



## GOVERNING BODY

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at 6.30pm**

### GOVERNORS (\* indicates present):

<u>Parent</u>	<u>Co-opted</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Staff</u>
* Ms P Dixon	Mr M Dixon	* Mr C Kitson	Ms R Bynon	* Mrs K Wheeler (HT)
Ms R Medwynter	* Mr S Gascoine		* Mr T Williams (Chair)	* Ms K Henderson
* Ms M Thomas	Mrs E Humm		* Mr J Blair	
	Ms A Ross			
	* Ms B Whelan			
	* Mr T Wilkins			

### In attendance:

Ms A Money, Business Manager and Clerk to the GB  
 Ms J Bowers-Broadbent, Head of Primary Phase  
 Mr M Parvez, Head of Secondary Phase  
 Ms T McGing, Deputy HT and Inclusion Lead  
 Mr M Beresford, Minuting Secretary

## MINUTES

Min	Summary of Action Points or Matters Arising for next meeting	<u>Action</u>
<b>83/15.1</b>	Chair to sign July and September minutes	<b>Chair, Clerk</b>
<b>83/15.2</b>	Communications working party to meet on 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 5.30	<b>J Blair, A Ross B Whelan, T Williams</b>
<b>83/15.3</b>	Governors profile - Governors not having done so yet to send the Clerk a brief profile with a photo (optional), and declare membership of any other school GBs	<b>All Governors</b>
<b>87/15</b>	Building Project archive - see whether English Heritage could be involved	<b>M Parvez</b>
<b>88/15.4</b>	Intrusiveness of Public Ethics declaration forms - clarify with the LA whether these were applicable to any school staff	<b>Business Manager / Clerk</b>
<b>88/15.8</b>	Capability Policy - LA model still under revision. Chair authorised to agree this with HT subject to consulting Governors Henderson and Kitson	<b>Clerk, Chair K Henderson C Kitson</b>
<b>93/15</b>	Staff Leave of Absence Policy - Chair to consult Governor Wilkins, other union representatives, and the HT, Clerk to facilitate contact with union representatives.	<b>Chair, HT T Wilkins Clerk</b>
<b>98/15</b>	NUT Campaign for Fairer Funding - distribute more information	<b>Clerk</b>

***Governors' comments, queries, or challenges during debate are highlighted in these minutes in italic underlined text, with responses and debate following in italic text.***

- 80/15 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Action  
 Apologies were received and consented from Governors Bynon, M Dixon, Medwynter, Ross, and the HT, who had informed the Clerk she would join the meeting late.
- 81/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**  
 There were no declarations of conflicts of interest on items on the agenda or receipt of gifts or hospitality.
- 82/15 MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**  
 The minutes were approved as a correct record. Fair copy to be signed by the Chair.
- 83/15 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING**
- 1 Minute 64/15.1 - Signing of July GB minutes**  
 Agreed Chair to sign minutes following the meeting. **Chair, Clerk**
- 2 Minute 64/15.2 - Communications Working Party**  
 Governor Whelan reported that she had met with Governor Ross to agree an agenda for the meeting scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 5.30. All Governors were invited to attend. **J Blair, A Ross  
B Whelan,  
T Williams**
- 3 Minute 76/15 - Code of Conduct - publication of Governors' personal details on school web-site**  
 All Governors had now been made aware that their details would be published on the web-site, so it was agreed that the web-site version could be amended accordingly. Governors not yet having done so were asked to send the Clerk a brief profile with a photo (optional), and also to declare whether they were members of other school's GBs **All Governors**
- 84/15 CHAIRS' ACTION**  
 None to report.
- 85/15 GB, COMMITTEE AND TRUST BOARD UPDATE**
- 1 Performance Committee 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015**  
 Draft minutes had been circulated with the agenda. The Chair of the Committee (Governor Gascoine) briefly summarized the Committee's business, including Trish Bromley (Y11 Learning Manager) explaining the background and steps taken to improve girls' performance, clarification of the Y6 staffing position, and review of key performance figures.
- Was lack of parental engagement (Minute 38/15.3) blaming parents for children's underperformance?*  
*Governor Wilkins pointed out that many families were in difficult circumstances and the school should be careful not to blame parents for very young children's underperformance. He challenged the value of homework other than reading. It was not proven to raise Primary achievement. The Head of Primary emphasized that it was not intended to lay blame on parents, but some parents were less engaged and school could seem threatening. Research indicated that encouraging and supporting joint parent-child activity would benefit pupils.*

**2 Inclusion & Diversity Committee 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

The Chair of the Committee (Governor Whelan) reported that: the Committee had reviewed the performance of higher and mid ability pupils against national average, and discussed reading at home. Governor Gascoine intended to visit T McGing to review safeguarding and PSHE.

