

HOMEWOOD COLLEGE  
GOVERNING BODY  
**MINUTES**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>
<b>Date/Time:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 4pm
<b>Location:</b>	Virtual – MS Teams
<b>Status and Distribution:</b>	Confidential and for FGB only prior to publication of Ofsted report. Following publication, for website.
<b>Quorum:</b>	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.
<b>Present:</b>	Governors (voting) Jo Adams (JA) from 4.12 pm Luke Burstow (LB) Co-chair and Chair of the meeting Rachel Carter (RC) until 4.30 pm Nick Dry (ND) Kasie Jeewon (KJ) Linda Newman (LN) Co-chair Pam Ridgwell (PR) Ruth Turner-Murell (RTM)  Other Janet Johnson (JJ) Clerk to Governors
<b>Apologies:</b>	Sue Shanks (SS) - accepted Claire Martin (CM) - accepted

Item	<b>AGENDA PAPERS</b> (circulated at least 7 days beforehand and accepted unless otherwise stated)
1	Applications RT and ND
2	Draft minutes FGB meeting 23.1.23

<b>DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ACTIONS</span>	
1.	<p><b>PROCEDURAL MATTERS</b></p> <p>LB opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. A welcome was extended to ND, who gave a brief introduction.</p> <p>1.1 Consideration of apologies. Apologies were considered.</p> <p>1.2 Consideration of interests No new interests were declared when invited and no withdrawals from discussion or voting were anticipated other than the co-option item.</p>

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1.3 Membership matters:

The governing body had been seeking to recruit additional members. Two applications had been received. ND withdrew.

1.3.1 Co-option R Turner

Governor support and a current governor had confirmed this applicant had extensive governance experience in the local authority and was currently chair at Mile Oak School. It was felt she would add to the current skill set and in particular in supporting with non-finance matters.

❖ R Turner was co-opted

1.3.2 Co-option N Dry

It was felt ND would add to the current skill set and in particular in supporting with finance matters.

❖ N Dry was co-opted. The reference would need to be followed up.

ND returned and welcomed to the governing body.

JA arrived 16.12

1.4 Recommendations from any governor training attended relevant to the meeting. No reports were made.

**ACTION**

LN LB JJ RT ND – induct new governors

2 **MINUTES**

2.1 Minutes

The minutes, including recommendations for decisions were approved.

2.2 Matters arising

No matters were raised.

3 **OFSTED INSPECTION and STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

3.1 Ofsted had very recently made a monitoring visit and LN now reported back. LB and RC had also attended the feedback session.

3.1.1 Ofsted still judged the school was making progress and taking action to improve but they recognized this had not got as far as expected due to the circumstances.

3.1.2 As expected, the school could still not appoint an Early Career Teacher (ECT).

3.1.3 The school would now be monitored on a termly basis until the academy order was signed. The inspector recognized there had been a delay but had no more information. They would continue to monitor us and continue to expect us to make progress to make improvement.

3.1.4 The main issue identified was the poor levels of reading amongst most if not all the pupils and she was concerned that their knowledge, fluency and confidence needed to be attended to and improved as it was fundamental for their individual futures. In her view, reading lessons were needed and to be provided by a specialist, that knew how to deal with and teach teenagers that were struggling, and that used specialist means

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such as phonics or other practice to help them.

- 3.1.5 The days lost due to staff absence were noted, particularly on long term absence as well as the impact on absence due to Covid.
- 3.1.6 She noted that the staffing structure change had not taken place due to funding constraints and budget difficulties that the Chairs, PR and the local authority had been struggling with.
- 3.1.7 The three curriculum pathways were acknowledged and she talked about progress with the careers advice. She talked about enthusiastic staff and that she could see some thinking and planning on curriculum and success criteria but recognized there was still work to do. The gaps had been identified mostly because the staff had such good relationships with the pupils but she explained this was not backed by the curriculum behind that and pointed out that pupils in our setting will have scattered gaps because of their experience of education prior to coming to Homewood and these gaps would differ from other pupils. So, she felt the curriculum work had improved but was not yet completely embedded. Reading was a whole school urgent priority.
- 3.1.8 The engagement of pupils was good and improving and she had spoken and had good interaction with pupils, even talking to them about world events. Having spoken to them about the curriculum, she alerted us that PSHE/RSE would be the focus of the next monitoring visit.
- 3.1.9 She felt the safeguarding culture was now established and that staff were now confident in that area. She pointed out that some of the safeguarding nomenclature had changed in September, particularly regarding child on child abuse. All the improvements up to the July visit had continued and were where they should have been. She approved of the plan to redo the DBS checks of staff.
- 3.1.10 She noted that attendance remained a concern and that perhaps pupils that had been with us longest had the poorest rate of attendance but she noted that the actions being taken were making a difference and she asked us to ask ourselves whether any trends or patterns from the whole cohort analysis can be used to improve attendance. She noted we are still using outside providers and that we have appropriate oversight and that we are still using Sight or Sound for those that are still not able to come onsite at all. She acknowledged there was an issue with attendance and with those not at school. Even though we have Sight and Sound we don't know what they are doing all the time so that remained a challenge. She made no judgements on the external support we were using.
- 3.1.11 She recognized the frustration over the difficulties with funding. She made clear governors and local authority had to work this out as we all wanted the same and it was essential to find a way through. She said we will have to have a healthy and robust discussion together.

