



GOVERNING BODY

Thursday 29TH September 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	* Mr T Williams (Chair)	* Mrs K Wheeler (HT)
* Ms R Medwynter (6.45)	* Mr S Gascoine		* Mr J Blair	* Ms K Henderson
Ms M Thomas	* Mrs E Humm			
	* Ms A Ross			
	Ms B Whelan			
	* Mr T Wilkins			

In attendance:

Ms A Money, Business Manager and Clerk to the GB
Mr M Beresford, Minuting Secretary

MINUTES

Min	Summary of Action Points or Matters Arising for next meeting	Action
63/16	Regular Attendance at meetings: Chair to write to Governors	Chair
66/16	Minutes of 30 th June fair copy to be signed by Chair	Clerk, Chair
67/16.1	Governor Profiles still outstanding and required from: M Dixon, P Dixon, R Medwynter, M Thomas	
67/16.3	Skills Audit form: printed copy for completion at next GB.	Clerk
67/16.6	Davies Lane: Governors invited to join board of collaboration	All Governors
73/16	SDP objectives: Governors asked to become familiar with them and think about how their role fitted in	All Governors
76/16	Collaboration Working Party: Clerk to circulate proposed date(s)	Clerk
77/16.1	Link Governor roles: on GB agenda for review at the next meeting	Clerk
77/16.3	Training: Governors to inform Business Manager of courses booked	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.

63/16 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and consented from Governors M Dixon, Kitson and Whelan, Governors P Dixon and Thomas were also absent. It was agreed later in the meeting that the Chair would write to Governors emphasising the importance of regular attendance at meetings.

Action

Chair

It was announced that this was Governor Henderson's last meeting and Governors thanked her for her contribution to the governance of the school.

- 64/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY** Action
 There were no declarations of conflicts of interest on items on the agenda or receipt of gifts or hospitality.
- 65/16 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**
 Nomination forms had been circulated to all Governors but the Clerk had received no nominees before the meeting. It was agreed to continue with terms of one year for each office and Governors re-elected Tom Williams to the Chair and Sean Gascoine as Vice Chair, both unanimously.
- 66/16 MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 30th JUNE 2016**
 The minutes including corrections as circulated with the agenda were approved as a correct record. Fair copy to be signed by the Chair. **Clerk
Chair**
- 67/16 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING**
- 1 Minute 51/16.2 - Governor profiles**
 Profiles were still outstanding and required from: **M Dixon, P Dixon, R Medwynter, M Thomas**
 - 2 Minute 53/16.1 - Membership**
 East London Business Alliance had been asked for a nominee, and although one person from KPMG had expressed some interest they had not yet followed this up.
 - 3 Minute 53/16.2 - Skills Audit**
 A skills audit form had previously been circulated to all Governors electronically but there had been minimal response so far. To ensure this exercise was completed it was confirmed that printed copy should be brought to the next meeting. Financial expertise or experience appeared to remain the principal gap in skills. **Clerk**

[18.45 Governor Medwynter joined the meeting]
 - 4 Minute 54/16.1 - Benchmarking**
 A benchmarking review had been carried out and reported to Resources Committee.
 - 5 Minute 54/16.4 - Dates of Communications Working Party meetings**
 Dates of future meetings had been circulated.
 - 6 Minute 60/16.1 - Davies Lane collaboration**
 No-one had yet put themselves forward to join the Board of Davies Lane collaboration. All Governors were still invited to do so. **All
Governors**
 - 7 Minute 62/16.2 - School Events**
 Dates and times of events had been circulated and the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors had attended the Primary Presentation day.
 - 8 Minute 62/16.3 - Staff exit interviews**
 The Chair reported that departing staff had completed anonymized exit forms and he had discussed these with the HT and the Chair of Inclusion & Diversity Committee.
- 67/16 CHAIRS' ACTION**
 The Chair reported that he had agreed an urgent purchase related to the new building.

68/16 MEMBERSHIP

In addition to recruitment and skills audit initiatives minuted at 66/16.2 and 3 above, the Chair reminded everyone that suitable nominees were invited from Governors by the Trust Board to fill the vacant Governorship.

69/16 GB, COMMITTEE AND TRUST BOARD UPDATE

1 Resources Committee 7th September 2016

The Business Manager verbally reported that the Committee had considered the following main items:

- **Staffing** - update
- **Financial reports** to July - income and expenditure being on track to produce the surplus forecast at budget time
- **National Funding formula** - implementation of which had been deferred until next year by the Government
- **Buildings** - update on development
- **Governance** - review of Committee terms of reference and work programme

Was the take-up of pupil vacancies lower than expected?

