

Archway School: Full Governing Body Meeting

Minutes of Meeting held on 13th May 2020 at 5pm by video conferencing

Present: Kay Young **KY**, Anne-Marie Delrosa **AD** (Chair), Pam Swindell **PS**, Martin Ansell **MA**, Christopher Berry **CBE**, George James **GJ**, Gill Ferry **GF**, Stewart King **SK**, Barnes Clutterbuck **BC**

Apologies: Natasha Rolls **NR**, Sarah Warner **SW**, Julie Brindle **JB**, Nicola Farrow **NF**, Nigel Cooper **NC**, Gavin Townsend **GT**, Robert Hurter **RH**

Where governors question and challenge, the minutes are highlighted in green.

1. **Declarations of Prejudicial Interest**

There were none.

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

The minutes of the previous FGB meeting held on 26th February 2020 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

Item 8: action to be carried forward:

Action: In response to a governor query about the number of Safeguarding concerns the school deals with on an annual basis, NR agreed to check and report back.

Action: AL will investigate online Safer Recruitment training for governors with the NGA.

3. **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. At the meeting, the following issues regarding learning during school closure were discussed in detail:

Online learning

The school is consistently setting over 20,000 individual tasks on Show my Homework a week with around 30- 40% of work returned being submitted via the platform. Work is also being submitted via other platforms such as Hegarty Maths, Sam Learning or GCSEPod. Some of the tasks are returned via email and others are set as research and students are making notes that do not need to be submitted to the teacher.

The estimate is that, whilst it is difficult to track with precision, 60-70% of the school are completing all of the work set on SMHW. In terms of engagement with online learning, 96% of the students are regularly logging into SMHW which is very positive. There are 21 students in total have not logged into SMHW since the closure (2%) and a further 21 are not logging in regularly to SMHW.

A Report received from SMHW on 22nd April stated that Archway's teacher activity was rated as 'High' and well above national average. A governor congratulated the staff on having one of the highest teacher engagement rates out of 1500+ schools across the country. Student engagement was also rated as 'High' when compared to other schools nationally. Parental engagement was rated as 'above average'.

12 of the 21 students who have not accessed SMHW are PP students. They have all been sent hard copies of work, apart from 3 PP students whose parents say they are learning and have computer access, even though they have not logged into SMHW. The school has applied for 4 laptops for Y10 students from the government scheme and 6 existing school laptops/tablet have already been provided.

A governor asked what action is being taken with those students who are not engaging at all. KY explained that all the families are being contacted by telephone. To date, this has mainly been a welfare check but after half term there will be more insistence on the completion of work set. Another governor expressed the view that the school needs to be more forthright about expectations, especially as there is a likelihood that schools will not be fully operational again until September.

Another governor asked whether parents may need a reminder about how to use SMH and it was agreed that Dominic Salmon (deputy head) will send a log in reminder.

A governor asked whether parents have enquired about the possibility of video lessons being provided and why this hadn't been organised by the school. KY explained that teaching unions had advised their members that the live streaming of lessons should not be done from teachers' homes. KY informed governors that only six parents had asked about this so far and most were happy with the work being provided through SMH, however, the SLT is currently exploring the possibility of teachers using Microsoft teams for online teaching in the coming weeks. A number of governors made it clear that they felt that virtual 'face to face' teaching arrangements would be very valuable for the students and were not impressed with the union position that teachers should not be asked to organise and deliver livestreamed sessions. One governor, who has been using livestreaming in a college context during lockdown, confirmed that online teacher interaction is really successful and invaluable in supporting learning with students.

Another governor asked if the school is encouraging the Y10 students to use GCSEPod as an online learning and revision resource. KY confirmed that parents have been informed about it.

Arrangements for summer exam grades

Teachers have been asked to use their professional judgement to make a fair and objective judgment of the grade in each subject which they believe the students would have achieved this summer if they had sat their examinations. There will be a level of scrutiny that is applied at every level: teacher, HOD and SLT. All grades will be signed off by two members of each department and the Head of Centre. The guidance issued to the Heads of Department states that a full range of evidence needs to be used to arrive at grades. This will include any non-examined assessments, the results of homework, mock exams and any other records of the students' performance over the whole course of their study.

Once grades have been agreed departments will start a process of rank ordering students across the subject. All grades will then be checked by the Head of Centre before submission to the exam boards. All grades are confidential and are not to be shared with the students or parents. Results days are as originally planned: 13th August for A-Level results and 20th August for GCSE exam results. Students will be able to appeal but details of the appeals process have not yet been published.