3.2 Discussion and further comments

- It was agreed the feedback contained good news, an acknowledgement of current frustrations and also the encouragement to move forward and a bit faster.

RC left 4.30

- It was acknowledged staffing sickness had had an impact. The inspector had been very fair and open to listening and gave the school the opportunity to prove to her what she wanted to hear and she recognized we are taking effective action. There was a need to get back to the pace of change that we had this time last year.
- Mark Storey, Head of Standards was present at the feedback meeting.
- The inspector was not allowed to look at academisation but she was aware of the difficulties it was causing due to the uncertainties. She would endeavor to include something in the letter about that but was not sure this would be possible.

**Based on the recent monitoring visit, does the school have a strategy for reading and does it**

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**use any external support for that?** PR responded that the school did have a strategy but were not able to follow it at the moment due to the curtailment of funding. It had been the consultant's next piece of work. **Does the local authority provide a service – they should but it would be at a cost?** PR: it is not usually tailored to special schools.

**Re the reading and support, with the recommendation being from Ofsted, would funding be reinstated for a reading programme?** PR it was not so much funding as being allowed to recruit to my staffing structure. I have sent the local authority a new suggested staffing structure so hopefully there will be some movement on that.

**Will the school be able to take it forward?** PR: we will first need to investigate whether the issue is reluctant readers or gaps in knowledge. I have experience of Rapid Read and found about 100 books in the SENCO's office already. We need to go ahead as a school, we know what their reading skills are.

**How are you delivering the EHCPs?** PR: They have all been checked by Alex Graham at the local authority so there is nothing in the EHCPs that is not covered. I am not too concerned about that or statutory checks.

**Re safeguarding, re language and terminology, are you using the latest terms re harmful sexual behaviour and perplexing behaviour?** PR – yes we have got that.

Governors suggested PR spoke to secondary SENCOs or headteachers if there were concerns about the literacy service to be offered.

Governors discussed whether the suggested robust meeting with the local authority would help. It was felt the comments by the inspector, along with the shared desire not to fail would aid focus. It was not only Homewood's job to resolve the issues.

How do you feel about it? PR: The academisation process is not moving forward and so the local authority still have the responsibility to support the school until the process is concluded. A governor added that they felt there was recognition within the local authority of the need for them to make decisions. Applications were known to have been made for millions of pounds of building work and Sabden were very keen to understand what they were taking on with regard to pupil numbers. They would want it, as we do, to be sustainable. I think we are in a good position to have a conversation with them. The local authority has huge financial pressures on it at the moment which will impact on their ability to fund education in the city.

**ACTION:**

LB and ND to work together with the local authority on finance issues.  
LN and RT to work on staff absences.

4 **HEADTEACHER REPORT**

School improvement, staffing and safeguarding.

A written report had not been received. The inspection had covered school improvement.

**Is there anything else you would like to raise around school leadership?** PR it is a challenging school and we will need to make changes to make sure it is right before the inspectors return in the summer term.

**Safeguarding**

Governor oversight of safeguarding was discussed. It was agreed that it was still not practical to form a safeguarding committee and that RTM would liaise with PR to visit the school and report back to governors. Safeguarding would continue to be on each agenda. It was recalled Ofsted had not raised concerns with safeguarding.

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5	<p><b>FINANCE – COMPLIANCE</b></p> <p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>No papers had been received. The SFVS has not been completed.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>ACTION</b> LB to ensure SFVS comes to March FGB to enable approval within the LA deadline</p> </div>
6	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>Budget monitoring and draft budget Neither the requested papers for budget monitoring nor draft budget had been provided.</p> <p>A governor expressed concern that they were not getting monthly outturn reports from the local authority. They were doing a lot on reporting which is affecting what was available. A governor recalled the last update governors had received had been as at the end of December.</p> <p><b>Has work started on budget setting?</b></p> <p>PR informed the draft budget had been done and a governor copied in but the school business manager was struggling due to sickness elsewhere in the team. The draft budget was awaited back from the local authority.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>ACTION</b> LB PR SBM to meet re the draft budget. Copy to be circulated to GB.</p> </div> <p>PR confirmed there were no contracts falling due for renew or that needed approval by governors.</p>
7	<p><b>POLICIES/DOCUMENTS</b></p> <p>7.1 Policies for approval/noting No policies had been provided. PR informed there were no changes to be made. Governors recalled seeing them all in recent months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The following policies were approved for a further year: Behaviour principles written statement; Data protection; School suspension/exclusion; SEN information report; SEN policy; Equality information. The behaviour policy was noted as continuing to be current.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>GOVERNOR UPDATE</b></p> <p>Responding to a query regarding the staff morale, a governor informed they were busy getting on with what was needed and the hardest thing was coping with staff absence. In discussion governors considered that staff had done well in the inspection and that the inspector wanted to see a group of strategies with evidence they were improving.</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting closed 5.20 pm</p>
9	<p><b>DATES of NEXT MEETINGS</b></p> <p>These were confirmed as 20<sup>th</sup> March and the following, 9<sup>th</sup> May (budget approval). The time was to remain at 4pm.</p>

Minutes approved at the meeting of the full governing body 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023