

MINUTES
ARBOUR VALE SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023 AT 4.30PM

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

In Attendance: Sarah Brooks (Vice Principal) (SB)
Ian Pett (IP) (Observer, pending governor appointment)
Mel Brown (MB) (Acting Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

JW welcomed everyone, particularly Ian Pett, whose appointment as a governor has been recommended to the Board of Trustees.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The LGB received and accepted apologies for absence from Josie Jones and Zynab Al Bahrani.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No new declarations of interest were raised.

4 CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

The meeting noted the recommendation to the Board of Trustees to appoint Ian Pett as a governor for a 3-year term commencing 24 March 2023.

The meeting noted that Imran Khan had resigned as a governor.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2022 were **approved** as a correct record, subject to removing Julia Copeland and Sarah Mitchell as being in attendance, adding Prav Bassi as attending the meeting, and changing the role of Charlene to Early Years & Literacy Lead (item 7.4).

Action: MB to update the minutes as agreed and forward to the Chair for signature

6 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON AGENDA

The following matters arising were considered:

- The parental workshops circulated to governors were included on the agenda.
- The draft Equality Objectives and Outcomes for 2022-23 would be considered at the next meeting.
- The date for the next LGB meeting was 4 July 2023 at 4.30pm, and the training meeting date was 16 May 2023 at 4.30pm.
- The arrangements for the safeguarding training session for governors were in hand and would be discussed later in the meeting.
- MB would confirm with NS which governors had read the KCSiE document.
Action: MB
- The LGB meeting dates for 2023-24 would be presented to the meeting next term. **Action: KC/NS/JW**
- **Action: NS and JW** to review the pupil premium statement. NS reported that the document should have been updated on the website.

7 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

NS referred to his Principal's Report and the following key points were considered by governors.

7.1 Overview

The successful journey and team effort to move the school from the previous Ofsted judgement of 'Inadequate' to the latest inspection of 'Good' was welcomed by governors. The strategy had been to flatten the leadership team and ensure succession planning, and the next phase of the journey would be towards outstanding. NS thanked everyone for their work.

NS reported that the current roll was 343 pupils and governors noted that the Ofsted judgement could add pressures to the admission process and may increase staff turnover; recruitment could be an issue for September.

Inflation, energy costs, and staff salary increases had significantly impacted finances. These increases were not funded by the government and were placing pressure on the number of staff in the classroom which in turn affected staff morale and well-being.

7.2 Key Objectives Achieved and Priorities

The Good Ofsted judgement, the communication pathways, successful recruitment, the advantages of recruiting overseas staff from agencies, and the school securing £40k to support the delivery of dysphagia were noted.

The school had started the feasibility study and budget approval for additional car parking spaces, and training had taken place with the Slough Transport Contractor Staff to provide support managing children travelling on the buses.

OHCAT were considering an IT managed service across the Trust, and Arbour Vale had been selected as one of the seven pilot projects to deliver the latest technology to support teaching and learning.

The priorities for the remainder of this academic year were to focus on: Human Resource Management to provide parity between roles, improving staff well-being (which was an Ofsted recommendation), continuing to secure therapeutic interventions to ensure that each child received their full entitlement, and further work on the newly introduced Phonics programme to improve high-quality teaching.

A governor commented on the reference to staff well-being in the Ofsted report. NS accepted and understood the reasons for the negative comments and acknowledged that the school should do more for staff well-being. NS outlined the work of the Teaching Assistants (who consisted of 70% of the workforce) and the commitment and considerable training required. Governors noted that the school did provide extensive enrichment and the staff forum provided a voice for staff. However, the views expressed were a concern for leaders and governors.

7.3 Portfolio Report 1 – Quality of Provision

Governors noted that no report was available from Josie Jones and that the SEF (available on the website) had been updated following the Ofsted inspection.

NS agreed to circulate the SDIP to governors and requested a meeting with the chair and another governor to update the SDIP following the Ofsted inspection.

Action: NS to circulate the updated SDIP to governors

Three staff members had left the school and governors noted the reasons for leaving as outlined in the report.

JW reported that he had reviewed and approved the OHCAT policies which had been customised for each academy.