Plans for the re-opening of school

The SLT is currently planning for different scenarios, depending on DfE guidance concerning re-opening. Hand sanitisers are being installed next week and bottles of hand sanitisers will be available in classrooms. Catering will be able to re-open with enough notice. A deep cleaning of the whole school will have been completed by half term.

Issues under consideration:

- Health and Safety of students and staff
- Number of students the school can accommodate
- Number of students in each class
- Movement around corridors
- One-way systems

- Staggered starts and break times
- Re-adjusted timetable
- Split year groups and rotation arrangements
- Absence of staff
- Contingency for second lockdown

A governor asked about PPE requirements. KY explained that the main emphasis will be on hand washing, cleaning surfaces and social distancing arrangements. Face masks will not be compulsory but an order has been made so that they are available on request. **In response to a governor query as to whether the staff are feeling unsafe,** KY replied that the majority have been involved in the staff rota since lockdown began and so are aware of the health & safety measures already in place whilst the school has been open for the children of key workers. **Asked what would happen if a large number of the staff became ill,** KY responded that it would be likely that Public Health England would close the school.

A governor asked about the provision being made for vulnerable students. Only a small number of students classed as in a vulnerable category have been coming into school. Their families have been contacted on a weekly basis and KY is hoping that where there are social workers involved, they will start encouraging the students to come in – something that has not happened to date.

A governor asked how the well-being of the staff is being monitored. KY replied that staff are seen when they come in to school on their rota days and are supported if they are struggling in any way. There is a strong team spirit and Rachel O'Brien is regularly emailing a 'Top Tips' newsletter to all staff. She has also given details of a Wellbeing First training course. Governors were pleased to see these measures in place.

Another governor asked whether departments were holding virtual meetings in order to keep in touch. KY agreed that face to face contact would be useful and agreed to investigate.

Governors congratulated the school on ensuring that the contact with students during school closure was being maintained at a commendably high level and gave their thanks and support to the head and the whole staff for their commitment at this difficult time.

4. **Committee Reports**

(Minutes of the relevant meetings had been circulated prior to the FGB meeting. The Governing Body had taken the decision to only have Chairs Group and Finance & Staffing Committee in line with guidance on only covering key items during this time. Key points from the minutes are below)

Chairs' Group

No specific issues to refer to on this occasion.

Finance & Staffing Committee

- The committee had reviewed the Staff grievance and Redundancy policies. There had been no significant amendments to these local authority model policies and the **FGB agreed to adopt them for the next year.**
- On the committee's recommendation, the **FGB approved the Governors' Budget Plan** for 2020/21 but accepted that due to the exceptional circumstances created by Covid 19, it may be necessary to re-visit it later this summer.
- A decision had been made at the committee meeting not to pay the 6th form cleaners for cleaning hours during the initial two week school closure in March. Following a parental query the Chair of Governors, acting Committee Chair and Business Manager reviewed the latest government guidance relating to mainstream, state-funded schools. The guidelines make it clear that whilst casual staff (such as the cleaners) are unable to be furloughed, they are entitled to be paid 80% of what they would have earned for 28 hours (the 14 days of school closure before Easter) at £10.31. With that in mind, it was decided to arrange for a retrospective payment of £230.94 for each of the 14 sixth form cleaners.

- A governor had raised a concern about the future of the revenue balance 2020/21 drawing attention to the fact that if the current staffing model continues, with a lower projected income any surplus would be eliminated very quickly and he felt that the school/governing body should be looking now for further savings to be made to the 2020/21 budget plan. The Chair of Governors will raise the issue with the new headteacher and request that staffing levels are reviewed as a matter of priority.

5. **The future of AS Levels**

KY reported that whilst the AS level offer has been a selling point for Archway 6th form, there is a significant financial cost to the school and a number of exam boards are now withdrawing AS levels due to falling demand. In addition, most universities are no longer taking them into account. On the recommendation of the SLT, **the FGB agreed with the proposal that from September 2021 the school's 6th form offer will just focus on students selecting three A levels.** **In response to a governor query,** KY confirmed that this would mean extra curriculum/study time for the chosen subjects.

6. **SEND Review and SEND Policy**

The governors and SLT had felt that following a request by the governing body, the SEND review undertaken by the local authority earlier in the year had been unsatisfactory and a further review by an independent consultant is now needed. The Chair of Governors emphasised that it is essential that the governing body can be confident that the school's SEND provision is fit for purpose and that its provision can be benchmarked against similar schools.

Action: KY will arrange for a consultant to undertake a further review of the school's SEND provision early in the next school year.

