

Archway School: Full Governing Body Meeting

Minutes of Meeting held on 10th May 2017

Present: Colin Belford **CB**, Nigel Cooper **NC**, Vic Lewis **VL**, Anne-Marie Delrosa **AD**, Natasha Rolls, **NR**, Sarah Warner **SWA**, Alan Potter **AP**, Clare Hankey **CHA**, Pam Swindell **PS**, Kerry Davies **KD**, Anna Ellis **AE**, Georgia Boon **GB**, Barnes Clutterbuck **BC**

Apologies: Lesley Ryall **LR**, Barry Upward **BU**, Emma Bradshaw **EB**, Gavin Townsend **GT**

The meeting was preceded by a 30 minute training session on the PiXL Edge programme, delivered by Bridget Durrant, Head of Key Stage 3. The Edge programme is an initiative aimed at developing pupils' employability skills. It leads to a skills based qualification which accredits five key employability attributes: leadership, organisation, initiative, resilience and communication. PiXL (Partners in Excellence) is a partnership of over 1500 schools working together to achieve the highest outcomes for students and to improve their life chances.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from **LR**, **BU**, **GT** and **EB**

2. **Welcome**

The new Parent Governor, Barnes Clutterbuck, was welcomed.

3. **Declarations of Prejudicial Interest**

There were none.

4. **Minutes from previous FGB Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous FGB meeting (1st February) were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Item 7: **AD** will speak to **BU** about liaising with Damian Barry with regard to a future Learning Support departmental visit.

5. **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. At the meeting, **CB** also provided the following staffing update:

New Staff

Amy Coombs, Maths teacher i/c KS3

Joel Cook, English teacher

Shaun Piper, PE teacher

Andy Lee, Maths teacher (maternity cover)

Current Staff Changes

Hanna Bullock, permanent Head of Art

Chrissie Lewis, i/c KS4 maths

Lee Johnson, Head of Learning Support

Helen Pomeroy, permanent Assistant Head of 6th Form

Current Vacancy

Maths teacher

The national recruitment and retention problems in teaching were discussed. **CB** informed the meeting that there are current subject shortages in Maths, Physics and Chemistry and that it is likely that within two years there will also be shortages in Languages and Geography. Schools are having to look at developing creative approaches to recruitment, including the use of incentives.

Governors expressed concern about the upward trend regarding exclusions. It was accepted that despite the fact that the school is making every effort to use in-school interventions with pupils at risk of permanent exclusions, there are occasions where such ‘last resort’ decisions are unavoidable. **CB** explained that the school gets a good service from SCAPS (Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision), using it in a variety of ways including pro-actively, to hopefully pre-empt a permanent exclusion where a student has been causing significant disruption in school.

CB circulated a list of questions devised by members of GASH (Gloucestershire Association of Secondary Heads) for parents/governors to put to all parliamentary candidates during the election campaign. The FGB agreed that these questions about education should be made available.

6. **School Budget Briefing**

CB gave a presentation explaining how the school budget is calculated. (The powerpoint will be sent out with the minutes.) The Finance and Staffing committee looks at the budget in detail as a standing agenda item at each meeting and has been monitoring it particularly closely due to the concerns about the three year projections. Whilst the anticipated numbers entering Year 7 in September are better than expected, there are still serious times ahead as funding is getting tighter all the time. The school has already made cuts through a variety of cost saving strategies. So far, these have not had a direct impact on teaching and learning but if the pressure on the budget continues, cuts and savings which do affect pupils will become inevitable. Class sizes for next year’s Y7 pupils, for example, will be larger and it may become necessary to review cost centres with surpluses and how they might subsidise the school’s overall staffing costs.

7. **Prevent Briefing**

CH gave a briefing on Prevent Duty and Current Safeguarding Issues. (The powerpoint will be sent out with the minutes.) The following points were emphasised:

- Safeguarding is a key Ofsted issue and needs to be seen as a ‘golden thread’, securely permeating all aspects of school life. If, during an Ofsted visit, the inspectors decide that there are concerns about aspects of a school’s Safeguarding procedures and practice, they would almost certainly place that school in a formal category of concern.
- In future, the annual Safeguarding Audit will need to include evidence to demonstrate compliance with requirements.
- Information about the government’s Prevent strategy online training and can be found on the GSCB (Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board) website. Awareness of how indoctrination can control a child’s mind is vital and there are strict guidelines about safeguarding training. All school staff are required to complete this training and it is important that all new governors do so, too.

Action: AL to circulate link to online prevent training to new governors.

CH was thanked for her very useful briefing.

