



**MINUTES OF THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BODY MONDAY 20th MAY 2024**
This meeting was held virtually via Teams.

PRESENT

Miss Tina Gobell (TG) - Head Teacher
 Mrs Annabel Cornall (AC) Chair of Governors & Co-opted governor
 Mrs Louise Connelly (LC) - Vice Chair & Co-opted governor
 Mrs June Budd- (JB) - Co-opted governor
 Kelly Dey (KD) - Staff Governor
 Mr David Waller (DW) – LA governor
 Mrs Katie Steele (KS) – Parent governor

In Attendance – Miss Jenny Baker (JB) - DHT

Apologies – Mr Hash Khan & Mr Louis Westlake,

Governance Professional - Mrs J Roe (GP).

| AGENDA NUMBER | ITEM FOR DISCUSSION |
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| 1. | <p>1.1 <u>Welcome and Apologies for absence</u> All were welcomed to the meeting. 1.2 <u>Apologies for absence</u> – Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Louis Westlake (uni examinations) and Mr Hash Khan (travelling with work). The meeting was quorate.</p> <p>It was noted that there was an action relating to a staff matter and the HTPM review meeting to discuss so the GP suggested that these were both discussed at the end of the meeting to enable the HT, DHT and staff governor to leave the meeting at that point.</p> |
| 2 | <u>Register of Business Interests.</u> The Register was up-to-date, and no other declarations were declared against the business of the agenda. |
| 3. | <u>Consideration of AOUB items</u> – No AOUB |
| 4 | <p><u>Minutes of the last meeting 25.03.2024</u> These had been circulated prior to the meeting and all agreed were a true representation of the meeting. The Chair will sign the minutes when next in school.</p> <p><u>Actions from the minutes of 25.03.2024.</u> Please refer to appendix 1.</p> |
| 5 | <p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>Out turn</u> All documentation along with the finance monitoring governors report had been circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting. (copies of documentation attached to these minutes). The finance monitoring governors had met on 24.04.24 to review the closedown figures. The underfunding of the teachers’ pay awards</p> |

by the government had heavily impacted the budget but because of stringent measures put in place by the school the end of year figures reveals the school to still be in a positive financial position.

The school had used members of SLT instead of supply teachers to cover one teacher's absence enabling a saving of £20,000 (twenty thousand pounds) and there had been better management of resources which will be ongoing.

The plant room will be having the boilers replaced over the half term holiday and it is hoped that these will be both more cost and energy efficient.

Because of the rigorous planning of the new 3 year budget by the HT and the SBM it is anticipated that the school will remain in a positive financial position.

The reception cohort from September 2024 is full as is the remainder of the school role, with an additional pupil in each class in KS2 which had been agreed with the LA providing these pupils were not accepted from another Kings Hill School.

It was noted that the in February the carry forward figure was under £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds) but the end of year carry forward figure was £86,467 (eight six thousand four hundred and sixty seven pounds) due to the school implementing its Business Continuity Plan. At the April budget setting the carry forward for year 1 is looking to be £92,000 (ninety two thousand pounds).

Despite the government saying that the teacher's salary increases were to be fully funded there had been a shortfall of £16,000 (sixteen thousand pounds) which does not include pension contributions so on costs were not included.

The school has also had to cover the cost of 5 teachers going onto maternity leave. The school will get reimbursed for these from the insurance but not until they return to school which will be towards the end of the financial year and for one member of staff this will not be until the 2025-26 financial year.

The school had received £15,000 (fifteen thousand pounds) for supporting pupils from Ukraine.

£8,000 (eight thousand pounds) had been received in HNF.

The school had gone back through VAT claims which had been an arduous task but had enabled another £4,000 (four thousand pounds) to be recouped.

One of the finance monitoring governors reminded all to be mindful that the budget for the last year had been affected because of unpredictable events and not because of bad financial management on the school's part. Moving forward governors were confident that the school would continue to see mindful and robust financial planning.

