



GOVERNING BODY

Thursday 12th May 2016 at 6.30 pm

Minutes approved:

Date:

.....

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
 Ms T McGing, Deputy Head Teacher
 Mr M Beresford, Minuting Secretary

MINUTES

Min	Summary of Action Points or Matters Arising for next meeting	Action
36/16	Minutes 23 rd March 2016 - Corrected copy to be signed by the Chair	Clerk, Chair
37/16.1	Communications Working Party - Next meeting 5.30 8 th June after Resources Committee	J Blair, A Ross B Whelan, T Williams
37/16.2	Governor profiles still required from	M Dixon, P Dixon, R Medwynter, M Thomas
39/16	Membership:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Governor Bynon of decision to replace her, discuss attendance with Governor Thomas 	Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate expiry dates and the NGA skills audit to all Governors 	Clerk
41/16.2	Resources Committee: Governor Whelan to join, start at 5.30 pm.	B Whelan, Resources Committee members
42/16	Buildings Development - seek opportunity for Governor to look round	Business Manager
44/16	Safeguarding:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors invited to attend presentation on FGM 	All Governors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full version and Summary of policy to go on web-site 	HT, T McGing
47/16	Academy:	
	Further information about the Partnership Learning Trust and all other options may be circulated to all Governors before the next GB and will be discussed at the working party	HT
	Working Party to include a Parent Governor and meet 7 th June 6 pm.	All Governors

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

34/16 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

Apologies were received and consented from Governors Blair and M Dixon. Governors Bynon and Thomas were also absent.

35/16 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.

36/16 MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 23RD MARCH 2016

Draft minutes had been circulated with the agenda.

Corrections:

Minute 21/16 - ~~Letoyah~~ Williams should read Latoya Williams

Minute 23/16 - Maths Co-ordinator for Primary Phase: in addition, the post had been advertised, but it had not been possible to attract a suitable candidate.

Minute 24/16 - KS1 performance and assessment: delete second sentence "~~The reason for this was unknown, e.g. was it worse teaching, or a more realistic view?~~". Flatter performance might indicate over-optimism, but it was impossible to say this with any degree of certainty.

Minute 26/16 – Catering Contract: it had been pointed out that both tenderers had agreed to pay staff at living wage levels

Minute 29/16.2 – paragraph 1 delete ~~taking a wider role~~, replace with "owning their own data", paragraph 2 insert "except *some of* the performance outcomes", fourth paragraph delete it and replace with "the new assessment systems" effectively.

Minute 31/16 – delete ~~Forming~~ and insert "Feedback from ..."

Minute 32/16 – Governor Williams had also attended the visit by actor Ian McKellen

Subject to the above corrections the minutes were approved as a correct record.
Corrected version to be signed by the Chair.

**Clerk
Chair**

37/16 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

1 *Minute 20/16.2 - Communications working party*

Meeting to be held 5.30 8th June after Resources Committee

**J Blair, A Ross
B Whelan, T Williams**

2 *Minute 20/16.3 - Governor profiles*

Profiles were still required from the following Governors

**M Dixon, P Dixon,
R Medwynter, M Thomas**

3 *Minute 24/16 - Shadow structure*

As the shadow structure was dependent on national funding formula outcomes, it remained under review.

4 *Minute 27/16.3- Staff Leave of Absence Policy*

It was confirmed that the addendum to the Policy had been made.

38/16 CHAIRS' ACTION

None to report.

39/16 MEMBERSHIP

Action

Further consideration of the membership and composition of the GB had been put on hold at the Governor Conference due to the need to firstly discuss and resolve issues concerning academy status. In the meantime, it was agreed:

1. To proceed with action to inform Governor Bynon that she would be replaced, and to discuss attendance with Governor Thomas
2. To circulate expiry dates and the NGA skills audit to all Governors

Chair

Clerk

40/16 GB, COMMITTEE AND TRUST BOARD UPDATE

1 *Performance Scrutiny Committee 7th April 2016*

Minutes of the Committee were not yet available. The Chair of the Committee, Governor Gascoine, commented that there had been minimal change since the last Committee and highlighted:

- On-going concern over Y10 performance in English Maths and History, although there had been slight improvement
- Strong progress (P8) in Y11
- Uncertainties around assessing and in measuring progress in KS2

The HT reminded Governors that all tests and standards had been changed which meant that no-one knew what the national picture and/or benchmarks would be.

The GB endorsed and ratified Performance Committee's decisions at the meeting held on 7th April.

2 *Resources Committee 10th March and 12th May 2016*

The main matters reviewed at these 2 Resources Committee meetings were:

- Buildings Development - on schedule and proceeding satisfactorily
- Staffing – several Heads of Subjects were leaving later this year, and several vacancies were difficult to fill
- Budget 2016-17

Governors acknowledged that the 2015-16 outturn and 2016-17 budget plan was on today's agenda and otherwise endorsed and ratified the Resources Committee's decisions at the meeting held on 10th March and 12th May.