JW asked about the increasing demand for pupil placements, and NS replied that the school was now at capacity at the site, and discussions were on-going with the Local Authority on how to manage increasing demand. Any decision would need to be endorsed by OHCAT. Following a governor question, it was noted that provision needed for new students joining the school was mainly ASC. NS reported that the percentage of students with ASC could gradually increase to 80%-90% (currently 46%) in future years and this would impact staffing; appropriate training and knowledge would be required and staff recruited to meet the need. NS reported that training would be provided by 2024 to ensure that all staff understood ASC provision.

Governors noted that reduced staffing numbers had resulted in pressures, particularly relating to communication and behaviour. The school had invested in Team Teach, and training was in progress to ensure that the school had a working group to support behaviour and understand triggers.

Following a governor question about how the school was managing space issues when ASC provision was in place, it was noted that individual needs of children were taken into account, quality teaching and interaction with the

Teaching Assistants improved situations, and the learning environment changed as children progressed through the school. There was a discussion about additional space required, the various options to accommodate additional students (for example, satellite provision for different groups), and the link between quality of education and space. Governors requested regular updates on student numbers, staffing training and knowledge, and available space and suggested that this could be part of the SDIP.

7.4 Portfolio Report 2 - Quality of Education

JW reported that Quality of Education included quality of teaching, learning & assessment, pupil behaviour and personal development, and the development of the curriculum. JW reported that, together with Sarah, he had reviewed careers education throughout the school and the increasing range of opportunities for pupils at the later stages of their education. Ofsted had highlighted that Phonics and Assessment were areas of development and JW would discuss this further with Sarah. Ofsted recognised the high standards of behaviour and personal development, and governors noted the extensive training and on-going personalised CPD which had helped all staff manage communication and support positive behaviour.

NS highlighted the excellent skills of Sarah Brooks in developing the curriculum to provide bespoke learning for all pupils.

7.5 Portfolio Report 3 - Premises and Finance

ML reported that he had not received feedback to write the report, and it was noted that the report should be written by the staff member and sent to the governor for comment. **Action:** Report to be circulated to ML for comment and then uploaded to *GovernorHub* for all governors

ML reported that the signage had been checked and verified and he had been informed that staff were available to direct the students in the event of an incident.

NS updated governors on the car park development which had involved a transfer of land from the Local Authority (LA) to the Highways Authority. A feasibility study and various layouts were being prepared and £0.5m was available from the LA to fund the works. In addition to this development (which should take place during Summer 2024) there would be a review of the car park on the school site to consider possible options to improve pedestrian walkways and help the flow of traffic.

JW asked about the recent issues with the heating system and if the school was confident that permanent repairs would be made during the summer. NS reported that he had been working with PFI Facilities Management and an independent survey had been commissioned which had identified necessary pipework replacement; this would be actioned. The heating issue had resulted in many parental complaints and parents had been informed that the responsibility for the premises was with QED and Pinnacle FM, who had both apologised.

Recent Management Accounts were reviewed by governors and NS highlighted the following key points:

- There was a slight improvement in income due to an increase in pupil numbers and LA funding.
- The high agency costs compared to the original budget were noted; these were not sustainable but necessary due to high staff absence and to ensure health and safety of the children.
- Between September and December several staff members had stage 1 absence review meetings with their line manager, and some had now reached stage 2; this related to staff across the school. Governors noted that staff support would be provided where appropriate, but underlying issues needed to be addressed. In addition, a number of staff members had requested extended leave during term time, which had also impacted the agency staff/budget. NS confirmed that decisions were the discretion of the Headteacher, and he aimed to balance staff well-being with the needs of the school.
- Governors acknowledged the high levels of money spent on staffing and action was necessary from governors/leaders. The percentage of budget spent on staffing had now reached levels that were not sustainable.
- The increasing financial challenges for the school were noted. These included the 3.4% additional funding from the government (which would not cover staff pay increases, inflation, or increased energy costs), EHCP funding had not changed since 2014, and the matrix for special needs funding had not increased since 2018.
- The amount of cash reserves had reduced. OHCAT will provide support where necessary.
- The operating deficit should reduce due to income from PFI (£140k), additional government funding, and managing curriculum spend and staffing costs. However, the school savings would impact on the quality of education.