**3 Resources Committee 9<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Governors noted the minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> September confirming the verbal report given at the last GB meeting, and Committee decisions of 9<sup>th</sup> September were formally ratified.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November had also been circulated with the agenda and the Business Manager summarized the business discussed:

- Half year financial position - forecast surplus increased to £657,000
- Cash flow healthy
- Pupils numbers slowly increasing
- Catering Committee joined by Governors Kitson and Wilkins
- Financial Regulations reviewed and approved
- Pupil Premium position reviewed
- Payroll position reviewed, dialogue to improve its workings were continuing

Governors noted the minutes, and the Committee's decisions of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were ratified.

**4 Pay Committee 23<sup>d</sup> November**

The Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed pay increase recommendations and, with a couple of exceptions, these had been approved. He pointed out that there were few pay increases at UPS, as over 20 Teachers were now at the top of the scale.

**5 HT Performance Review**

The Chair confirmed that the Panel comprising himself, Governor Gascoine and Governor Whelan had successfully completed a review prior to this meeting.

**86/15 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)**

An additional section on Teaching and Learning was tabled. This followed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) conducted by Challenge Partners 11-13<sup>th</sup> November and reports of the LBWF school effectiveness adviser Rachel Singer after visits in October and November. It comprised an operational level plan for improving consistency in teaching, using John Hattie's "Visible Learning" strategies, which aimed to encourage teachers to see learning through the eyes of students and help them become their own teachers.

*In future could abbreviations be defined in a glossary like that in the SEND report?*

*Yes. BLT stood for Buxton Leadership Team, CPD career professional development, SC success criteria, and AFL assessment for learning.*

Governors noted and approved the additional SDP section on Teaching and Learning.

## 87/15 BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

Action

The Business Manager reported that the scheme was progressing to timescale with foundations being dug and construction of the steel frame due to start in January. She and the HT were meeting the project manager weekly to decide detail such as the positioning of internal facilities.

Would the Primary school and Sports Hall be completed first ?

*Yes, scheduled for completion by October 2016 half term, after which the Primary school would move and work would start on the new Secondary building.*

Should a regularly updated archive be kept of the building works and changes, and could outside support be enlisted e.g. from English Heritage?

*The contractors were compiling a photo and narrative timeline. Y9 were looking at the project as part of their history curriculum, and there were other initiatives planned or under consideration, such as selling bricks and placing "time capsules"*

The Head of Secondary agreed to ask staff to pursue whether and how English Heritage might become involved in the building project archive.

**M Parvez**

## 88/15 POLICIES

Governors reviewed the following policies which had been circulated with the agenda:

### 1 **Pupil Hardship Fund**

Did this cover meals and how much was spent?

*School meal subsidies were included in the catering budget. This fund comprised £2-3,000 to assist hardship in individual cases and was usually underspent.*

The Pupil Hardship fund policy was noted and approved, unanimously.

### 2 **Premises Management policy**

The Business Manager advised that there had been no changes to this policy, which was noted and approved, unanimously.

### 3 **Lettings rates**

New lettings rates were approved, unanimously.

### 4 **Financial Regulations**

Financial Regulations had been scrutinized and approved by Resources Committee, but in endorsing the Committee's decision the Business Manager asked Governors to separately note the following appendices:

- i) Whistleblowing arrangements
- ii) LBWF code of conduct for employees
- iii) Bribery Act 2010
- iv) Anti-fraud and corruption statement
- v) Public Ethics Declaration

Had a schedule of sums subject to delegated authority had been approved?

*Yes, at a previous GB meeting,*

Wasn't the information sought in (v) applicable only applicable for senior staff or LA employees?

**Action**

Governors challenged the need for or all or indeed any school staff to answer what they considered unnecessarily detailed and intrusive questions in the Public Ethics declarations.

Governors noted and endorsed items (i) to (iv). The Business Manager was asked to clarify with the LA whether (v) Public Ethics Declarations, was appropriate to school staff.

**Business  
Manager  
/ Clerk**

**5 Annual Health & Safety Report**

Staff had been involved in 15 accidents or incidents - what were these?