Year 7 intake matched Y11 leavers, but this was less than hoped for. Buxton had never been able to completely fill 4 forms and there was about half a class worth of vacancies in the current Reception year group, although the number of KS2 starters at Years 5 and 6 appeared to be increasing. It was unclear whether take-up was connected with last years' results or affected by expansion elsewhere, e.g. opening of free schools. In Waltham Forest South area Norlington Boys was the only school that was full.

What was impact of the National Funding formula on the budget?

The impact was now longer term but still a reduction of around 10%.

Governors noted the update the decisions of Resources Committee were ratified.

2 Performance Committee 16th July and 22nd September

Minutes of the 16th July Committee had been circulated with the agenda. The Chair of the Committee, Governor Gascoine, highlighted the main performance issues discussed, including:

- **Attendance and Punctuality:** Little change, Reception the main concern
- **KS2** - Maths close to NA, Writing above NA, but Reading lower
- **Progress data** - new presentation formats found useful

The Committee held on 22nd September had mainly considered KS4 and KS2 results. The focus on improving Writing in KS2 in recent years had met with success and it was pleasing that it was now around 10 points above NA. However, pupils were finding Reading and comprehension harder, especially when their vocabulary did not extend to less commonly used words such as "ancestor" which had occurred in the Reading test. The larger proportion of boys (55 cf 35 girls in Year 6) did not help Buxton's results, since boys' reading was weaker. Weaker reading among boys was a problem affecting many other schools.

How was it proposed to tackle reading and engaging parents in their children's reading?

Staff had already undertaken some training on improving reading and pupils were doing better than before, despite their low starting points. But the "bar" had risen again and new ways of accelerating progress were being sought, e.g. by trying to separate reading and writing, focusing on barriers in each year group, or adjusting the curriculum. The school tried to encourage parents to get involved through evening information and reading sessions.

Governors noted the minutes of Performance Scrutiny Committee and ratified its decisions.

70/16 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

The HT's report had been circulated with the agenda. She highlighted the following:

- **KS4 results** - this year all schools' attainment at 53% 5A*-C inc English and Maths had turned out well below the floor target of 65%, so the focus nationally would be on progress rather than attainment.
- **Progress** - Buxton's progress scores were just below NA (or 0) for Maths, >1 for Writing, but significantly negative for Reading, re-emphasizing concern and that Reading was the danger point for Buxton. However, on the positive side Buxton pupils' progress in Reading was above floor target.
- **Predictions** - Secondary progress (+0.72 on 2015 data) was close to staff predictions ranging between +0.68 and +0.75.
- **Progress score** - within the last week the progress score had been revised down to +0.59 for 2016. This change was determined by how schools filled up their Ebacc subject groups
- **Coasting schools** - The shortfall nationally against attainment floor target meant this measure could not be used to judge coasting. It would now presumably be a progress measure, but clarification of what level was not expected before December.
- **Departmental results** - in the main there was strength and improvement across the curriculum, but there were oddities, e.g. a reduction in marks across the board in Art for reasons as yet unknown, and a large change in staff affecting Graphics which was now being replaced by Design and Technology.
- **Groups** - nearly all groups had shown positive progress

Governors wished to formally record their thanks to all Buxton staff for their hard work in delivering a positive result over the last year.

Exclusions

In addition to her written report the HT informed Governors that short term exclusions had risen due to pupils involved in fighting and earlier interventions being less successful than hoped.

What was the significance of earlier measures not working?

No single method of tackling poor behaviour appeared to be universally successful. It was possible to take the view that Buxton was too tolerant and at some other schools the number of warnings given was subject to strict limits. The interest of other pupils had to be protected and those involved in fighting were more likely end up excluded. Any Governors' views on the matter would be welcome.

It was noted that, should one become necessary, the membership of a pupil disciplinary panel would need to be drawn from non-staff Governors with no connection to the pupil(s) concerned.

The HT also reported that feedback from the Head Boy and Head Girl indicated that extra support and input such as the mock exams at the end of last year had had a positive impact on this group. The mock exams had been conducted as part of a large group nationally, and although results for Buxton's cohort were below national averages they were not as bad as staff had feared.

