

HOMEWOOD COLLEGE  
GOVERNING BODY  
**MINUTES**

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| <b>Meeting of:</b>   | <b>Full Governing Body</b>  |
| <b>Date/Time:</b>    | 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 4.00pm  |
| <b>Location:</b>     | Held virtually via MS Teams   |
| <b>Distribution:</b> | Governing Body, Website, Karen Prout, Kate Schofield  |
| <b>Status:</b>       | Open  |
| <b>Quorum:</b>       | For decisions to be binding at least half the number of governors in office are required to be present. The meeting was quorate throughout.   |
| <b>Present:</b>      | Governors (voting)<br>Jo Adams (JA)<br>Luke Burstow (LB)<br>Rachel Carter (RC)<br>Louise Cook (LC) Executive Headteacher<br>Jeff Matthews (JM)<br>Sue Shanks (SS)<br>Bob Wall (BW) Chair of Governors and Chair of this meeting<br><br>Other (non-voting)<br>Janet Johnson (JJ) Clerk to Governors<br>Karen Prout (KP) School Business Manager from item 12.2<br>Kate Schofield (KS) Head of School |
| <b>Apologies:</b>    | Flora Jenkins – accepted<br>Anna Gianfrancesco - accepted   |

|   | <b>DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS</b>   | <b>ACTION</b> |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 | <p><b>WELCOME</b>, apologies for absence and declaration of interest in items on agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BW opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.</li> <li>• Apologies were considered. The absence of Claire Saunders was noted.</li> <li>• Interests were considered. No new declarations of interest were made when invited. BW was the Chair of the Management Committee for Brighton Pupil referral unit and The Connected Hub. LB was the spouse of the headteacher at a local special school. All governors could take full part throughout.</li> </ul> |               |
| 2 | <p><b>COVID-19 UPDATE</b><br/>Papers: Head of School Report; Chair's Action Log; Child protection policy (with COVID-19 amendment)</p> <p>2.1 Head of School report<br/>The report covered: safeguarding, current attendance, teaching and learning, rewards, exams, progress towards Ofsted Good, curriculum, SEMH need, staff training, exclusions, part-time timetables, COVID-19 finance, staffing and staff wellbeing, post 16 destinations, year 6/7 transition and return to school.</p>   |               |

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2.1.1 Governors commented that the report was very helpful and KS and LC took questions.

**Is there anything in particular to note?** KS informed there were difficulties around the level of anxiety of children, parents and staff and that media coverage was not explaining that special schools had different guidance. The local authority has agreed that we may keep the Educational Psychologists next year which will help with the back to school issues.

**Is the anxiety parental or pupils?** KS we rang all parents after Easter giving them the options to come in. We think it will be just general anxiety when they get back and a letter is being sent with a lot of permutations to help them.

**Are some children engaging better in current circumstances than before?** Yes. One child has read a book for the first time and it has made us really think about how to deliver the learning. Their special needs still need to be addressed. Their worry is that they are doing work but not being taught, for example their next steps. Being at home appears not to be as bad as we had feared.

**Re safeguarding at home – are there any issues?** A detailed account and reassurance was given along with an explanation of the safeguarding system.

#### Staffing

**Why can some staff be unavailable for good reason and what are the numbers?**

This has been the subject of much discussion including regarding a fair risk assessment. There are concerns re anxiety and the rules are that pregnant staff, those that are shielding or are shielding members in their family cannot attend. 7 members of staff cannot attend at present. The unions are reviewing the position if members of staff have not had the formal letter and it may become an issue.

**Are they adjusting to using the Lynchett close site?** They are keen to attend there. There are 4 Homewood pupils there and some primary pupils.

**Have you furloughed any staff?** No.

Governors commented that the post 16 destinations were very promising and were informed the career advisors were working very hard. The report was accepted.

#### 2.1.2 Update on return to school

Governors were aware the school was being advised to bring back all pupils and the unions were advising no action was taken until there was proper evidence from the government that return was safe.

LC gave a verbal report:

- Risk assessments would now be need to be updated at the special school for each student.
- Staff were working towards all students returning.
- We are thinking about how we can prioritise the return which need not be on 1<sup>st</sup> June but the present offer needed to be enhanced.
- It was not possible to run the school as it was before.

