



Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Castle School
held on Monday 25th April 2016 at 6.30 pm in the School

Present: Mary Langran (Chair) (MLa),
Nick Brenton (Vice Chair) (NB),
Carol McCarthy (Headteacher Teacher) (CM),

John Bastable (JB),
Helen Dolling (HD),
Jane Elliott-Poxon (JEP),
Janice Frankham (JF),
Lesley Leech (LL),
Jane Merrett (JM),
Elivira Spronk (ES).

In Attendance: Sally Hempson (School Business Manager)
Ann Trenchard (Camclerk) (AT)

The meeting was quorate.

1	Welcome & Apologies for absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair welcomed the governors to the meeting and apologised for the confusion surrounding the time on the agenda.• Apologies were accepted from Mark Littlewood and Kate Dove.• Leslie Leech arrived at 6.50.
2	Declarations of Interest regarding items on the Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None.
3	Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2016. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clerk apologised for the minor grammatical errors on the minutes, they were otherwise agreed as a true and accurate record, though it was noted that JM was present. <p>The Clerk to correct the grammatical errors and include JM's attendance.</p>

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Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 7th March 2016

3 - ESafety Policy

- A new draft of the eSafety policy has been received from JB and CR, with a couple of sections where additional input has been requested. The Chair asked whether any other governor would be willing to assist with 6.3 – how parents are made aware of the school's eSafety Policy.
- The Headteacher felt that taking a simple approach would be better. The Headteacher also agreed that a parental workshop in the Autumn term would be beneficial, but noted that although school could offer advice it might be unable to address all issues within the home/family environment.
- A governor related an anecdote from the governor's eSafety training where a 3 year old was having therapy as a result of experiencing separation anxiety with an iPad. A governor asked whether we had the staff specialism in school. The Headteacher confirmed that we did, and that if it was felt that we needed further support that could be obtained from the LA.

Headteacher to take forward the idea of having a regular event to communicate with parents about eSafety

- JB also reported that they had adapted the appearance so that it was more in line with existing policies, and noted that there was overlap with many existing policies.

MLa/Clerk to add policy to agenda for June

6.6 - Staff Retention Working Group

- It was noted that the Headteacher, JEP and MLa would set a date by the end of May.

6.9 - Assessment without levels – still awaiting Rochford Review Report

- The Rochford Report has been delayed due to the membership of the panel changing and is now anticipated by July.
- The GB decided to wait and see what happens.

9 - Brief feedback re funding meeting with the LA.

- The meeting was attended by Martin Wade, Rob Cottle and Judith Davies. Although there are limited funds, they were very positive, and very apologetic about the lack of pupil take up.
- A governor asked about why take up was so low. The Headteacher remains in close contact with the LA about school admissions. Our Case Work Officer is 'tracking' with the Headteacher the admission process. Not all pupils offered places will take the place. This is due to a variety of reasons including:
 - Parental preference;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Panel decide against special school - Child does not move into County • A governor raised concerns about money being wasted as a result of this process as it stands. • The LA agreed to the school being funded an additional £50,000 to hire one primary teacher and two L2 TAs for September. <p>10 - SFVS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking and governor finance skills will be discussed at the next FGB. <p>11 - CAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document was signed and completed by the Chair.
5	<p>Chair's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair summarised briefly a list of things that she had done since the last meeting. • The Chair indicated that a copy of a member of the teaching staff's preliminary PhD proposal will be distributed to the GB in due course. The Headteacher will have more information to add as the project develops to accommodate the demands of the course, such as ethical and parental permission requirements. • It was agreed that the GB should do a Governors Tea for Staff on Monday 4th July 2016 4pm-5pm. The Chair asked for volunteers. It was noted that we would be celebrating 10 years since Castle School opened, the 50th birthday of our deputy Headteacher, and wishing well those staff who were leaving/retiring. <p style="text-align: right;">ES, JM, HD, JEP and AT to bake for the event. NB & JB to make sandwiches. MLa to source the strawberries and cream etc.</p>
6	<p>Headteacher's Report to Governors</p> <p>Headteacher drew governor's attention once more to the January report.</p> <p>1.5 – The Headteacher asked governors to revisit the information in the January Headteacher's report concerning admissions. The Headteacher felt confident that they were able to adjust the budget accordingly.</p> <p>2 – Jade Smith has had her baby and all is well. The PE Teacher has married. The Governing Body sent their congratulations for both.</p> <p>2.2 – recruitment reported and under way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher has created an appendix on the proposed changes of Keeping Children Safe in Education, in addition to her own version of the white paper. The GB expressed their gratitude for the extremely useful summaries.