41/16 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

The HT's report had been emailed to all Governors accompanied by the Spring 2 Data Dashboard. The HT invited Governors' questions.

1 Outcomes for pupils

Y10 5A-C inc Eng & Maths looked disturbingly low, was this due to caution in predictions?*

As explained in the HT's report and in minute 40/16.1 above, the new examination and benchmarks were unknowns, causing uncertainty and caution. Coursework had been discontinued and a new GCSE 1-9 scale introduced; Y10 found the existing standard hard enough but standards were getting more difficult again; in addition they were a less resilient group than Y11 with more learning and emotional issues. It was possible that performance would fall nationally, but there were so many large unknowns.

Had Y10's issues been identified and tackled beforehand e.g. from Y7?

Action

They had: pupils in this year group weren't so very different from others, but they were struggling to tackle what they had to face now, and staff were struggling to predict outcomes.

2 Resources

Governor Whelan volunteered to join Resources Committee. The Committee start time was agreed as 18.30.

**B Whelan, Clerk
Resources
Committee members**

42/16 BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT

The works were on schedule to complete by October half term. It was agreed to seek an opportunity for Governors to have a look round the new building.

**HT
Business Manager**

43/16 2016-17 BUDGET

The following reports had been circulated with the agenda:

1. Final draft budget including 2014-15 and 2015-16 outturn, and breakdown of income and expenditure figures across all budgetary sub-headings
2. Commentary on 2016-17 budget
3. School summary outturn 2015-16 as submitted to LBWF

The Business Manager drew Governors' attention to the following in particular:

- The in-year budget was balanced with a projected surplus of £0.76m, up from £0.731 last year, at least £0.58m of which was for investment in the new building
- The higher level of income reflected pupil numbers rising to 4 forms of entry
- Salary costs took into account increases due to pay awards, national insurance and pension contributions and paying the living wage.
- Salary costs were based on current actual staffing levels, i.e. without replacing the HoSS. If further staff left, posts would have to be reviewed, particularly in the light of changes in the national funding formula expected by September / October.
- Savings were projected in printing and photocopying costs

What was the Year 7 intake likely to be in September ?

It was likely to match Year 11 leavers, i.e. around 130. Not so many late applicants were expected this year, so the number of Year 7 classes might be less than 6. No year group contained more than 160 pupils, so the school needed to attract pupils to fill vacant places.

Would the loss of the Head of Secondary affect pupils' results ?

The impact of this loss was a concern. However, everything was being done to fill the gap, with an Acting Deputy Head of Secondary and 2 acting Assistant Heads already appointed and in place.

Governors proceeded to approve the outturn figures and the 2016-17 budget plan, unanimously.

44/16 POLICIES

Action

1 **Safeguarding Policy**

The LBWF model policy revised May 2016 had been circulated with the agenda.

Teresa McGing (DHT) reminded Governors that the updating of the model policy had taken longer than expected and Buxton staff had drawn up a revised policy considered by Inclusion Committee at its March meeting. However, now the LBWF model policy was available she recommended adopting it. It incorporated a section on FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) about which a 30-45 minute presentation was available, and she invited Governors to consider attending a session.

The HT added that Inclusion Committee had suggested a summary of the full policy was needed for the school web-site. This was agreed, and Governors approved the LBWF model Safeguarding policy.

45/16 SOUTH AREA PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION, SECONDARY CHALLENGE AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS ADVISER

1 Strategic Review Follow-up meeting

Jackie Bowers Broadbent (HoPP) reported that a meeting had been held on 25th April with 2 officers from LBWF Educational Standards (Roslyn Turner and Oguguwa Okolo-Angus). They had reviewed on the main recommendations emerging from the School Effectiveness Adviser's (SEA's) review, e.g. related to mid-leaders' use and ownership of data, and felt that steps taken so far - such as Heads of Years meeting with the HoPP as a team on data - were effective. Tanya Nightingale was replacing Rachel Singer as SEA and additional support from her had been discussed, notably working with middle leaders, Heads of Year, and Learning Managers, continuing the focus on Maths and the Maths curriculum, and helping staff to become "OFSTED ready".

Was it still intended to recruit a Maths Co-ordinator?

Yes, but advertising had met with an unsatisfactory response. In order not to waste money on further unsuccessful advertising, agency staff were to be considered. But even though the lead member of staff was not in place the work of the lead was continuing in the meantime. The new SEA Tanya Nightingale's specialism was in Maths and the link with Davies Lane Primary school was being used to good effect.

2 LA and Regional schools Commissioner meeting

The HT reported that she had attended accompanied by the GB Chair. The white paper position had been updated and it had been confirmed that Good or Outstanding schools in high-performing LAs would not be forced to join / become Academies unless the LA was no longer viable. The idea of a Learning Trust (MAT) had been mooted for Waltham Forest Schools to work together by the LBWF Deputy Director of Education (Lindsay Robert-Egan). However, this would probably take at least a year to put in place.

46/16 GOVERNOR FEEDBACK

No feedback reports were made to this meeting.