*These were serious incidents involving e.g. broken limbs, paramedic attention, hospitalization.*

The report was approved unanimously for signature by the Chair.

**6 Staff Appraisal Policy**

The Business Manager advised that there had been no changes to this policy, which was noted and approved, unanimously.

**7 SEND Policy**

| [Theresa Tereza](#) McGing, Deputy HT and Inclusion Lead, reminded Governors that this policy incorporated the new SEN code and had been published on the web-site after lengthy consultation. Governors welcomed and ratified the policy, unanimously.

**8 Capability Policy**

The Business Manager advised that the LA were still updating this policy and suggested that it should be agreed by the Chair under Chair's action. The Chair proposed to consult a couple of Governors in addition to the HT before taking such action and this was agreed. Governors Kitson and Henderson to be consulted

**Clerk  
Chair  
K Henderson  
C Kitson**

**9 Staff leave of absence policy and Contracts of Employment for new staff**

These items were discussed following the arrival of the H, and recorded at Minute ..... below.

**89/15 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS FOR GOVERNORS**

Governors noted the e-bulletin from LBWF that had been circulated with the agenda. This explained the DfE proposal to introduce mandatory DBS checks for new and existing Governors by April and September 2016 respectively.

How long were DBS checks valid?

3 years.

**90/15 YEAR 6 RESIDENTIAL TRIP**

Details of the proposed trip in the Spring term had been circulated with the agenda.

The cost seemed high, what did the trip offer and was there a plan or quota for those unable to afford it?

*This was a 1 week stay 29-02-16 to 04-03-16 at an outdoor adventure centre in Essex (www.fairplayhouse.org). The cost included well-staffed activities intertwined with lessons and care duties which provided an overall experience that helped pupils grow up.*

All 48 places would be taken up, parents could pay contributions weekly, and places were subsidised for Pupil premium grant pupils. There was also the hardship fund to be called on if necessary. A quota could not be operated but about 5 hardship cases were picked up last year.

It was also noted that deposits were already being taken. Governors approved the Y6 residential trip unanimously.

*[19.25 The HT joined the meeting and Governor P Dixon left the meeting]*

## **91/15 HT REPORT**

The HT's report had been circulated with the agenda accompanied by the Autumn 1 pupil performance data (Buxton School "Data Dashboard") for Governors' information. The HT drew Governors' attention to revised headings in her report reflecting OFSTED terminology. She commented on the following:

### **1 Revised 2015 KS4 outcome**

- The appeal against last year's Y11 Speaking and Listening results had been partially successful, so revised 2015 KS4 results were 47% achieving 5A\*-C inc E&M
- Although above national floor target (40%) this was below LBWF's target (50%) so Buxton had become entitled to 12 days' additional support from the Borough, 6 of which already been used this term e.g. for adviser visits.
- Value added in 2015 pupils' best 8 subjects was 1011, well above the average of 1000 and close to 1014.5, which would have scored as significantly positive in RAISEOn-line data

### **2 Current Y11**

- Partly because of the problems experienced last year, there had been a big focus on English in the first half of the term.
- It had been decided to enter some 60 pupils early for English Language, a calculated risk which could affect performance measures. Working out the new Attainment 8 (A8) and Progress 8 (P8) scores across 8 subjects meant English Language and Literature scores were doubled, but from pupils' first results rather than their best. Recently both have been published. However, it wasn't clear how rigidly this rule would apply in 2016
- Early entry was deemed best for pupils since they had the option to re-sit: and staff were more confident now compared to waiting until the summer.

### **3 KS1 to KS2**

- Pupils still struggled to make sufficient progress between KS1 to KS2 and RAISEOnline figures lately available showed attainment at Y2 / end of KS1 as significantly negative
- Pupils reached Levels 2 and 4, but not 2B or 4B. Expected levels had been lifted to 2A and 4B, so there was a twin challenge- the "bar" was shifting upwards even as the school was striving to improve
- Contributory factors included Buxton pupils being needier than average, but It was a long time since the reliability of KS1 assessments had been moderated by the LA, and the pressure of constantly increasing expectations might result in staff overestimating progress and attainment. Buxton have requested an external moderation for this year.

- This was not due to lack of effort: recent observations recognized how hard everyone was working, but the “magic ingredient” in raising achievement remained elusive
- Further analysis would be discussed at Performance Scrutiny Committee.

