



Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Castle School
held on Monday 27th June 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),
Kate Dove (KD)
Janice Frankham (JF),
Lesley Leech (LL),
Mark Littlewood (MLi),
Jane Merrett (JM),
Elvira Spronk (ES).

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

The meeting was quorate. It began at 18.31.

1	Welcome & Apologies for absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair welcomed the governors to the meeting.• Mark Littlewood arrived at 18:35• Apologies were not received from Jane Elliot-Poxon.
2	Declarations of Interest regarding items on the Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LL declared an interest as an employee of Avocet and left the room when that item 13 on the agenda was reached.
3	Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2016. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.9 – Matters arising. NB clarified his question, and it was agreed that the sentence re. the LA would be removed.• 8 – budget pressures – HD requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that she had not agreed to lead on Fundraising.• The minutes with the changes listed above were approved.

	<p>The Clerk to update the FGB minutes and email to MLAs. MLAs to print, sign and add minutes to the book.</p>
4	<p>Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 25th April 2016</p> <p>4 - eSafety Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair had added section indicating that the policy was a working draft in its current format. • The Headteacher indicated that she felt it should be a working document as it is something that needs to be regularly reviewed as advice and guidance to schools changes. • A governor challenged the lack of appendices. The Headteacher clarified that they were not finished yet. Another governor indicated that they had seen other eSafety policies where there being no appendices was a normal thing, instead links were provided within the document. • The governors agreed that they were happy to formally approve this as a working draft, noting that the document would need to be updated continuously. <p>3 - Recruitment and Retention working party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working group (JEP, CM, SH and MLAs) have met to discuss recruitment. There will be a survey of applicants who requested an information pack, but proceeded no further with their application. It was hoped that the outcome of this survey would enable the information pack to be adapted to be more robust. • It was noted that sometimes qualified teachers preferred to take on TA positions when they were juggling family arrangements. • EU applicants were discussed, so too were teachers' aspirations. • Long term absences were discussed, and noted that these were reviewed once a term. School will be looking at the different forms of absences, whether they link to the abs policy. The working group will ask whether the existing absence policy is deliverable given the financial constraints. <p>5 - Staff celebration tea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the governors would be catering for 125 guests this year and more governor participation than last year was requested. • A governor checked what time support was needed from and JM, HD both agreed to help. • The Headteacher emphasised that it would be a very informal tea. <p style="text-align: center;">JM and HD to assist ES and MLAs to prepare for this year's tea. Other governors agreed to bring sandwiches and cakes to the event.</p> <p>13 - DBS Checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH confirmed that the last couple of governors had provided their documents this evening.

5	<p>Chair's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair sent out a number of termly briefing presentations with this evening's meeting materials on account of there being so much relevant to special schools. The Chair felt that there may be things here to take forward in future meetings. • A governor requested that papers be sent out earlier so governors would have time to read them. The Chair apologised explaining that the documents were still being worked on up until the point of dissemination on this occasion. • Thanks were given to Governors who had provided their photographs for display in the vestibule. • The Chair had been participating in interviews in addition to attending the SFA and EPM briefings. • Impington VC's meeting regarding the Cavendish School had been attended by 2 governors. They reported that the school was hoping to open in September 2018 with Y5-7 and a sixth form, and if approved by the DfE, they would cater for high functioning Autism pupils. It was felt that there may be an impact on staffing, but not necessarily on pupil intake. Another governor had received a leaflet from IVC, which indicated that there would be 4 new SEN schools opening in Cambridgeshire, which the Headteacher confirmed, citing Littleport due to open in 2017 as a for instance. • It was noted that a number of initiatives were appearing where MATs were attempting to fill gaps needed by children in Cambs. • The Headteacher expressed concerns about the area's pre-school and post-19 provision. It was recognised that there were limited options post-19, and that although colleges were trying, there was little specialist support for the 19-25 group. It was also recognised that the school is constrained in what it can offer at the moment, due to a lack of land. • The Chair reported that the pre-school and post-19 provision were areas that the school could potentially expand into in the future. The Chair requested that governors considered this over the summer. • Expansion possibilities, such as an off-site 19-25 unit were briefly discussed. Governors noted that there was a high rate of skills regression in our pupils in this age group due to a perceived training deficit in the adult services professionals who currently cover this age group. <p style="text-align: center;">Chair to scan and email article about Impington VC's new school. Governors to consider what 19-25 provision could look like at Castle. MLa to add "Castle in the next 10 years" to the next agenda.</p>
6	<p>Headteacher's Report to Governors</p> <p><u>Core Offer from multi-disciplinary team.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now 1 part-time nurse covering all Cambridgeshire schools as Janet has resigned. This poses challenges to the school and the Headteacher is using the L4 TAs to supplement. • The Headteacher indicated that the Core Offer has not yet been received. The Head cited concerns regarding safety as there was talk of protocols