- The Headteacher reported that she had first been commissioned to look into academisation approximately 6 years ago. The Headteacher felt the GB needed to be cognisant of the Government's drive towards academisation, but that Castle could continue to take its time. It was recognised that many articles were coming out, and that some were more helpful than others.
- A governor asked about how academisation would affect members of staff's Terms of Employment. The Headteacher indicated that they would be TUPEd over, and it would then be for the academy Trust to determine any subsequent changes to their terms and conditions of employment through appropriate negotiation.
- A governor asked about employees' general rights. The Headteacher confirmed that the LA would no longer be the staff's employer, meaning that staff could not opt to remain as LA employees. The Chair reminded the GB that it was still only at the white paper stage. It was felt that staff would not have any input into the terms and conditions.
- A governor challenged the perception that Castle would be forced to academise as the wording of the white paper singles out mainstream schools. It was argued that the LA and Government was in a bind, and that it was likely that the LA would be the only body dealing with special and high needs as it would not be a popular move to privatise SEN education. Further clarification expected on 18th May in Queen's speech.
- The Headteacher expressed a desire not to become the "pet" project of an academy trust, where the school is used for training their staff on particular client groups. It was expressed that there was lots of scaremongering going on at the moment. It was generally concluded that we live in interesting times.
- The results of the LA Keeping in Touch visit have been shared with the Headteacher and Chair, and it was reported that they supported the school's self evaluation. The Headteacher will report formally on it in the future as they have not been officially released yet.
- It was agreed that the Assessment Story will be revisited in the next agenda.

6.3 – The Changes made to the end of term whereby pupils start the September timetable in the summer.

- A governor asked about what prompted the change to the timetabling. The Headteacher indicated that it had been based on internal feedback from staff, which had prompted the Headteacher to look at a number of models of how other schools managed their transitions.
- A governor asked whether it would be a trial. The Headteacher indicated that it would be a trial, but voiced a belief that it would continue as it was received positively by staff and beneficial to the school's pupils. It was acknowledged that it would take time to undo the change, and that a large amount of time had gone into it. The 2 weeks of "September" scheduling in the summer will enable the school to be more robust and move more swiftly in the September.
- The GB recognised that pupils would have scope to discuss the impending changes over the summer holiday, and they would already have met the

	<p>teachers and their peers making the transition less daunting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor asked about preparations for the transition. The Headteacher confirmed that the timetable, staffing structure and class groups were all ready to go. A governor asked about pupil readiness. The Headteacher indicated that this would not take place until the class lists had been finalised. • A governor queried which year groups would be affected by the move. The Headteacher confirmed that the whole school would move to a September timetable and structure in July. It was acknowledged that annual reports and curriculum planning for the last two weeks of term would have to be more focused. The number of activities the school had previously tried to cram in exhausted both pupils and staff. • A governor asked about how the transition would be marked. The Headteacher reported that the traditional transition day will still happen on the Friday, before children go and meet their new teacher on the Monday. • A governor asked for clarification about the national citizenship service. The Headteacher explained a little more about the service, and how it started two years ago. It is an interesting thing for students to be involved in. A governor asked about the classes being named, rather than by year groups, commenting that it was difficult to keep track of the year groups with the use of names for classes. The Headteacher indicated that she would happily indicate children's year groups.
7	<p>Discussion and Ratification of the Proposed 2016-17 Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been many challenges this year, and additional changes were made to the budget after the F&P meeting when an additional £12,000 was found to have been overlooked in the draft budget for 2016/17. • A governor asked about the duplications of titles in sections of the budget, and the formatting of the spreadsheet was explained. A governor sought further clarification regarding out-turn and it was confirmed that these values would be carried over, forming part of the budget for the next year. • A governor asked about the non-teaching staffing supply costs, enquiring what the school do to avoid the reoccurrence of a £40,000 overspend. SH confirmed that the breakdown has been changed to facilitate keeping better track of individual expenses. SH indicated that the school had overspent as a result of employing supply staff while recruiting. SH indicated that new cost codes would be implemented in the next budget to keep better track of the flow of funds. • A governor expressed concerns that the school was supporting pupils' individual needs when the funding to do so was not in place. A governor asked whether there was a point at which the school would cease to put in place measures to provide that necessary support. The Headteacher indicated that under such circumstances, a student would be placed on a reduced timetable. The Headteacher reported that it was challenging to obtain reports from specialists at times due to time constraints. In short, it takes time to identify additional sources of funding/support and further time to then put that support in place. A governor voiced her desire to voice the schools' concerns over this more formally. The Headteacher explained that an emergency meeting would be held, a panel convened, and

alternative provision explored if we could no longer meet the needs of our more complex pupils.