*Didn't the pressure of tests worry pupils, especially those who were very young?*

*Pupils were naturally aware of testing and the school did its best to limit pressures felt, e.g. by working in small groups. One Y6 pupil had refused to sit tests last year. Perceptions also depended on parents' attitudes, some being more competitive than others. The school had to work within the system it was in, and the Government had announced further testing of Y7 pupils to replace teacher assessments.*

4 Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment

- Observation of teachers by School Effectiveness Adviser Rachel Singer and middle leaders was about to be completed. [Reports of her visits and findings on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> November had been circulated with the agenda]
- Judgments from moderated teaching observations conducted by Challenge Partners (the QAR team) agreed strongly with the school's own findings. [Reports of their findings on 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November had been circulated with the agenda]
- This was pleasing, as there were more new teachers and NQT's at this time of year, but could shift downwards when “triangulation” was done i.e. classroom observations, feedback from books and marking, and pupil progress.
- Assessment without Levels system now in place and training carried out for pupils and parents. Governor Gascoine and parent governors had attended one parent sessions, but no Governors had attended the session specifically for them.

5 Personal Development, Behaviour, and Welfare

- Correction: compared last year exclusions had decreased (as indicated by in the data dashboard) rather than the increase mistakenly stated in the report.
- Primary attendance had dropped slightly
- The QAR team had confirmed the excellence of school practice in SMSC (social, moral, spiritual and cultural) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This was publicized on the Challenge Partner web-site and it was possible other schools would contact Buxton as a lead school in these areas.

6 Resources

At present school finances were healthy. However, over time it was anticipated that funding could be cut by an 8%: making small savings earlier would help to avoid larger cuts later.

*Did the current level of surplus offer some degree of comfort?*

*The school would have to find about £1m for furniture, fixtures, and IT equipment in the new building so the current surplus was committed. To avoid draconian cuts in future the school needed to keep a discipline of staying well within spending limits.*

7 School Data Dashboard

- The Autumn 1 version provided the 4 new performance measures for KS4, viz: progress across 8 subjects (P8), attainment across the same 8 subjects (A8), the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C in English and Maths, and the proportion

achieving the English Baccalaureate subjects.

- Currently A8 for Y11 was 4.72 (C-) and P8 was 0.65, which was very positive given that the P8 average was zero.
- The proportion of Y11 pupils achieving A\*-C in English and Maths was 61%
- Y6 Reading, Writing, and Maths was now analysed by 6 new Assessment Thresholds without levels [Mastering, Exceeding, Expected, Developing, Emerging, and P scale (SEN)] and 5 progress rates [significantly faster, faster, maintained, slower, and significantly slower]
- In Y6, the floor standard was 65% to reach the Expected threshold
- Although the change in performance measures over 2016 and 2017 would make it impossible to do the same type of predictions, Y11 and Y10 data would continue to be monitored for comparison through the year

**Action**

Governors thanked the English Department staff for preparing pupils for early exam entry at short notice, but also expressed their appreciation of all the staff's hard work and positive response in the face of continuing pressures and changes for Buxton and in education generally.

### **92/15 SEF**

RAISEOnline figures had become available last week and the SEF could be updated to reflect the 47% 5A\*-C inc E&M and value added of 1011, even though this was not considered as "significantly" positive statistically. The HT commented that the dilemma in self-evaluation was that elements like the quality of teaching and leadership might be good, but without an accompanying improvement in current pupil performance the school was unlikely to be judged good overall. Pupil achievement was the key driver, and on current data this was likely to be seen as RI (requiring improvement) by external observers.

But this did not need to be decided yet, and before doing so she proposed to re-circulate the SEF and asked for Governors' input in scrutinizing, querying, and challenging the data [for each year group. The data for current pupils would likely be a deciding factor in the overall judgement.](#)

*When would the results from early exam entry be available ?*  
*January 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

### **93/15 STAFF LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

The LBWF model leave of absence policy dated September 2015 had been circulated with the agenda. A letter signed by members of the NUT and UNISON was tabled. This expressed concerns about the following:

- i) Removal of 15 days half pay in regard to caring for dependents
- ii) No mention of single parents as a group who may have additional needs
- iii) Shared leave responsibility and management of this
- iv) Reduction of days for bereavement from 5 to 3
- v) Removal of a day for moving
- vi) Overly intrusive and unnecessary direction to discuss IVF with the HT
- vii) Greater dependence on the HT's discretion

The HT was in favour of adopting the new model. The Council negotiated such policy with unions to save Governors and staff the time of scrutinizing documents line-by-line. She



also preferred greater discretion than the existing policy allowed.

