

Minutes
Arbour Vale School Local Governing Body (LGB) meeting
23 April 2020 at 2 pm

Present: John Wise [Chair] (JW)
Prav Bassi (PB)-STET
Matt Downey (MD)
Motomori Labode (ML)
Neil Sykes [Principal] (NS)

Also in attendance: Sarah Brooks (SB) (Vice Principal)
Tracey Goodsell (TG) (OHC&AT Head of Governance)
Kayleigh Franklyn (KF) (OHCAT Management Accountant)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

JW opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Lee Clark and Isobel Callaby.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

4. a) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2019

- i The minutes of the LGB meeting held on 21 November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: JW to sign and scan back to TG

b) MATTERS ARISING

- i Update on LGB membership

Governors were advised that David Jeffrey had resigned on 16.2.20 and JW had been appointed as Chair for the remainder of this academic year.

Lee Clark had been appointed as a new governor on 16.12.2019, and had been allocated the HR portfolio. He has already carried out one portfolio visit.

Atif Nasir, the finance portfolio governor had resigned on 9.3.20. The OHC&AT Governance team are actively seeking a replacement for this position.

ii GovernorHub

All governors confirmed that they can access GovernorHub and agreed it was a good resource.

iii Provision of Speech and Language Therapy Services

NS reported that the SaLT provision has been outsourced and he is working with the Children and Young People's Integrated Services (CYPIT) commissioned by Slough Borough Council. However, there has been no direction as to how the resources will be deployed. There have been complaints from parents as their child's EHCP plan is not being met. Julie Foot & Neil Sykes have met with representatives of CYPIT and similarly with Slough officers and there has been signs of some improvement, although there is a long way to go. The LA have agreed to fund the provision but there is a short supply of therapists and an ever increasing demand.

PB asked how many students have access this therapy.

Action: NS to ask Julie Foot to contact PB directly with the data.

NS added that he has been regularly communicating with parents about the provision.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

5.1 Introduction by Principal

The focus since the last LGB has been on the timetabling and curriculum remodelling in line with the new Ofsted framework.

It is anticipated that there will be 325 pupils by September, which has increased from approximately 290 since NS was appointed. He said that planning for staffing is crucial at this point to accommodate the extra pupils and advised that SB would provide an update later in the meeting.

The School Development and Improvement Programme (SDIP) has been revised and the headings have been aligned with the new framework.

The school did not appoint in the recent round of interviews for a second Vice Principal. All 3 candidates had shown talent and potential for the role in the future, but there were areas for development. There are also plans to recruit subject leads for Humanities, Science and Art. The appointments will be internal. There are currently 4 teacher vacancies. Interviews were due to take place before the Easter holidays but these were postponed due to the current crisis. Three of the candidates are still available for interview, and these will take place on 4.5.20. The calibre of the applicants seems high. MD has sourced potential candidates from Brunel University.

There has been an emphasis on staff well-being. The SLT are keeping in touch with staff and offering support. 10 members of leadership undertook and passed, a Level 3 Mental Health First Aid course. A new OHCAT HR member of staff has been appointed and has been focussing on staff absence. This has resulted in much lower levels of absence.

The Teacher Evaluation Schedule has suffered as a result of the crisis but the school is still able to track 4/5 points, which is being monitored by SB. Quality of teaching is graded at 2B, which is a solid good, with 20% of lessons being graded as outstanding. All of the five PE team have delivered outstanding lessons.

The staff team has coped extremely well with the current situation. Some staff with underlying medical conditions are working from home on planning, undertaking on-line training and maintaining contact with parents/carers. Provision in school is being provided for key workers' children and vulnerable children. This also took place over the Easter holidays, when there were 10-12 children in each day. There has been a significant increase in pupils this week and the staffing has been adjusted accordingly. Staff are working on resource and subject plans. The PE department have been preparing face to face virtual lessons.

At this point of the meeting, it was agreed to move to 5.8 on the agenda to allow Kayleigh Franklyn from the OHCAT Finance team to report on the management accounts.

5.8 Finance- Management Accounts

Governors had received Period 6 with the LGB papers but KF provided an update for Period 7.