	<p>going from the consultant straight to the Headteacher without a nurse to act as a professional/experienced/knowledgeable mediator between the two. It was felt that a professional gatekeeper was needed to liaise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Core Offer will indicate what the health services have been commissioned to do. When it comes in September, it will be circulated (among staff?) but cannot go further as it is highly sensitive. • Service agreements, outreach and afterschool clubs agreements were discussed and agreed. • It was reported that the LA was currently retendering transport, and that these provisions were going to be reviewed more often now as an area of budget concern. It was felt that the biggest impact would be on new pupils. • Training day – postural management and feeding programmes/regimes will be included. A governor related that Meadowgate use 30 minutes of lunch as curriculum time to focus on eating as this area was considered an issue. LA have indicated that training on items such as epilepsy, asthma would be renewed. • LA looking at Coventry and Warwickshire model of competency, where training is provided online. The Headteacher expressed her concerns about such an uninteractive model. • The impact of the NUT strike on the 5th July was discussed. A knock on effect was anticipated since the school has a number of NUT staff in addition to staff who as parents with school-aged children would be affected. The Headteacher could not ask other teachers/TAs to cover striking members of staff's classes and a number of potential outcomes for the school were acknowledged including partial closure, full closure or being open to only certain groups/pupils. • The Headteacher reported that Helen Feelan was looking at policies regarding behavioural needs and de-escalation. • It was felt that Cambridgeshire would not now be subject to an Ofsted inspection as a LA as neighbouring Hertfordshire had just been. It was noted that one area Ofsted will be looking at will be whether the school has been impacted by the LA's work on Safeguarding. • A governor indicated that the medical needs policies have been updated by the LA. The Headteacher indicated that this had not been discussed, or conveyed to the area's Headteachers by the LA.
7	<p>Website Development (– moved to end.)</p> <p>a) Presentation of framework and progress to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher introduced the GB to base camp, showing the wireframe – an outline of what the website will look like/contain when completed. • The decision had been made not to use 'communicate inprint', as it was not appropriate to the intended audience. • The Headteacher reported that the next phase in the wire frame was for subject leaders to upload the content relevant to their fields; explaining the multi-layered approach in the process. • The challenge is to get as much as possible onto the site before the