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| | <p><u>Proposed new 3-year budget</u> - all budget documentation had been shared to the FGB and copies enclosed with this report.</p> <p>The finance monitoring governors had met with the HT and DHT to scrutinise the proposed 3 year budget on 17.10.24.</p> <p>The HT commented that for this financial year the anticipated carry forward figure is £42,375 (forty two thousand three hundred and seventy five pounds) for year 1 going into year 2, but with the increase in pupil numbers and careful planning this should increase significantly to £141,798 (one hundred and forty one thousand, seven hundred and ninety eight pounds) and by the end of year 3, notwithstanding expenditure not included to £282,275 (two hundred and eighty two thousand , two hundred and seventy five pounds). The next year would be very tight as the school is still paying the price for the very low year R cohort.</p> <p>The most challenge is going to come from the unspecified changes to HNF and the likely shortfall of £35,000 (thirty-five thousand pounds) teachers' pension grants and £26,000 (twenty-six thousand pounds) shortfall in the teachers' pay grant. There has also been an increase to supply staff salaries which schools cannot control. The HT discussed the impact that the 9.6% pay increases on support staff salaries were going to have on the school budget. Details of this discussion are recorded within confidential items, part 2 of these minutes.</p> <p>Pressures on energy prices are on-going.</p> <p>Because of the reduction in this year's carry forward there had been a halt on ordering consumables but in the budget setting process the HT reassured governors that there had been no cuts as it was important to maintain high expectations.</p> <p>Having discussed the budget in detail, the FGB approved the new 3-year budget for submission to KCC.</p> <p>The FGB thanked the HT and SBM for their due diligence and hard work on producing the new budget.</p> <p><u>Pay Committee – Support Staff Pay</u> Following a meeting of the Pay Committee to review Support Staff pay which had been set by KCC, the FGB approved the recommended pay increase.</p> |
| 6 | <p><u>School Improvement Plan & Monitoring Visit Reports</u></p> <p>The CoG had observed a meeting between the HT and Attendance & Inclusion Officer to discuss attendance and talk about children who have very low attendance with some development points for the HT given.</p> <p>The CoG had attended a Governor Conference where the speaker Jean Gross had discussed the national picture around attendance. Simon Smith, PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Manager had also delivered a presentation on attendance and how from September all schools would be required to submit attendance figures daily, which on questioning the HT was something TDS</p> |

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| | <p>already does. There is also legislation being brought in for all schools to issue a fixed penalty notice around those pupils who have persistent absence. The HT explained that currently because parents cannot be fined if their child(ren) are taken out of school for 5 days or less, many will take their children out around the days before a weekend and then phone in sick to avoid a fine.</p> <p>A governor asked the HT if she could give the figure for pupils with persistent absence. For severely absent pupils it is 50% or less. There are 2 pupils who are school refusers and they have been referred to the local authority attendance officer.</p> <p>The CoG referred to a useful video regarding attendance that had been shown at the conference and suggested this was something that the school could have on their website for parents to see the impact attendance had from a child’s point of view. Once the link for this has been received from the Conference, this will be circulated for all governors to see.</p> <p>Action – Attendance video to be circulated by GP to all members of FGB.</p> <p>The Vice CoG had attended school on the 1st day of SATs to ensure that the school was following correct protocols around storage and distribution. The school had made access arrangements for pupils requiring 1:1 support. The Vice CoG confirmed that there was no opportunity for any misconduct or mismanagement during the process and observed how calm the atmosphere was for the children, with all of them given the opportunity to attend for breakfast prior to the SATs so that they could have some social time before they began.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Head Teacher’s Report As the focus of this meeting had been to scrutinise the budget, there had been no HT report circulated, but the HT did ask governors to approve the upcoming Year 6 Residential trip which was taking place from the 7th June for the weekend. All risk assessments had been completed and uploaded to the KCC platform.</p> <p>A governor questioned why the visit always happened over a weekend. The HT said that this was to ensure that it was affordable for all families as the trip was far more expensive if it took place during the week.</p> <p>A governor asked whether staff accompanying the children would get time in lieu. The HT said that this was the case with their classes being covered by SLT or HLTA’s.</p> <p>A governor asked what the cost of the trip was and learned it was £300 (three hundred pounds). The school were looking to find a cheaper provider next year, although when they had done this in previous years, the quality offered on the trip was not of the same standard.</p> <p>Governors asked whether all children attend or whether some do miss out. The HT said that the school does not let cost become a barrier so the only children who do not go are those who choose not to for personal reasons.</p> <p>Governors approved the Year 6 Residential trip for June 2024.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Chair’s Report/GP to provide short update on any legislative information</p> |