She confirmed that the school is performing well against the budget levels and there are no concerns. She highlighted the following points:

- Staffing is currently showing a £167k saving as some vacant posts have been budgeted for but not yet filled. There is more work to be done here but results are positive and the school is expecting to realise savings at end of year.
- Staff related costs are under budget
- The apprenticeships levy is under budget
- With regard to premises costs, the PFI charges are lower than anticipated due to some of the charges including an element for water.
- Savings will be realised in the curriculum budget because schools will receive support from the Government for Covid 19.

The school is showing a full year surplus of £28k. NS commented that the school is in a healthy position financially, particular considering that there was a £1.4m deficit in November 2018. The school has managed to clear this deficit with the help of the OHCAT Finance team.

NS added that he has been in conversation with OHCAT's Chief Finance Officer, Corrina Jenkins, regarding OHC&AT's Reserve Policy. Mrs Jenkins has asked the OHCAT Board to reduce reserves from 90-120 to 45-60 days. By the end of the year, the school should have 15-20 days which is a considerable improvement on the previous position. NS has asked KF if the forecast can be altered to reflect the current position but KF is keen to see the evidence before any remodelling takes place.

NS said that the Trust has also asked for all academies to donate to the OHCAT Central team capital costs and this donation will be based on the number of years that the school has been part of OHCAT. He said that he felt that this was equitable and Arbour Vale will be charged for 1 year (approx. £25k). This has already been built into the budget. He added that in 17 years' time, the PFI contract for the school will end and the building will transfer over to OHCAT, so it is important to depreciate against capital costs and to reinvest in the building.

JW thanked OHCAT for their support and to all those involved in negating the deficit position.

Governors **noted** the information on the management accounts and thanked KF for attending the meeting.

Governors reverted to agenda Item 5.2 at this point of the meeting.

5.2 Update on actions since school closure and current situation

NS said that the office staff have done an incredible job in managing the Free School Meals (FSM) situation during the Covid 19 crisis. All pupils have now received their vouchers by post to cover the next fortnight. SB added that the process has been laborious and problematic. Parents have been given the option for which supermarket they would like to spend their money in. Office staff have also been keeping in touch with parents and the office was open over the holiday period, which the school was able to fund. The government has undertaken to meet all additional costs incurred as part of the crisis, so there will be a saving in the budget for FSM. MD asked whether it is possible to check that the money is being spent appropriately and SB confirmed that this is the case.

PB asked about access to technology for students and whether there had been any concerns raised by parents. NS said that the school has purchased a number of laptops through the Pupil Premium grant (PPG) which can be made available for pupils. The government has also pledged some funding. The SLT will be thinking about innovative, creative learning. All parents are called every Monday and any safeguarding calls are made every Friday. Staff have been given IT equipment to work at home where necessary and packs will be sent home next week containing supplies of tissue paper, Pritt sticks etc.

Governors recognised that even if the government provides extra IT for pupils, those families in greater economic hardship will not have Broadband to support online work. NS agreed and said the school will do it all it can to provide support but there will still be some that will be disadvantaged.

NS said that the leadership team has been split into two sections, one focussed on operational matters, led by Robert Stevenson and one on strategic matters, including transitioning pupils and staff back into school. SB will lead and work on timetabling, curriculum and recruitment.

5.3 Arbour Vale House

NS said that Arbour Vale House is intending to open for up to 24 MLD Post-16 pupils. The school will need to consider the financial and resource implications. There are electrical works to carry out and an upgrade to the kitchen facilities is needed. The house will provide a wonderful opportunity for pupils to improve their independent living skills. The LA has said that change of use requires planning permission. PB asked whether the additional pupils in the main school will come from feeder schools. NS confirmed that it will mainly be for existing students in early years and year 7.

5.4. Preparation for September 2020-staff recruitment and anticipated pupil numbers

As previously discussed, 3 candidates will be interviewed for teaching positions on 4.5.20. All look strong on paper. The school now advertises via the Times Education Supplement (TES) which has helped attract good candidates.

The school consistently uses two agencies for Teaching Assistants. Currently, 4 Teaching Assistants are moving into a permanent position. There are 5 new external candidates who have been referred by staff currently working in the school. In terms of recruitment checks, it can take longer to clear agency staff than external staff due to the agency protocols. NS added that much is expected of the teaching assistants whose pay is low. The TAs at Arbour Vale are talented, devoted people. NS was pleased to report that all support staff were awarded an increment within their existing pay range with effect from 1.4.20 arranged by OHCAT's HR team. It is hoped that the school will be fully staffed by September.