71/16 POLICIES

1 Pay Policy

The HT explained that the policy circulated with the agenda incorporated a 1% pay rise across the board and retained amendments of the LA model as agreed by Governors last year. It was due to be reviewed with union representatives on Tuesday 4th October and Governors were therefore being asked to agree the policy in principle subject to these further discussions, with appropriate amendments to be authorized by Chair's Action.

Governors agreed this approach and approved the policy for amendment by Chair's action where appropriate, unanimously.

2 Complaints Policy

The HT explained that the policy circulated with the agenda was largely the LA model but with information about where complainants should appeal moved to the end of the policy rather than the beginning. Governor Wilkins commented that the policy needed to ensure staff were protected from unfair or aggressive complaints, but after discussion it was felt that the policy and procedure provided for this, e.g. review by staff not directly involved in the substance of the complaint.

The policy was approved, unanimously.

3 Appraisal Policy

The HT explained that the current policy would be followed in the round of appraisals due for October, but she invited Governors' views on the policy at the November GB. She felt the current policy and procedures needed review, for several reasons:

- The process should be less about one-off observation of lessons and more about continuous monitoring of books, data, results and class visits on learning walks throughout the year, particularly when conducted and "owned" by middle leaders
- Staff were excessively focused on appraisal and observations at this particular time of year, causing unnecessary worry and stress
- The appraisal process was time-consuming but added no value for her, as she did not have any concerns about any members of staff this year

Other Governors who were also members of staff confirmed that lesson observations for the purpose of appraisal caused worry and stress and could potentially give a false picture of any Teacher's performance.

But how would individual performance be assessed and inform decisions about pay?

Monitoring of individual performance throughout the year effectively meant it was continuously assessed, and any concerns would be addressed by agreeing and putting in place a support plan during the year. Regarding pay, this was not linked to performance for the majority of staff at Buxton and only affected staff who were NQTs or undergoing induction. However, individual's objectives for the year ahead need to be defined at appraisal time.

Governors commented that staff should feel the appraisal policy and process was designed to invest in them and foster their development, so a more streamlined procedure might well be appropriate. It was agreed to offer further input when the policy was on the agenda for review at the November GB.

Action

72/16 BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT

The HT advised that the contractors continued to adhere to the planned timescale for moving into the new building at half term. There was still a lot to plan and do, and she thanked Alison Money, the Business Manager, for keeping the project on track.

Had there been any parental objection to the extra closure days?

Some parents weren't pleased about being obliged to take time off work, but others seemed to welcome the extra holiday. The HT had not received any complaints but was aware that a number of parents maintained they had not been informed, despite information having been distributed several times in newsletters and on the school web-site.

The HT added that she personally had knocked on residents' doors in the vicinity of the school to remind them of the impending change in pupil entry, exit and collection arrangements. Information about this would also be sent out.

73/16 2016-17 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)

The SDP had been circulated with the agenda. The HT highlighted the four objectives:

1. Provide a seamless Buxton curriculum to include comprehensive schemes of learning and appropriate pathways for all pupils.
2. Improve the quality of teaching so that all children reach their potential
3. Use performance data to raise standards
4. Ensure education is delivered effectively during a period of considerable change

Governors were asked to familiarize themselves with these objectives and think about how their role fitted in with them. The Chair of Governors also drew attention to the Governance objective (under 4) of strategic direction, support, and challenge, and how it was intended this should happen.

**All
Governors**

74/16 DARTINGTON RESEARCH

The HT informed Governors of research proposed and funded by the LA which involved pupils in Years 8 to 11 completing a computer-based survey. The research was investigating the social context of family needs and provision at a time of decreasing funding and targeting. Information from the research was likely to be useful for schools as it would identify gaps in services, but in doing so the survey would probe sensitive issues and pose questions to potentially vulnerable families. At a recent meeting of schools, several had either objected to the survey or suggested different methods of implementing it.

What sort of questions would the survey pose?

They would be aimed at identifying gaps in services which might need LA funding. This could include asking about issues like sexual exploitation or gangs. Pupils' responses would be anonymous.

In discussion Governors expressed concern about pupils' consent and privacy. Recalling Buxton's recent negative experience over the BRIT survey, they were not comfortable with people of Secondary school age being accessed under the auspices the school, irrespective of potential benefits to the school.

75/16 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Revised Terms of Reference, Roles and Ways of Working recommended by Resources and Performance Scrutiny Committees had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the revised quorum for Resources Committee was 50% of Governors appointed but at least 2 of which must be non-staff Governors. Performance Scrutiny Committee had recommended including monitoring of Curriculum policies in its terms of reference and membership should include the Link Governor responsible for Data but not those for SEN and Safeguarding, who would be more relevant to Inclusion and Diversity Committee.

