

Castle Hill School
Minutes of LGB Meeting
10 May 2022 at 3.30pm
Venue: At the School

Present:

Rev Julie Anderson (Co-Opted Governor)
Jayne Askew (Staff Governor)
Joan Haines (Chair)
Dawn Naughton (Parent Governor)
Steve Perren (Principal)
Katrina Whale (Staff Governor)
Til Wright (Co-Opted Governor)

In Attendance:

Caroline Hall (Clerk)
Allanna Hoyer (Business & Administrations Manager)
Dan Pearce (Deputy Principal)

1. Apologies for absence, consent and declaration of interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest with regard to the meeting's agenda items.

2. Notification of items to be brought up under Any Other Business

The following items were notified to be brought up under Any Other Business:

- 2.1 Governing body meeting dates 2022/23
- 2.2 Letter to staff regarding lunchtime timings
- 2.3 Governor training

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022

Governors agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 were approved and will be signed by the Chair as a correct account.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Action 1, TW to arrange to visit school.

TW had arranged to visit school.

4.2 Action 2, AH to enquire about hydro pool cover - thermal/insulating properties and cost of thermal cover.

The existing cover was layered and the pool was emptied in the last week of the summer term.

4.3 Action 3, JH to distribute documents prepared for UNICEF Gold Award and Inclusion Quality Mark to governors

JH had sent both documents to governors, who felt they provided a really good snapshot of what Castle Hill School was really all about.

4.4 Action 4, SP to circulate full report from safeguarding audit to governors.

SP had shared the safeguarding report with governors (under AOB in shared drive).

5. Finance

Allanna Hoyer referred to the management accounts up to May 2022 and her written reports to governors and explained significant variances from budget. The highlights were:

- The figures to May 2022 showed a deficit of £31K made up of additional income from SEN top-up, underspend in staffing costs and overspend in other expenditure, which included the transfer from revenue to capital contribution relating to spending on the playground project.
- The auditors confirmed the cumulative carry forward from 2020-21 was £1,428,000 but a true balance of £1,206,599 after deducting PTS balances of £221,401 received in previous years.

AH reported that the contractor was dealing with the issues arising in the amphitheatre area and SP advised on measures taken to limit the damage to the tunnel caused by crows recently.

Q: Was the lack of staff absence insurance causing a problem?

A: The system of HLTAs, ETAs and LTSs 'acting up' was working well and the cost saving was proven: such insurance was expensive.

AH referred to key points underpinning the three-year budget for 2022-2025, which had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. Staffing costs had been benchmarked to similar schools and were comparable. Action was being taken to reduce other costs wherever possible but utility costs were increasing rapidly and the budget would be revised once the relevant information was known. The increase for utilities could be as much as 400% and could cause a deficit. Consumption was down on last year as lighting and thermostats had been addressed by Pinnacle.

Q: Was there a limit set on the number of pupils?

A: Yes, there was place funding for 124 pupils. which could be flexed to 126 or 127 but any significant increase would require extra building.

Q: Was the hydro pool expensive to run and could this be closed for a while?

A: Closing the pool would have an impact on pupils with the greatest need. Any alternative therapy offer would require careful thought, planning & time to arrange.

Q: Was there any community use of the pool?

A: No, not post-COVID, mainly due to the risk of contamination and shutdown.

JH thanked AH for her efficiency, her reports to governors and her efforts in managing the budgets in challenging times. Value for money was a strategic issue for the LGB and Allanna questioning Pinnacle's quotes and seeking alternatives was appreciated.

It was noted that any virements would need to come to the LGB prior to being made.

Allanna Hoyer left the meeting at 4:24pm.
Catherine Whitlam joined the meeting at 4:25pm.

6. Curriculum lead input: Communication and language

Jayne Askew and Catherine Whitlam gave an update on the communication and language curriculum at Castle Hill, highlighting the following points:

- Most targets set in September were now green, with just a few on amber or red.
- Long-term case studies evidenced student learning and progress.
- Individual summary for each child detailing their communication methods used to brief next teacher - "amazingly good practice" response from SALT review.
- Phonics work was woven into communication pathways to provide evidence of students' progress - CHS was not using synthetic phonics.
- Clear phonics pathways showed student progression, promoted more effective communicators and fitted with what CHS already did. We needed to be realistic about the limitations of mainstream phonics schemes in our setting.

Q: Research shows that synthetic phonics may not be entirely appropriate here: are you confident you have something significantly better?