Governors had the opinion further detail in this meeting was not necessary as they considered the situation may change. They enquired whether they were getting together with other special schools (Hillpark and Downs View) to assist. LC confirmed they were in discussions and it had been very helpful in aiding decisions and coming up with solutions for example the risk assessments for staff,

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| <p>which we are in discussion with the unions, and transport.<br/>A bullet point update with plans for 1<sup>st</sup> June would be provided.</p> <p>2.1.3 Update on PPE and hand sanitiser<br/>KP informed costs were being obtained for static hand sanitiser. Bottles for each site had been obtained.</p> <p>2.1.4 Premises and restructure update<br/>A governor confirmed the restructure was on pause. LC was in discussion with HR and an updated steer from HR would be sought. The pricing for the premises comparisons between the two potential sites had yet to be started and no date for receipt has been given by the LA.</p> <p>2.2 Governors<br/>2.2.1 BW gave a verbal update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He had been in weekly supportive contact with LC and continued to monitor the myriad of emails from the local authority which had been largely operational.</li> <li>• Chair’s action log. Two actions had been taken, following the previously agreed process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AG had stepped down from the role of safeguarding lead. JM had been requested and agreed to take on the role.</li> <li>○ Instructions to obtain 3 quotes in accordance with the scheme of delegation had been given in relation to the telephone supply contract.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>❖ The actions were ratified</p> <p>Update on telephone contract – the most competitive tender was to be approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership. RC and SS terms were due to expire this term. Governors had already considered their reco-option prior to the meeting. Both were thanked for the contributions they make to the GB and for the skills, experience and expertise they bring to the group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ RC and SS were co-opted for a further four year term.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It was agreed further recruitment would await the outcome of discussions with Camden planned for June</p> <p>2.2.2 Safeguarding update<br/>JM gave a verbal update. He had met virtually with both safeguarding leads and the main objective was to ascertain whether the school knew where the pupils were and whether they should be there. Discussion also addressed concerns, disputes and how they were resolved, along with some issues relating to staff safeguarding. He reported that on every point he was satisfied with the responses.<br/>LC gave a brief update regarding a member of staff and confirmed she was satisfied everything was being done to safeguard the young people.</p> <p>A governor requested some amendments to the usual data sheet for the safeguarding group in the light of the current crisis and it was agreed JM would liaise with school for this to be provided.</p> <p>❖ The child protection policy with COVID-19 amendment was approved</p> | <p>LC</p> <p>#</p> <p>#</p> <p>JM</p> <p>#</p> |
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**FINANCE**

Papers: Outturn 2019/20; 3 year budget summaries scenarios September 20 and January 21, budget notification; budget commentary; original and updated staffing structure proposal. Papers would be signed when COVID-19 restrictions lifted.

| Summary of financial information* |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Outturn 2019/20                   | £14,866                                 |   |   |
|                                   | Forecast outturn<br><b>2020/21</b> £000 | Forecast outturn<br><b>2021/22</b> £000 | Forecast outturn<br><b>2022/23</b> £000 |
| Restructure<br>commence Sept 20   | £26k deficit                            | £23k deficit                            | £3k surplus                             |
| Restructure<br>commence Jan 21    | £50k deficit                            | £46k deficit                            | £20k deficit                            |

KP now gave further information and KP and LC took questions.

**3.1 Budget monitoring 2019/20**

The budget outturn 2019/20 document had shown the final outturn surplus to be £15,415 however due to adjustment of some minor accounting differences the final figure was as shown in the budget notification i.e. £14,866.

- ❖ The outturn was approved in the sum of £14,866. The surplus would be used towards financing staffing to support provision.

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Governors congratulated the school on moving to a much better financial position.

**3.2 3-year budget and budget 2020/21**

3.2.1 BW LC and KP had met to discuss the budget and a governor drew attention to a number of significant factors, referring also to the budget notes and assumptions. KP gave further information and took questions.

- The in-year deficit for scenario Restructure Sept 20 was **£40 k dr.**
- Figures did not include additional income to be received of £10k per annum, from the place element for an additional (46<sup>th</sup>) pupil.
- At Excel cell Q8 the full time equivalent should be 5, not 4. This would mean there are more costs not shown; however, these should be offset by the additional £10k per annum.
- Grant income, such as pupil premium, could change in future years and dependant on admissions.
- Secondment costs of £74k had not been included in either scenario. The local authority had been asked for a grant to cover it.
- The budget did not include any change of site or commissioning numbers.
- The COVID-19 expenditure reclaim limit was £50k for a special school but the outcome of claims was not known. LC informed some expenditure had been put to that budget head but there were few additional costs at the moment.

3.2.2 **The agency budget was £30k last year but actual expenditure was £85k. Has this been factored in?** KP informed they were committed to not using agency and instead, providing internal cover. Since the new approach had come