- A governor challenged the £15,000 overspend on the catering budget. SH reported that the overspend was not a true reflection as the income for pupil meals is reported elsewhere. The total catering figures only differed by £600. It was assumed that some parents had not paid their pupil meal tab yet, but would pay by the end of the year. It was noted that due to staff absence this had not been chased yet. It was noted also that the catering budget was £6,000 less, as the school did not take into account any income from pupil meals that the school would obtain later.
- It was agreed that the report was challenging to read on screen and in a word document. The Headteacher assured governors that they would have a user friendly copy next time, and extended an invitation to governors to attend finance meetings so they could see these things in advance.

a) Revenue

- The governors were unanimous in ratifying it.

b) Capital

- There were 2 main spends
 - the school's WiFi
 - the school's outdoor equipment.
- The school will do a survey to identify the most pressing priorities based on H&S considerations.
- The governors were unanimous in ratifying it.

c) Staff Insurance costs and changes in cover now

- The Chair explained the changes to TA staff insurance costs in order to balance the budget. Cover would not be insured until it reached the 6th day, saving the school approximately £11,000, but meaning that the school would require other TAs within the school to cover. It was noted that under the terms of the new policy the School would still be able to get a supply TA in for every 4 that are off sick on a single day.
- A governor asked how often these sorts of situations come up, where 4 TAs will be off at the same time. It was anecdotally reported that this happens several times a week – today due to a tummy bug. A governor then asked about long-term sickness. The Headteacher did not have the figures this evening, and is prepared to present this in the future. It was related that the teaching staff do not go off sick often. The Headteacher felt that their processes were robust.
- The Headteacher will emphasise the need for staff to look after themselves physically and mentally in future staff meetings. The Headteacher will discuss the budget with the staff further on 3rd May. As a result of the changes to insurance, that element has needed to be discussed sooner. The governors received confirmation that every member of staff understood the implications of taking time off sick.
- The Headteacher noted that every area has been impacted by the budget.

8	<p>Budget Pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that budget cuts were Government led as a result of statutory obligation, and recognised that the school was in a difficult situation given that all of its staff are needed due to Castle’s pupils’ needs. The Chair voiced that it was a credit to the school that it had been able to maintain its staffing levels, even though curriculum cuts felt drastic. • The Headteacher indicated that areas of school development, such as replacing mini-buses and ageing outdoor play areas, have been marginalised on the agenda, as the school does not have the funds for “wow” innovative projects. • It was voiced that innovation comes from people, however it was also acknowledged that there is limited scope for promotion at Castle as a result of the school lacking a middle structure. Posts such as T&L leaders were not replaced when their holders opted to move on. • A governor expressed her desire to see money in the budget for T&L leaders, and that school development points such as mini-buses and outdoor play areas should come from fundraising. The Headteacher agreed, but emphasised that times had changed and that funding was tight in organisations that had previously been very supportive of the school. • A discussion then took place about fundraising, in which the low level of uptake on previous attempts such as to create an active PTA or to instigate coffee mornings. The Headteacher indicated that she and other Castle staff lacked the capacity to take the lead on projects such as running a jumble sale, and it was also noted that the attendance figures for Flo Longhorn’s visit on 21st May – a world renowned expert on families with complex needs who had 120+ families attending an event in Dublin – was lower than anticipated. • The school charity (CSCA) had previously looked for a fundraiser, who would have to earn their own salary, and money for the school. Someone came in, but nothing came of it. The school would love to have one, or someone offering to write letters offering advertising space on the website in exchange for becoming supporters of the school, as it was noted other schools had previously done with some success. • The Headteacher noted that the Christmas bazaar and sponsored fun run each raised approximately £400-500. • After acknowledging the lack of staff capacity to lead on fundraising activities, a governor proposed that the school’s profile be raised through articles in the Cambridge Evening News in order to create that wider contact group. HD agreed to lead on this. • The possibility of getting the Enterprise group and student council more involved with fundraising was raised. <p style="text-align: center;">HD to write profile raising articles for the Cambridge Evening News.</p>
9	<p>Website Development</p> <p>Discussion and agreement of recommendations following the presentations by website designers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school had had a day of presentations from possible website designers. The recommendation of the group was for e4education, whose

