</p>
14	<p>IMPACT OF THIS MEETING ON PUPILS Governors had supported action to enable capacity at the school. Staff had the support and gratitude of the governors who in turn were trying to challenge the local authority to deliver what the school needs to improve outcomes.</p>
15	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting would be on 23rd January at 4pm and by Teams. PR requested the agenda at the beginning of term and papers would be provided by 7 days before the meeting. Governors were requested to keep a vigilant check on emails in the interim, particularly in the coming days in case actions were required for the Health and Safety or Child protection policies. There being no further business, the meeting closed 5.32 pm.</p>

Appendix

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List of Policies approved:

Accessibility Plan
Admissions
Capability of staff
Careers at Homewood
Charging and Remissions
Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school
Complaints procedure
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary procedure
Early Career Teachers
Equality duty statement
Equality Objectives
First Aid Policy
Freedom of Information publication scheme
Grievance
Health and Safety
Child Protection
Pay 2021/22
PHSE including RSHE
SEN Information Report
SEN Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Statement of Behaviour Principles
Statement of Procedures for Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
End of List

These minutes were approved at the full governing body meeting 20.2.23