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|   | <p>in, from January there had been no agency spending. JA provided a lot of the cover and KS thanked JA. LC recalled that some costs, although not agency, had had to be included in that section, which skewed the figures.</p> <p><b>Re the property change, when might it be in place?</b> LC informed even if it could start tomorrow it would not be in place before January.</p> <p><b>When pupils return would we deploy those delivering off-site provision in on-site provision?</b> LC felt strongly that the school should not be looking to employ extra people and it needed to make the most of what we have. It would review the delivery of provision.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged the secondment funding would be a big issue. It was noted there would be a reduction in costs if the restructure went ahead in Jan 21 and that the local authority was currently funding the position. <b>Have the local authority said they will not pay?</b> LC informed it was a difficult situation and the school had thought through the different permutations. Governors agreed to flag this as an issue to be revisited in due course.</p> <p><b>What is the last date you can start the consultation to bring about the Jan 21 budget or do we need to look at what the budget will be if it is delayed further?</b> I will ask Jenny Rhodes from HR to do a fresh timeline and I will circulate this.</p> <p><b>3.2.3 Governors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested the COVID-19 claim may rise upon return of pupils.</li> <li>• Noted the commentary with assumptions and the planned budget incorporated reductions in the deficit.</li> <li>• Decided the January 21 budget was the more realistic scenario.</li> <li>• Checked again regarding confidence in the agency budget level given previous levels of staff absence.</li> <li>• Agreed pupil premium expenditure would be reviewed in September.</li> </ul> <p>❖ The 2020/21 budget was approved in the sum of £455,833 as presented in the Jan 21 scenario subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the budget being amended to include both the £10k additional income and the correct full-time equivalent figure</li> <li>○ a request for £40k licensed deficit being made for the year 2020/21.</li> </ul> <p><b>3.3 Any other urgent financial business</b><br/>There were no matters for this item.</p> | <p>LC BW</p> <p>LC</p> <p>BW</p> |
| 4 | <p><b>MINUTES</b><br/>Papers: Minutes 23.3.20<br/>The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and signature was approved.</p>   | #                                |
| 5 | <p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b><br/>Papers: Action log 31.3.20 update 6.5.20</p> <p><b>5.1 Action log review</b><br/>The actions were reviewed and the log updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offsite review – no longer needed as incorporated in restructure</li> <li>• Wish list re accommodation – deferred for the duration</li> <li>• Admissions – LC had posted information on the website and admissions were linked with the service level agreement. JM planning to attend an LA admissions panel when current conditions allow and a meeting LC/JM</li> </ul>  |                                  |

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|   | <p>would take place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil premium – completed. Await return of FJ in September for further scrutiny</li> <li>• Policy schedule and Health and Safety policy – deferred till July</li> <li>• Vice chair – to continue to be noted as a risk and remain as standing item on FGB agenda until position filled.</li> </ul> <p>5.2 Other outstanding actions<br/>BW would review any other actions from last meeting.</p>  | <p>BW JJ</p> <p>BW</p> |
| 6 | <p><b>WEBSITE</b><br/>Review and discussion of new website</p> <p>Governors were pleased with the look of the new website. G Thorp and LC were thanked for their substantial input.</p>   |                        |
| 7 | <p><b>POLICIES</b><br/>Paper: Child Protection Policy (Update for Covid-19)</p> <p>This policy was approved at item 2.2.2.</p>  |                        |
| 8 | <p><b>GOVERNOR MONITORING PRIORITIES</b><br/>Paper: Risk Register May 2020.</p> <p>The updated risk register was noted. LC and KS were requested to check the register if possible but defer this action to July if time was not available. Governors requested the school contact them in the case of any difficulty.</p>  | <p>LC KS</p>           |
| 9 | <p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>9.1 Governors were consulted in a case to arrange for payment for increased work for a member of staff. Following a number of questions it was suggested the matter be checked with HR and governors would then consider the recommendation if required.</p> <p>9.2 LC wished to record her thanks for all the staff and particularly KP for successfully undertaking the enormous task of arranging the Edenred free school meal vouchers.</p> <p>9.3 Meetings until September were acknowledged to be by virtual means. The next meeting of the full governing body was due 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.</p> <p>There being no further business, everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed 17.56.</p> |                        |

| Item           | Owner | Action  | Due By |
|----------------|-------|---|--------|
| <b>23.3.20</b> |       |   |        |
| 2              | BW    | Check re confidentiality status of minutes and inform JJ                                |        |
| 3.2            | JM LC | JM to attend a placement meeting when possible and report back                          |        |
| 5              | BW JJ | Obtain and BW to sign paper finance documents/minutes for this and all virtual meetings |        |
| 5.4            | KP    | Re 2019/20 budget, inform JJ the amount involved  |        |
| 5.4            | BW JJ | Review of audit actions to go on agenda for future meeting                              |        |
| 6              | BW    | Follow up latest SDP if required  |        |
|                | BW    | Take action re items not taken – items  |        |

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|                |       | 6 7 8 9 10 11 13 14   |         |
| <b>13.5.20</b> |       |   |         |
| 2.1.2          | LC    | Provide governors will bullet point list to brief re return to school plans         |         |
| 2.2.2          | JM    | Follow up with school re amendment to safeguarding data sheet                       |         |
| 3.2.2          | LC BW | Follow up budget queries re<br>Secondment and<br>Consultation date/effect on budget |         |
| 3.2.3          |       | Review pupil premium spending   | Sept 20 |
| 5.2            | BW    | Review outstanding actions from 23.3.20   |         |
| 7              | LC KS | Check /update risk register when possible   | July 20 |

Signature authorised at meeting 23.9.20