7.6 Portfolio Report 4 – Child Protection and Safeguarding

JW referred to his portfolio report and his discussion with the DSL and requested that the Autumn Term Safeguarding Audit report be circulated to governors. NS informed governors that the Safeguarding Audit was required termly by OHCAT in order to benchmark and identify trends and was completed by the DSL with additional input from NS and the Operations Manager (for Health & Safety data).

Arising from the portfolio report, governors particularly noted that:

- All staff had received child on child abuse training this term.
- Induction training for new staff was regularly carried out.
- Regular governor training for safeguarding was now required and would be the focus of the informal session next term. JW had asked that future sessions include scenarios for discussion. There was a brief discussion about on-line safety training for parents. Governors noted that the school

website did include guidance for parents, but coffee mornings/workshops provided a more effective face to face way to discuss this issue.

- On-line safety should be regularly reviewed by governors and JW agreed to meet with staff members to review implementation of the policy and provide feedback to the next meeting.
- The Single Central Record had been reviewed and was up to date.
- Attendance was low and currently below the government national target for SEND schools. However, when the figures had been reviewed, the school could explain why children were absent. Governors noted that holidays taken during term time were not authorised, and penalty charges not made. Ofsted recognised the attendance was low but accepted the explanations.
- A governor asked how many home visits had been done, and NS replied that there was a log for home visits to deliver learning resources or carry out a safeguarding check; any issues would be discussed at the Safeguarding meetings.

7.7 Portfolio Report 5 - Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement had been reviewed and notes would be circulated to governors. Governors noted that parental engagement and student voice remained good.

Governors recognised the successful parent workshops and training which had taken place during the Autumn term and thanked those who had organised the events.

Governors noted that a Stage 2 formal complaint had been escalated to Stage 3 and an independent panel had taken place yesterday.

8 SAFEGUARDING

This had been discussed under item 7.6

9 PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR VISITS

The portfolio reports had been considered in association with item 7.

10 GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Governor Safeguarding training was planned for next term. Governors were reminded of the available online training modules and asked to record completed training on *GovernorHub*.

Governors noted the importance of keeping their training up to date with the latest guidance, particularly safeguarding, KCSiE, and training related to their particular portfolios.

11 FINANCE AND FUNDING

This had been discussed under item 7.5.

12 OHCAT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The LGB noted that the following policies and procedures had been approved by the OHCAT Board meeting on 9 December and were available via *GovernorHub*:

- Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Radicalisation Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Families and Visitors Code of Conduct
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Supervision Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- 16-19 Bursary Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Complaints Policy (OHCAT)
- Complaints Policy (OHC)
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Protection: Practical guidance for staff
- Fundraising Policy
- Guidance for staff on use of photos and videos
- Investment Policy
- Student Financial Support Funding Policy (OHC)
- LGPS Employer Discretions Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Fire Policy
- Legionella Policy

The following local policies and procedures had been approved by the Chair. Governors noted that these were OHCAT policies which had been personalised for Arbour Vale.

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exams Policy
- Missing Child Procedure
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sex education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Admissions Procedure

It was agreed that all the OHCAT policies should be available for governors for information on *GovernorHub*. **Action:** KC

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Training meeting date on 16 May 2023 at 4.30pm.

LGB meeting on 4 July 2023 at 4.30pm

15 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Chair reminded governors of confidential items discussed during the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS		
Item	Action	Due Date
5	MB to update the minutes as agreed and forward to Chair for signature	Complete
6	LGB to consider draft Equality Objectives and Outcomes for 2022-23	Next Meeting
6	MB to confirm with NS which governors had read the KCSIE document	Complete
6	KC/NS/JW to prepare the schedule of LGB meeting dates for 2023/24 which would be presented to the meeting next term	Next Meeting
6	NS and JW to review the pupil premium statement	TBC
7.3	NS to circulate the updated SDIP to governors for information	ASAP
7.5	Premises & Finance Report to be circulated to ML for comment and then uploaded to <i>GovernorHub</i> for all governors	
12	Kelly Collett to add the OHCAT policies to <i>GovernorHub</i> or confirm where governors can access this information	Complete