It was understandable that staff might prefer things to stay as they are, as ~~rarely staff~~ ~~one~~ had been refused a request for special leave. But the school had to bear the cost of covering absence on top of paying for leave, and the GB needed to consider and decide its obligations in the context of limited resources.

**Action**

She pointed out that in practice the new policy was unlikely to have a negative impact on staff. Requests for special leave beyond 5 days were very rare, and people in such circumstances were less concerned about pay than being able to take time off. Taking additional need into account was not prohibited by the policy, whether for single parents, bereavement, or those moving, and requests for special leave should be shared between two parents.

Governor Wilkins emphasized that there were no concerns about whether the HT exercised discretion fairly. Rather they were about erosion of terms and conditions designed to protect employees, and the principle of whether any discretion was appropriate. Most people did not take unfair advantage of special leave privileges and he felt Governors should show their support for staff.

Was this policy reviewed annually?

*No, it was likely to remain in place for some time.*

Governors proceeded to discuss number of detailed points, including:

- Bereavement leave - although reduced from 5 days to 3, clause 4.0.2 stated that further paid/unpaid leave could be granted
- IVF - Women undergoing this needed to take a lot of time off so could not avoid discussing it with the HT. But this would assist positive support, e.g. in understanding sickness absence
- Adhering to LA policy - this was thought vital in other matters e.g. admissions, but did not preclude adopting local variations where appropriate
- Cumulative requests e.g. for more than one bereavement would be subject to discretion
- Change of HT - more decisions at the discretion of the HT might become a problem where a different person was in post. On the other hand under clause 4.3 (d) of Section 1 the GB could receive appeals and was responsible for ensuring the HT acted fairly and consistently
- Appendix - to add an appendix providing clarification or detail about issues of concern at Buxton, including appeal procedures.

Governors were then asked to vote on whether the model policy should be adopted. 3 were in favour but 6 were against, mainly because it was felt more time was required to consider the policy and union reservations. In view of the time taken up by this item, the Chair proposed that he consult Governor Wilkins, other union representatives, and the HT outside the meeting to settle concerns by agreeing changes in the wording of the policy or adding an appendix, for approval at the next GB. This was agreed, Clerk to facilitate Chair's contact with union representatives.

**Chair  
T  
Wilkins  
HT  
Clerk**

## **94/15 CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR NEW STAFF**

Revised contracts of employment for new staff had been circulated with the agenda. These incorporated wording to make it clear that staff might be required to work across both

phases of the school, and amendments to information about pension contributions.

The revised contracts of employment were approved unanimously.

**95/15 SOUTH AREA PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION, SECONDARY CHALLENGE & SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS ADVISER**

**Action**

**1 Reports by School Effectiveness Adviser and Quality Assurance Review (QAR)**

3 reports had been circulated with the agenda. The reports were noted, with 2 corrections:

- The number of pupils on roll should be 1528 in the QAR report
- The second sentence of the 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point under Pupil Outcomes (p4 of the QAR report) concerning SEN students should be deleted. The consultants had accepted that this was based on a misinterpretation of events.

**2 Partnership and Collaboration with other schools**

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

**96/15 GOVERNOR FEEDBACK**

**1,2,3, 4 Link Governor Reports, School related events attended Training planned or undertaken, and any other contributions to school life**

Due to the meeting over-running Governors were asked to make any reports to the next GB or to inform the Clerk for recording in these minutes. Governor Whelan reported that she had attended a Y3 presentation of this term's work on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**97/15 ADMISSIONS CRITERIA CONSULTATION**

The HT advised that there had been delays in the LA issuing documentation, but it was now proposing to consult on 2 further changes to admissions policy. These were:

1. To include in the definition of eligible siblings the child(ren) of parents / carers' partners
2. Where a household had moved, to exclude from eligibility siblings living further away than 0.5 miles from the school.

Proposal 1 to include children of parents / carers' partners in the definition of eligible siblings was agreed, unanimously.

In discussion of proposal 2, the HT explained that it stemmed from the principle of "local schools for local children". However, Governors felt that it could potentially disadvantage families that had little or no choice but to move, e.g. due to capping of housing benefits.

A vote was taken on proposal 2 and it was rejected, no Governors being in favour, 6 against, and 3 abstaining.

**98/15 NUT CAMPAIGN FOR FAIRER FUNDING**

Governors requested and it was agreed to distribute further information about this campaign

**Clerk**

*There being no further business the meeting was closed at 21.25*