The revised and updated SEND policy was approved and adopted. **It was agreed that any recommendations resulting from a future SEND review would be incorporated into the policy.**

7. **Mental Health Policy**

IMPACT

This new policy, instigated by the governing body, was approved and adopted.

8. **Governance Review**

The main recommendation from the review of Governance carried out at the end of last year was that the governing body should ensure that it can fully demonstrate that it is holding the SLT to account through rigorous scrutiny and challenging questioning. Minutes of meetings need to be able to provide evidence of such scrutiny and it is therefore important that committee chairs ensure that minutes of meetings fully reflect the scrutiny and questioning which takes place.

The report had also recommended that school visits need to be clearly linked to the School Development Plan. It was agreed that whilst governor visits in the past have been linked to strategic objectives, future briefings and reports need to make this more explicit.

Whilst the report acknowledged that the governors are generally well informed, it would be helpful for the whole governing body to receive training in the school's procedures for performance management and appraisal.

The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors expressed their disappointment that the report had not offered any specific advice about how the governing body could progress and move forward towards achieving an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating.

Action: AD will ensure that future Subject Visits are clearly linked to the Strategic Plan and arrange for Performance Management training.

9. **Succession Planning**

The elections for the two parent governor vacancies are to be postponed until the autumn.

Action: AD to liaise with Jayne Thorley to arrange Parent Governor elections in Term 1.

10. **Stakeholder Voice**

SW had circulated a report following the Student Voice survey carried out by herself and NR in March. The issues raised by the students were discussed. A governor commented on the positive responses which indicated that the students felt proud to attend Archway school, that they felt the teachers respected and genuinely like the students and that they felt bullying was not a problem. Another governor was pleased to see that there was no difference in the views expressed by the different ability groups which he felt demonstrated the effectiveness of the school's inclusive ethos.

This is the fifth year that the Staff Survey has been undertaken. This year saw the lowest response rate to the survey. AD felt that there may be a number of reasons for the low response rate including the survey dates coinciding with the Coronavirus lockdown, the new headteacher recruitment, previous staff focus groups, and maybe some survey fatigue.

It was pleasing to see that with regard to the responses to questions about leadership & management and behaviour, the percentage of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' has gone up in all areas. A governor drew attention to the fact that the responses to the statement 'behaviour is good in school' had improved significantly compared with previous years. However, some staff concerns had been expressed about micromanaging each department rather than listening to experienced members of staff; the questionable effectiveness of the Blue Sky CPD tool and certain inconsistencies in managing behaviour and the possible decrease in the impact of the isolation room. A governor expressed concern about the high level of disagreement about behaviour being well managed and wondered whether this is in part due to staff not knowing what is done 'behind the scenes' with regard to behaviour management. KY agreed with this and felt that support staff in particular may not be aware of the changes which have taken place in the last six months.

The unsatisfactory level of cleanliness around the school is a concern raised each year. A governor asked whether the current deep cleaning which being undertaken in response to the Covid 19 situation could take place on annual basis in future in order to maintain the improved standard.

A governor asked about the racist bullying incidents and KY confirmed that these had been dealt with appropriately.

The FGB agreed with a governor suggestion that more needs to be done to communicate the school's vision and an opportunity to do this should be taken to do this when the school is fully re-opened.

Action: AD will provide the staff with feedback by email regarding the survey results.

11. **Health & Safety**

See agenda item 3 above.

12. **Training.**

AL will investigate online Safer Recruitment training for governors with the NGA.

13. **AOB**

- The FGB accepted the Chair of Governors proposal that an additional FGB meeting should be held to replace the next round of committee meetings as the most effective way of dealing with governing body business during the school closure. **AD** will consult with committee chairs regarding policies due for review and any other items from the standing cycle of activities.
- **A governor suggested minor amendments to the recently reviewed Physical Intervention policy. These were accepted.**

The meeting ended at 6.45pm. The date of the next FGB meeting is 10th June at 5pm.

Actions

*Item 2: **Action: In response to a governor query about the number of Safeguarding concerns the school deals with on an annual basis, NR agreed to check and report back.***

Action:AL will investigate online Safer Recruitment training for governors with the NGA.

*Item 6: **Action: KY will arrange for a consultant to undertake a further review of the school's SEND provision early in the next school year.***

*Item 8: **Action: AD will ensure that future Subject Visits are clearly linked to the Strategic Plan and arrange for performance management training***

*Item 9: **Action: AD to liaise with Jayne Thorley to arrange Parent Governor elections in Term 1.***

*Item 10: **Action: AD will provide the staff with feedback by email regarding the survey results***

AL Clerk to Governors