8. **Subject Visit Reports**

AD thanked governors for the time taken in carrying out the departmental visits and producing follow-up reports. Whilst it can be difficult to arrange visits during the working day, all governors agreed that personal contact with departmental staff is far preferable to emailing a questionnaire. The subject visits for these terms focused on literacy and numeracy and how they are embedded into the curriculum areas, as well as getting feedback on the newly introduced Show my Homework.

The following recommendations and questions emerged from the reports:

- Matt Redman is to be commended for his work on the Literacy Box. Is there something similar planned for numeracy?
- There were a number of comments around basic skills – how is the school tackling making sure that students have the basic skills needed?

- Suggestions for literacy /numeracy now need to be considered by the SLT.
- A number of departments expressed concern about Show My Homework. Clarity is needed on the next steps for its use and the future purpose of planners. (CB confirmed that Kay Young, Deputy Head, is currently reviewing SMH and the issues raised in the Subject Reports will be taken into account).

9. **Committee Reports**

(Minutes of all the recent committee meetings had been circulated prior to the FGB meeting: key points below)

Chairs' Group

- The governing body skills audit is being revised and will be reviewed at the next Chairs' Group meeting before being emailed to all governors for completion before the final FGB meeting of the year.

Finance & Staffing Committee

- The headteacher's mid-year performance review has been completed.
- The FGB accepted the committee's recommendation that the Governors' Budget Plan for 2017 – 18 should be approved.
- A Financial Health Check audit has been carried out by a contracted company. The committee was satisfied that steps have been put in place to address the audit action points.
- The committee reviewed the Staff Grievance and Redundancy policies. No changes had been made.

Curriculum Committee

- The committee had noted that recent whole school data analysis on progress, together with Pupil Premium data, indicate that Y9 is a year group with a number of pupils causing concern. Maths was also identified as a cause of concern.
- The Learning Policy was reviewed. No changes made.

Welfare & Discipline Committee

- The Physical Intervention, Confidentiality and Attendance policies had been reviewed. No significant changes were made.
- The committee had expressed concern about the number of exclusions but was satisfied that the school is responding appropriately to each situation and makes every effort to take pro-active intervention measures with pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

10. **Stakeholder Voice**

The findings from the recent staff survey, parents' evening questionnaires and pupil interviews had been circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting.

- In response to a question about the percentage of parents completing the questionnaire distributed at Parents' Evenings, SW commented that the highest response tends to come from Y7 parents.
- In order to make an attempt to capture the 'hard to reach' parents, those not attending parents' evenings are to be contacted.
- A feeling of disaffection had been expressed within the lower achieving group during the pupil interviews. CB commented that this could be a reflection of the instability caused by the lack of a permanent SENCO.
- It was noted that 53 members of staff did not complete the staff survey. The main issues to emerge from the completed surveys were: behaviour, the use of mobile phones, opportunities for support staff professional development and the safety of students. These issues will be considered by the appropriate committees.

Action: AD will email all the staff to thank them for participating in the online survey, to inform that the governing body has alerted the SLT to the findings and to reassure them that their concerns are taken seriously and action will be taken.

Action: At the first Welfare & Discipline committee meeting of the next school year, Damian Barry will be asked to provide feedback on what has been done by the SLT to address the issues raised in this year's parent and student surveys.

IMPACT

All agreed that the governing body's annual methods of capturing stakeholder voice help to identify important issues for the SLT to consider. The various surveys provide evidence of how the governing body is carrying out its monitoring role and contributing to school improvement.

11. **Chairs' Correspondence**

- AD will investigate the consultation regarding social media and the use of mobile phones currently being undertaken with parents/students by Stroud High School.
- AD has sent out notes following her attendance at a recent National Governors' Association conference.
- AD will be contacting all governors to arrange individual consultations.

12. **Health & Safety**

See Finance & Staffing committee minutes.

13. **Governor Training**

Gloucestershire Governor Services have published their training programme for April 2017 – March 2018. The courses on 'Monitoring and Challenge' and 'Governors and the Curriculum' are recommended. Any governor wishing to go on a course should contact AL who will make the the booking arrangements.

14. **AOB**

CB informed the FGB that the school had been commended by the GSCB for its sensitive handling of the recent suicide of an Archway pupil.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm. The date of the next FGB meeting is 5th July, 2017.

Actions

Item 7: Action: AL to circulate link to online prevent training to new governors.

Item 10: Action: At the first Welfare & Discipline committee meeting of the next school year, Damian Barry will be asked to provide feedback on what has been done by the SLT to address the issues raised in this year's parent and student surveys.

Action: AD will email all the staff to thank them for participating in the online survey, to inform that the governing body has alerted the SLT to the findings and to reassure them that their concerns are taken seriously.

AL Clerk to Governors