	<p>presentation was delivered by Daniel Bennett.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor asked about how the recommendation was reached, what made them stand out? The panel reported back that e4education had addressed the brief, had experience in the field, came in within budget, and gave the impression that they could support both the staff and the school. It was noted that they already catered for 1500 schools. The Headteacher reported that the panel had voted, and come to a conclusion based on the data. • The Chair signposted the GB to the Stephen Hawking school (London) as an example of the quality of work the company does, and it was noted that e4education had also done Spring Common's website. • It was reported back that the costs were fixed, with no surprise expenses. Once the school has commissioned e4education, they will present the school with a more formal proposal. The Headteacher emphasised that the finished product would only be as good as the content. • A governor asked about the timescale. The Headteacher asked for a September start, but felt that we would realistically looking at the end of September. The Headteacher indicated that the pages of the website would go live. A governor reported that the timescale of the project had been from 14-16 weeks. • The governors were unanimous in agreeing to commission e4education to create the website. • The Headteacher proposed that the governors do some research looking into what should/could be included in the governor's section of the website. This item will be revisited on the June agenda. The GB agreed to submit ideas to MLa and NB by 4/6/2016, giving the Chair and Vice Chair time to consider them prior to the next FGB. <p>Governors to submit ideas for the governor's section of the website to MLa and NB by 4/6/2016.</p>
10	<p>Review and discussion of Castle School Instrument of Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GB currently has 4 vacancies. The Chair noted that since Governors Support Services charge according to the number of governors a school is supposed to have according to their Instrument of Government, there is an opportunity to save money here. • The Chair asked whether or not the GB wished to continue to keep those vacant posts. It was proposed that the 2 co-opted gvs could be removed from the Instrument, as if the school needed someone with specific skills they could be brought in as Associates, which are not charged for. • A governor emphasised that staff governors were also entitled to go to the training provided by Governors Services, and it was noted that Clerks are entitled to go as part of the Camclerk SLA. It was concluded that the governor training package offered value for money, rather than an alternative of taking a pay-as-you-go approach. <p>The Chair asked how viable is it to keep the positions open.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor expressed the need for a more diverse and broader ranging

	<p>representation of parent governors on the GB. A governor expressed that they have tried multiple approaches to encourage parent governors to join and remain, and to foster diversity, with little success. It was noted that the induction pack has been developed, and that the FGB is ready for more people. Governors acknowledged the challenges of balancing commitments, and that potential candidates were being put off after hearing that the roles are getting bigger and more high profile. It was noted that the responsibility of being a governor can be off-putting, or they can come to the role with a very narrow set of intentions. It was noted that without supportive partners, it is too difficult to be a parent governor. Governors expressed sympathy with the realities of life, and with how intimidating the role can appear. A governor expressed that they had had very capable candidates coming forward, but that the time commitments were an issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor raised the possibility of getting co-opted governors from other sources, such as the new companies coming into Cambridge. • Other associated costs with being governors were also considered, such as membership of The Key. It was agreed that The Key was useful and well worth its cost. • It was agreed that the school should keep its subscription to Governor Support Services and The Key. The school has been involved with The Key since its inception. Its value was recognised, especially in the looming academisation. • The GB decided to postpone the decision regarding changing the Instrument of Government until the next FGB. It was felt that the school needed to advertise again, to both parents and the new companies, U3A, and professional bodies including Governor Support and Linked-in. <p style="text-align: right;">JB will go to the U3A.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HD will write a bit for the newsletter for the Headteacher to use in the newsletter.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MLa to contact the pre-existing candidate asap to update on situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness was expressed that ES's time is coming to an end in mid-November.
11	<p>Governor Visits</p> <p>Topics for the next round of visits linked to the SDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD was able to complete the missing part of her visit today, and will write it up in time for the next FGB. • It was noted that ML still has a catch up visit to undertake. • It was agreed that the next round of governor visits will expand on work previously done, answering the question: how does what we see link to the school's development?

12	<p>Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 18th April 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were circulated in a draft format. • Comments were invited from the governors, who accepted that they were a Work in Progress.
13	<p>Any other Business:</p> <p>Enhanced DBS checks:</p> <p><i>“The governing body must apply for enhanced DBS certificates for all governors appointed before 1 April 2016 who do not currently have them. They must apply by 1 September 2016.</i></p> <p><i>For governors appointed after 1 April 2016 who do not currently have an enhanced DBS certificate, the governing body must apply for one within 21 days after their appointment or election.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation changes mean that all Governors now need to have completed DBS checks. SH reported that they are done online, and that Governors will need to bring documents and information into the school. <p style="text-align: center;">SH will contact governors about the documents and the information they will need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher drew the GB’s attention to “Responding to Critical Incidents” from the council. It is not a statutory requirement to have a Critical Incident Plan. The Headteacher noted the guide’s quality and succinctness.
14	<p>Items for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eSafety Policy • Equality and Diversity Policy • KIT Visit and Report 2016 • Business Continuity Plan • SFVS: benchmarking and governor finance skills • Governor’s section of the website • Instrument of Government • Assessment Story
15	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 27th June 2016 – 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 9:10pm.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....