47/16 ACADEMY STATUS

A survey of 56 staff views about Academy conversion had been conducted and the results had been emailed to all Governors. Copies of the survey were also tabled.

The GB Chair summarized the outcome of the survey as staff having no great appetite for conversion and strong opposition among members of teaching unions, but a narrow majority was in favour of converting if terms and conditions were maintained.

There followed a free-ranging discussion about the survey and different aspects of academy trusts and conversion. This is summarized under the following headings:

Volume of staff responses to survey

56 members of staff had completed questionnaires, representing only about 25%, although all staff had been given the opportunity to respond. At a union meeting held on the matter it was thought that between two thirds and three quarters had been against Academy conversion, but the number of staff attending the meeting and/or voting was not stated and/or not recorded.

Academies and Inclusion

Some Governors felt that academies were expected to achieve results and this stimulated competition, not inclusion. As an example, a Waltham Forest school judged outstanding in all areas, except for its results, had been found RI overall and compelled to join a Federation. Buxton was vulnerable: as well as having substantial numbers of pupils on Education and Health Care (EHCP) plans, there were many more not on such plans but who needed similar levels of support. One Governor stated he was implacably opposed to Academies and felt they were the instruments of Government “cronyism”.

National terms and conditions of employment could not be guaranteed

At other schools who had converted, promises about terms and conditions had not been kept, and there was an increasing risk that national terms and conditions would disappear.

Insufficient information and options about partnership

Several Governors felt that there were many gaps in the information available to them at present and/or were not sure the options presented in the survey were sufficient. One argued that Buxton should just focus on getting an OFSTED Good judgment and not be driven by fear. But if conversion could not be avoided, the LA’s suggestion of a Waltham Forest Learning Trust or MAT (see minute 45/16.2 above) should be considered more favourably than other options.

Other Governors queried what a WF Learning Trust would offer and when it would be operative, e.g. would it help Buxton to tackle its “gaps”? The school had benefitted from the Strategic Review, and there was nothing to prevent continuing co-operation with LBWF, with or without a Learning Trust.

One Governor pointed out that the Barking & Dagenham based Learning Partnership MAT was new and still experimental. There was little substantive evidence that it would benefit Buxton, and she wondered who would be accountable for performance: the school, or the MAT? The HT advised that such responsibilities would be shared by both the school and the MAT.

Risks inherent in an earlier or later decision

35.4% of staff were in favour of taking action early i.e. by September, to minimize the risk of an OFSTED inspection and designation as a “coasting school”. But 39.6% of staff were undecided about this. Several Governors felt that September was too soon, and that further information and consultation was needed. The Chair pointed out that consultation was not confined to the minimum of 6 weeks, and could proceed into next term. However, everyone needed to be aware that over such a timescale the decision could be taken out of Governors’ hands and the school could be subject to a Government directive over which there would be no consultation.

The HT felt that the survey had at least made staff more aware of this risk.

Action

Why was Buxton at risk?

Buxton was proud of its long history as an “open-door”, welcoming and inclusive school, but there were increasing indications that schools like Buxton would fare less well than others. It was at risk in a number of ways. At present pupils did not progress at a rate the school wanted and was trying to achieve, so results were at risk. Buxton could be classified as a “coasting school” or, rather than having any choice, be forced to join an academy chain following a Requiring Improvement (RI) judgment from OFSTED. Worse, achievement falling below predictions and new floor standards could make the school subject to special measures. One potential adverse effect was the threat of these risks leading to staff leaving and joining other schools.

Partnership Learning Trusts offered a potential way forward that might mitigate the risk of crucial decisions being taken out of Governors’ control.

Further Consultation and research

A number of Governors expressed the view that further consultation and research was needed, including with parents and other stakeholders and visiting other schools such as Sydney Russel, the outstanding school in the Barking and Dagenham Partnership Learning Trust. The HT emphasized that the survey had been conducted and brought to Governors as part of BLT’s duty to consult and explore options that reflected the school ethos. It had not been done to make a decision about any specific Learning Partnership options.

However, a number of Governors felt that consulting without further information might lead to staff and others suspecting a decision to convert had been made, and steps were needed to assure people this was not the case. One re-emphasized that more information was needed about Learning Partnerships, generally and for specific partnerships.

The Chair asked Governors to vote on whether consultation with parents and the wider community should proceed now, and this motion was defeated (2 for, 7 against, 2 abstentions). However this did not mean that Governors felt consultation should not proceed at all. In further discussion it was clear that:

- Further information about the Partnership Learning Trust (PLT) and other options should be circulated to all Governors before the next GB after discussion at the working party
- Such information might still leave unanswered questions because potential partners might only be willing to respond to very detailed or in-depth queries if and when Buxton expressed firm interest in joining their partnership

HT

Governors were asked to take a further vote on continuing discussions with PLT, and this was approved by a majority of 8 out of 11 Governors.

It was also agreed that the working party should meet again on 7th June at 6 pm, to include a Parent Governor.

**All
Governors**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.45