	<p>summer holidays. The Headteacher will be contactable by the company for the first two weeks to iron out glitches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher announced that policies were to go up in September. Photographer coming in on the 14th September. Looking for site to go live at end of September. • A governor asked about whether the new website will have the facility to archive newsletters, which the current website does not have. It was agreed that an archiving facility would be useful and one that the school would use. • A governor suggested that parents be involved in the new website, with the option to contribute ideas to the project. A focus group was suggested. • A governor raised a question about how live updates could be, citing the manner another local primary school handled a recent bomb threat. An update was on the website within an hour of children being evacuated. • Statutory policies were not yet ready to go live. The possibility of working on these over the summer was raised. It was felt that there would be a list, prioritised according to what is statutory and what is not. <p>b) Governor section – public and secure areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governors section will be in the About Us section. The secure area would come off that.
8	<p>KIT Visit Report 2016 – presentation and discussion of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair reported that the 2 sessions were very enjoyable. During the first session with Caroline Underwood (CU) and colleague, one went on a learning walk while the other scrutinised docs. The second session had been with CU alone. • It was felt that the school now needed to fulfil the expectations outlined in the KIT visit. • The Headteacher emphasised that the visit should not be seen in isolation. It is used in triangulation with School Improvement Partner and the Self-Evaluation Form (internal monitoring). • The Headteacher also reported that the SIP visit had also taken place, and that it had concentrated on subject leadership. • The Headteacher had also commissioned 2 unannounced visits to look at pupil progress, which she would report back to the governors on in September. • The Headteacher indicated that there was a need to correlate the KIT with the governor visits to check that the school was indeed meeting targets. • It was confirmed that all members of staff had been provided with the opportunity to see the reports. The Head clarified that the staff had been a part of the visits. • The GB passed their congratulations onto the staff, and asserted their commitment to matching the quality/standard of their work in the GB's own.

9	<p>Governor Visits</p> <p>a) Governor Visit Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD’s report circulated after her visit to Primary. This visit concluded the current round of governor visits, meaning that the school has fulfilled its aim for governors to come in and look at specific areas listed on the Governor Development Plan. • The Chair asked how the GB wanted to take governor visits forward. It was noted that all reports had been previously circulated. It was felt that they needed to be revisited with the Governor Development Plan, to see it as a strategic piece of work, as well as a positive achievement. • The Headteacher has enjoyed the visits. It was felt that governor comments had been helpful, interesting and thought-provoking. It was noted that the senior management has not yet had a chance to look at these in depth, nor the GB. • It was agreed that before the next round of visits took place, the governors needed to look at the reports holistically. <p>MLa to circulate all reports and Development Plan prior to the next FGB.</p> <p>b) Evaluation of last round of visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postponed. <p>c) Topics for the next round of visits linked to the SDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postponed.
10	<p>Section 8 Inspections – presentation and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PPT was not circulated prior to FGB. <p style="text-align: right;">Head to circulate PPT post-FGB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good/Outstanding schools now have a 1 day inspection called “short inspections”. With 1 day’s notice (by 1pm the previous day). They’re based on the assumption that the school has not changed its rating. • It will ask: “Is safeguarding effective?” and “Is the school still good?” • The governors will be spoken to, and will be tested on their knowledge of the school (have governors identified weaknesses; do they/the school have a clear vision; does the GB have the ability to tackle areas [of weakness/concern?] quickly and effectively?) • The School and governors will have time to present their evidence. • Under S8 every adult in the school is considered a leader. • Outcomes: If the school’s rating may be about to improve/decline, the inspection will become a S5 inspection. There’s no guarantee that the outcome of a S5 will be “outstanding”. • There is the need to balance the need to communicate what the school/governors do with the need to convey the impact of doing that.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The areas of development identified in the school's last S5 inspection were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interesting lessons - information for parents - pupil behaviour - parent view of progress • A governor asked whether this would be a training issue for governors. The Headteacher indicated that she has been running sessions for governors, and that she would be happy to circulate paperwork relating to this, enabling governors to create their own checklists. • The Headteacher encouraged governors to think beyond the classroom setting, such as the risk of getting a broken leg outside on a school trip. Similarly, pupils may not always indicate that they feel safe when asked perhaps due to bullying, but that there are policies and procedures (such as mediation) in place to ensure that they are safe in school regardless. • The safeguarding inspection sits within that, and the Headteacher indicated that she can revisit this later if the GB wished. • The Chair related the safeguarding element to the 10 year plan, and the role of the minutes to evidence the GB's/School's strategic working. • Single Central Record: Contains details about every single person associated with the school. It is checked by SH and the Headteacher to ensure that info is up to date and contains no gaps. Head proposed that SCR goes to F&P at each point of review as a standard item. • A governor asked for further clarification about what was stored on the SCR. The Headteacher gave a brief overview. The Chair highlighted that the personnel policies also outlines the procedures.
11	<p>GB and Committee meeting times and dates for 2016-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These had been circulated prior to the meeting for governors' consideration. • The Chair at the Headteacher's request raised the possibility of having some meetings earlier in the afternoon, perhaps even during the school day. It was noted that such an arrangement may potentially be better to accommodate parent and retired governors, as well as a positive point for staff wellbeing. The GB discussed the feasibility and merits of holding earlier meetings. • The possibility of allocating times for agenda items was raised by a governor. So too was the possibility of having a trial run of earlier meetings. • It was noted that meeting lengths when held during the day were less flexible than they were in evenings. Similarly the availability of parking was raised, but it was felt that the issue was not insurmountable. • The GB agreed to have one F&P (19th June) and two FGB (7th Nov and 13th Mar) from 10-12. • It was possible that classroom visits could also take place on those days. Governors would also be welcome to stay for lunch on these days. • The circulated times were otherwise agreed.