A: Yes, we have whole word recognition and phonics work in a hybrid, blended approach, which passed at the previous Ofsted inspection. We are confident these approaches work for our students; teachers are confident delivering our own strategies and we are exploiting individual pupils' talents as much as possible. Staff know the students very well and they embrace their achievements and fill the gaps to encourage whole language development: this is a whole school project.

Q: Do you have contact from other schools regarding phonics?

A: Yes, we are asked what phonics and reading schemes we use.

JH thanked Jayne and Catherine for their fantastic, specialist report and their expertise.

Catherine Whitlam left the meeting at 5:08pm.

7. Behaviour report

SP reported on one pupil's initial stages of transition, attending Castle Hill 2.5 days at present and full-time from September 2022. Form 4 indicated that staff were problem-solving around the pupil's needs. This case study would be revisited at the next strategic meeting.

8. Attendance

SP reported that attendance for the year to date was approaching pre-pandemic levels, which reflected the lessening effect of COVID-19 on families. Cumulative attendance for all pupils was 4% below the DfE statistic, rising when complex health needs were taken into account.

Q: What is the impact of the recent COVID spike?

A: The impact is minimal this term: more staff than pupils and staff were only absent if unwell and tested positive.

9. Health and safety

SP reported on specific incidents regarding the swings & the hoist, advising governors that health & safety was discussed weekly at whole school meetings and staff were urged to exercise vigilance at all times.

Q: How do you address lapses of staff attention or concentration?

A: We have regular discussions on health & safety with staff.

Q: How are you monitoring levels of concern from staff or about staff?

A: We use CPOMS to identify patterns of incidents.

JH commended staff for being open and feeling able to report all incidents. TW to include effect on staff of health & safety incidents during her visit on 29 June 2022.

10. Governor review/self review

JH and TW had discussed governor review and proposed an audit of individual governor skills and a half-day meeting of governors in the autumn term, with a view to using a self-evaluation tool, which would help in determining an action plan and 'refreshing our vision'.

JH to meet with DN before the end of the summer term and her term of office as a parent governor.

Julie Anderson left the meeting at 5.29pm

11. Policies for review

Policies had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting and had been reviewed:

Pupil Premium - DN - very thorough, no changes needed

Provider Access; Admissions - KW - on track

Positive Relationships - Julie A - confirmed

Online Safety; Communication and Interaction - TW - very thorough

Careers; Design Technology; Geography; History; ICT and Computing;

Religious Education; Science - JH - confirmed

The Home Learning Policy was being updated with reference to risks for staff on home visits. Jayne A advised that staff always went in pairs on home visits.

JH thanked governors for their reviews and their input.

RESOLVED:

That the above policies were ratified by the LGB.

12. Governor training and governor visits

It was noted that governor visits were ongoing and there was an evaluations file in the

school reception for governors to note the outcome of each visit.

13. Any other business

13.1 Lunchtime - SP referred to a copy letter to ETA staff and reported on the addition of five minutes to lunch breaks for ETAs, giving a twenty minute break overall, with no change to start/finish times.

Q: How will the extra five minutes be managed?

A: By cover from Lunchtime Supervisors. SLT were monitoring for any impact over time.

13.2 SEF and SEF Summary - SP referred to the SEF and SEF summary, which were up to date and on the website, including achievements this academic year, and asked governors to read these documents.

13.3 CHIP - SP referred governors to the Castle Hill Improvement Plan, which showed the direction of the school for the next few years.

13.4 Parent/staff governors - JH to approach two potential governors. DN indicated she would be happy to speak to potential new parent governors about the role.

13.5 Governor training - TW checking on the level of training on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' required for all governors and for the safeguarding link governor.

14. Dates of future meetings and possible agenda items.

RESOLVED: That the following dates be scheduled (due to commence at 3.30pm):

- Tuesday 18 October 2022
- Tuesday 6 December 2022
- Tuesday 24 January 2023
- Tuesday 14 March 2023
- Tuesday 9 May 2023
- Tuesday 27 June 2023

15. Agenda, minutes and related papers – school copy

RESOLVED: That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Chair thanked Dawn Naughton for her service as a parent governor and closed the meeting at 5.57pm.

Summary of Actions

Action Number	Action	By Whom
1	TW to include effect on staff of health & safety incidents in her discussions on 29 June 2022	TW
2	Arrange half-day meeting for governors in autumn term	JH

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3	Meet with DN before end of summer term	JH
4	Check on level of training on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' required for safeguarding link governor and for all governors	TW