5.5 SDIP

NS reported that the SDIP has been streamlined and aligned with the previous headings, but also with the new Ofsted framework. He said he was seeking governors' approval of this draft. Governors commented that this was a well-structured document. JW referred to the Leadership and Management section of the SDIP, particularly relating to the LGB and portfolio visits and reporting. Governors recognised the importance of the portfolio visits but also commented that it can be difficult to fit in visits on top

of their busy day jobs. JW said it was important for governors to get as much understanding of the school as possible to be able to reflect this to Ofsted inspectors when they come. TG said that whilst it was preferable for governors to come to school for their portfolio visit, portfolios could also be carried out over the phone or virtually. NS added that he did not doubt the commitment of the governors but he needs to be sure that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are able to hold the leadership team to account. The reports from portfolio visits provide the written evidence of this.

ML commented that his portfolio is confusing and requested more clarity on his role.

Action: JW and NS to review this portfolio area with ML

NS said that the LGB will need to appoint a Chair in September, as well as a Vice Chair and additional governors. NS emphasised the need for stability in leading the LGB over the next 18 months and thanked the Chair for the considerable time and support sincerely hoping that this would continue going forward into the next academic year. This would be a good time to review the remits of the governors.

Action: NS and JW to review governor remits later in the summer term.

JW suggested that the next iteration of the SDIP could align the headings in the document with the portfolios.

Action: NS to ensure to align the headings of the SDIP with the portfolios and to ensure that the latest version is posted on GovernorHub.

Governors **APPROVED** the SDIP.

5.6 Attendance Data

NS said that attendance is slightly below what he would expect to see. The current data shows attendance between 80 and 90% but some areas of the school are lower than that. There is good attendance however in KS3/4 and Post 16. The school's attendance officer, Sarah Woolley, works hard to follow up on pupils with regular absence.

5.7 Pupil Progress Data

SB reported that the current pupil progress data is still being analysed.

Action: SB to send the updated pupil progress report to governors when it is available.

Action: NS and JW to discuss the narrative.

5.9 Any other questions

PB asked how the school is supporting Children In Need (CIN) pupils during this pandemic. NS said that the school makes regular contact and the safeguarding team is following up on vulnerable pupils. The team has been successful in engaging some vulnerable pupils. All data is included on the school's CPOM system. All OHCAT Designated Safeguarding Leads (DLSs) have weekly meetings. SB said that all occupational therapy equipment is sent home (walking frames etc.) but if parents can't store them at home, it can be kept at school.

Action: NS to send ML an update on the SaLT provision as he had joined the meeting after this matter was discussed, and to also send PB the LA contact details.

6. Portfolio reports

JW asked for all portfolio reports to be added to GovernorHub when they are available. It was agreed that all reports should be sent to NS, with Susanne Wicks, OHCAT Governance Manager copied in so that they can be uploaded.

Clerk's note: *Susanne Wicks' email address is swicks@ohcandat.org*

7. Arrangements for future meetings.

Governors were advised that an informal LGB meeting would be held on 14th May 2020 at 2pm which would focus on therapies. It was hoped that Julie Foot would attend to present on a range of therapies, including access and support. There would also be an update on the curriculum model. It is anticipated that the meeting would not last longer than one hour.

Action: All governors to confirm with NS if they are able to attend this meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Chair----- Date-----

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS		
Item	Action	Due Date
4i	Action: JW to sign and scan back to TG	ASAP
5iii	Action: NS to ask Julie Foot to contact PB directly with the data.	ASAP
5.5	Action: JW and NS to review this portfolio area with ML	ASAP
5.5.	Action: NS and JW to review governor remits later in the summer term	Summer term
5.5	Action: NS to ensure to align the headings of the SDIP with the portfolios and to ensure that the latest version is posted on GovernorHub	ASAP
5.7	Action: SB to send the updated pupil progress report to governors when it is available. Action: NS and JW to discuss the narrative	ASAP
5.9	Action: NS to send ML an update on the SaLT provision as he had joined the meeting after this matter was discussed, and to also send PB the LA contact details.	ASAP
7	Action: All governors to confirm with NS if they are able to attend this meeting.	ASAP