12	<p>GB Membership – vacancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB's U3A contacts has led to interest from an experienced SEN drama teacher. The Chair asked the governors to clarify whether it was looking for more SEN teacher experience, or more business experience. It was noted that additional business experience would be useful if the school found itself forced to academise. • The GB felt that they needed someone who moved in a different circle to education. It was noted that businesses were used to more autonomy and that the last experience the GB had had with someone from business had not been a great fit for either party. • The possibility of having other people in as Associate Members was raised if the GB lacked the free spaces but later had the need for specific expertise. • The possibility of approaching Governor Services about additional recruitment was raised. • It was agreed that the GB would approach volunteers for a statement outlining what they could contribute, ready for presentation at October's FGB meeting. <p style="text-align: center;">MLa to approach Governor Services and reply to U3A volunteer.</p>
13	<p>Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 20th June 2016</p> <p>a) Avocet Cleaning Contract – formal approval by FGB due to exceeding delegated expenditure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LL left the room during the discussion. • The annual cost of the contract is £49500 meaning it could not be approved by the F&P committee. • It was felt that Avocet's services to the school were beyond adequate. It was noted that areas of the school that had caused concern in the previous contract were greatly improved. It was also felt that the Avocet team had become part of the school community, responding to the hazards of the school environment in a positive way, and that they were responsive to unusual circumstances. It was felt that they had a vested interest in our young people, and that they were keen to get involved. • The governors commented positively on Avocet's staff's work, recognising and valuing their contribution, and noting that they had agreed to clean the new build without additional cost. • Extending the contract was unanimously agreed by the GB. The Headteacher expressed a desire for the GB to write to Avocet to formally thank them for their efforts, in addition to the standard letter confirming their retention. <p style="text-align: center;">MLa to write a letter of appreciation to Avocet's Director. SH to notify of contract extension.</p> <p>b) Benchmarking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments. GB moved on after acknowledging the high supply costs.

	<p>c) Letting Rates for September 2016 – review and approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor asked who set the charges and it was clarified that the school did. • The changes to the charges were unanimously agreed. <p style="text-align: right;">SH to notify relevant parties.</p>
14	<p>Any other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD came to the well organised sports day. HD reported that she had spoken to the 6 parents sitting on the bench with her and sought their views. HD reported that all had expressed that they were happy with the progress their children were making since joining, most had reported noticeable changes in their children’s skills, attitudes and behaviours since transferring here for Secondary from mainstream education. • The Clerk thanked the members of the GB who had already sent her their training records. <p style="text-align: right;">Clerk to resend the email re. governor training participation.</p>
15	<p>Items for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle – the next 10 years! • School and Governing Body Development Plan • Assessment Story following Rochford Report • Safeguarding and Child Protection Annual Report to Governors 2015-16 • Equality and Diversity Policy • Governing Body Effectiveness Audit • Governing Body Training • Business Continuity Plan • Governor Recruitment – applicant statement
16	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tba

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....