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| | <p>The Chair, Vice Chair and GP had attended the Edu Kent Governor/Clerk Conference 20.05.2024. Once the slides had been shared with them, the GP will forward on information from these to the FGB, including suggested questions around pay and staffing as well as information on attendance.</p> <p>Action – GP to forward information from the Edu Kent Governor Conference to all members of the FGB.</p> <p>The GP has already shared via email details with the Board on the Ofsted survey and the link to the consultation on RSHE guidance.</p> |
| 9 | <p><u>Correspondence</u> The GP informed the FGB that she had received an email from a parent expressing an interest in becoming a parent governor and communicated back that there were no parent vacancies at the current time, as well as explaining how parent governors have to be elected.</p> |
| 10 | <p><u>Any other urgent business</u> – None of note</p> |
| 11 | <p><u>Confidential items</u> <i>Please note the HT, DHT and staff governor left the meeting before these discussions took place</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget implications for support staff. • HTPM mid-term review. |
| 12 | <p><u>Impact of meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny by the finance monitoring governors had revealed how the partly funded teachers’ pay awards and support staff pay awards had severely impacted the carry forward figure of the budget but because of the school implementing its Business Emergency Plan the school was able to end the year in a positive financial position with a carry forward figure of £86,467 (eighty-six thousand, four hundred and sixty-seven pounds). • The school is now oversubscribed with a full Year R cohort joining in September 2024 which will greatly improve the budget by years 2 & 3. • Cuts to HNF (which as yet have not been communicated by KCC) are going to have a massive impact on the budget meaning that the HT and DHT have had to look at how support staff are deployed within the school. • Through stringent monitoring and questioning, governors were able to evidence that the impact to the budget had been because of factors outside of the school’s control and not due to any mis management of finances. The FGB approved the new 3-year proposed budget for submission to KCC. • A monitoring visit from the CoG observing a meeting between the HT and Attendance and Inclusion Officer showed that the school were proactive in supporting pupils with poor attendance and how attendance remained above the national average for pupils with persistent absence. • A monitoring visit from the Vice CoG to review quality assurance around SAT’s papers evidenced no opportunity for any misconduct. • Governors had discussed and approved the Year 6 residential trip. |
| 13. | <p><u>Date and time of meeting.</u> Monday 8th July 2024. It is proposed that this meeting will be faced to face, venue to be confirmed and will have an earlier start time which will be confirmed by the CoG with the HT.</p> |

Signed..... Chair/Vice Chair

Date.....

Appendix 1

Actions from the FGB meeting Monday 25th March 2024

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| 4 | <p><u>Membership update</u> – The CoG had met with the CoG of Kings Hill School. There were no further developments to report in terms of sustainability at this stage but both CoG’s were aware of the sustainability deadline of 2025. A further meeting will be arranged to discuss local responses.</p> <p>They had discussed the constitution of both FGB’s and how each school carries out their governor monitoring.</p> |
| 6 | <p><u>Finance</u> – The Chair had signed the SFVS which had been submitted to KCC before 31.03.2024.</p> |
| 7 | <p><u>SIP & Monitoring visits</u> The CoG apologised for not circulating these and will forward after the meeting.</p> |
| 11 | <p><u>PREVENT training.</u> The GP reminded all governors of the requirement to complete their PREVENT training asap. A governor questioned whether there was an emergency lockdown place for the school. The HT said that this was the case, and the school would be practising this again shortly. It will be discussed during a staff meeting initially and then carried out with the children. The HT said that staff must be mindful to use a scenario that will not upset the children, but previous practises have always been very successful. Governors were reminded that this was very different to a fire drill. Governors were mindful from the training of how the issues covered are now affecting primary school pupils not just those of secondary school age.</p> |
| 14 | <p><u>AQUB</u> The GP had updated the TORs to reflect the recommendations by HR regarding staff dismissal panels to be heard by one governor not 3. These had been checked by the HT and the uploaded to the school website.</p> |
| 14 | <p><u>AQUB</u> The request for a holiday during term time will be discussed under confidential items, part 2 of these minutes.</p> |