Governors accepted the recommendations and approved the changes to the Terms of Reference.

76/16 SOUTH AREA PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION, SECONDARY CHALLENGE AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS ADVISER

1 Secondary Challenge, Primary Challenge and Goodmayes Primary School

There was little to report at this time but the HT informed Governors that all member schools of the Secondary Challenge continued to participate and, following a similar model, the Primary Challenge was just starting. Co-operation with Goodmayes Primary School on grading of Primary work was continuing.

2 Collaboration Working Party feedback

Governors Humm, Williams, and Wilkins had visited two Teaching Schools within the Partnership Learning Teaching School Alliance (PLTSA), Sydney Russell Secondary School and Warren Junior School in the LBs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering. In partnership with local partner schools and London universities, the PLTSA stated aim was to support, train, and develop teaching professionals at all stages of their careers.

Governors mentioned the following main observations:

- There were 4 or 5 schools in the Partnership
- Sydney Russell Secondary school was OFSTED outstanding and the lead school, very large, and well-resourced
- All Secondary classes were funded for a Teacher and TA plus one additional Teacher for small groups
- All classes had computers for every pupil
- The Secondary School had a friendly atmosphere, and the HT appeared confident and able
- Warren Junior School was out of special measures and had become the lead school for Primary phase. The HT seemed well supported by the Trust without being subject to “direction”
- 2 other schools had joined the Trust only in September: One had been in special measures but had improved although as yet results were not known

Did the Secondary school have collaborative arrangements with other schools and were these formalised?

As far as was known collaboration was only between PLTSA schools. The main formal area of collaboration seemed to be in assessments, although not compulsory, comparable to collaboration in the South Area Partnership. Heads of subjects also offered support within the PLTSA.

It was acknowledged that exam results and on-going changes in Government policy meant the school was now less likely to be obliged to join a multi-academy Trust (MAT), Governors still needed to keep a close eye on the situation.

With regard to a possible LBWF MAT, the HT tabled a paper produced by Waltham Forest Council in July which appraised various options for a WF Learning Partnership. The LA's preferred model was forming an employee-led mutual cooperative. This would be a voluntary and informal arrangement which did not preclude Buxton joining a MAT as well. Feedback from other LBWF schools was that there was continued interest in collective working but mostly in the form of a non-Academy partnership.

Action

*What was the time frame for the LA to complete consultation on the Learning Partnership?
The LA wanted views by Christmas with a view to decision about Easter. Funding would have to come from participating schools. Buxton would definitely want to work with other LBWF schools, but it did not have to be a party to the Learning Partnership or other arrangements to do so. Among other schools' HTs, views were mixed.*

It was agreed that a meeting of the Collaboration Working Party should be convened during the second half of the Autumn term and before the next GB on 15th December to give further consideration to Buxton's options, including whether visits to other schools/ MATs should be arranged. Clerk requested to circulate proposed date(s)

Clerk

*Would Buxton be harmed if the LA had to withdraw from providing its education services?
Traded services and support would have to be sought from other providers, but this might be advantageous in certain respects.*

77/16 GOVERNOR FEEDBACK

1 Link Governor reports, School related events attended by Governors and Governors' contributions to school life

There were no reports. It was agreed that Link Governor roles should be put on the agenda for review at the next GB meeting. Governors Gascoine and Williams had attended prize award ceremonies at the end of last term.

Clerk

2 Training planned or undertaken

Governor Medwynter had attended LB Newham training on making informed choices. Governors Ross and Whelan had booked to attend LB Newham training on assessment and data. The Clerk invited all Governors to book their own training sessions (the new brochure would be available soon) but asked to be informed about bookings as she was not told automatically by providers such as LB Newham.

**All
Governors**

78/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 Parent's Complaint to OFSTED concerning meal payments and restrictions

The Chair reported that he had been called on to investigate a parent's complaint about the school restricting a pupil's meals after failure to pay charges. The school had implemented procedures which parents had already been informed about, but these would be re-circulated and published on the school web-site. Other than recommending some improvements to the procedures no further action was required, but undertook to circulate his findings to Governors. The HT pointed out that last year the school had had to write off c£7,000 of unpaid meals. She felt a written policy about payment for school meals was now required.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.45