



Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Castle School
held on Monday 12th June 2017 at 6.30 pm in the School

Present: Mary Langran (Chair - MLa)
Nick Brenton (Vice Chair - NB)
Carol McCarthy (Head Teacher - CM)
John Bastable (JB)
Helen Dolling (HD)
Janice Frankham (JF)
Mark Littlewood (ML)

Also in Attendance: Sally Hempson (School Business Manager - SH)

The meeting was quorate throughout.

1	<p>Apologies for absence / clerking arrangements</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Jude Coad, Jane Elliot-Poxon and Katy Roberts.</p> <p>MLa reported that we have still not recruited a clerk – see #9 below. For this meeting neither MLa nor SH had been able to find cover for minuting. NB was therefore minuting this meeting.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda</p> <p>None.</p>
	MINUTES
3	<p>Minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd May 2017</p> <p>Circulated in advance; approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.</p>
4	<p>Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd May 2017</p>
4.1	<p>(Item 8) CM reported that she and SH would be attending a meeting the following day on uses of the Apprenticeship Levy.</p>
4.2	<p>Because this was an 'overflow' meeting carrying forward decisions on the</p>

	budget from the last meeting, it was agreed that any other matters arising would be covered at the next FGB on 3 rd July.
	FINANCE
5	School Budget 2017-18
a)	<p>Papers circulated before the meeting included the 2017/18 budget summary, a spreadsheet summarising where savings are proposed, and briefing papers for staff and MLa / NB, who had discussed the proposed budget with CM and SH the previous week. CM said that from a starting point of a £132k deficit savings could be made which would reduce the deficit to £89k. This would be achieved by some minor changes to staffing (though no redundancies), and changes to cover and training arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No first day cover for teachers - this will now start after day 5. • TA cover will continue to be after day 5. • Covering internally for any absences linked with school activities. • Any support needed for training will also be covered internally (unless cover costs are included) <p>In discussion, the following points were covered:</p>
b)	<p><i>What cover arrangements will be put in place for teacher absence?</i> CM explained that non-teaching staff, including herself and Anne Haberfield would undertake some teaching; that teachers' non-contact time (PPA time) which has been generous in the past, may need to be reduced; and that L4 TAs could also provide short-term cover. HD was concerned that classes could go without their teacher for an extended period: CM explained that any absences were likely to be short term, such as half a day; and class teachers would continue to prepare lessons so there should be no loss of content or curriculum as a result of these savings.</p>
c)	<p><i>IT:</i> HD expressed surprise that the proposed £40k for replacement IT formed part of this year's budget, and that figures had not been shared with governors sooner. She was also concerned about the total cost, which she regarded as high for what was being purchased. SH explained that the figures only came into school on 1st June, and final equipment needs were still under discussion: it might be possible to reduce the number of new monitors in the final order. As part of the overall bill, the school server had to be replaced at a cost of about £5k, because of increasing memory capacity requirements and because the existing server will be out of warranty next year. The equipment was to be lease purchased over three years, with an estimated useful lifetime of five years.</p> <p>CM added that we are still using equipment from our predecessor schools, and replacement was overdue: it made sense to migrate to a new system across the school rather than 'patch and mend' as Castle has so far been doing. The LA has been advising on equipment needs and had provided the current tender. There was no specific deadline for replacing our existing IT: the</p>

<p>d)</p> <p>(agenda item #8)</p>	<p>installation would be done depending on equipment availability and convenience for the school.</p> <p>Governors questioned why only the LA had been asked to tender: should we not be looking for competitor quotes for this work? CM explained that the LA goes through its own competitive tendering process to secure the best deal for its schools, including for example gas and electricity costs. Other schools use the LA, and some who have taken a different approach have had problems, particularly with service contracts and support following equipment purchase.</p> <p>JB asked what became of the old equipment, and if it could be sold to offset the cost of the new. CM said a specialist company would take away the obsolete equipment and refurbish for further use elsewhere.</p> <p>Two governors continued to be uneasy about only having the LA quote as the basis for a decision: it was therefore agreed that SH would send details of the existing quote and our equipment needs to ML, who would look at alternative providers and whether we could achieve the same refurbishment and post-purchase support more efficiently by other means.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: SH / ML</p>
	<p>Deficit. CM reported she has written to the LA to say we are setting a deficit budget and will be requesting a license for £89k to be repaid over three years. The LA has asked for a detailed budget and sent the paperwork required for this to be agreed, which SH is now working through. CM pointed out that other schools were taking more drastic measures than Castle to balance their books, including staffing cuts, continental days, etc. She felt a lot of time had been spent on working on a budget which preserves the Castle vision over the years, at the expense of a focus on important areas such as teaching and learning. As things stand, the situation will be worse in 2018/19, when Castle will have to look for cuts of £130k with no option to borrow further: the next job, as CM had flagged in her note to MLa / NB, will be to look again at Castle's staffing structure in preparation for next year's budget.</p>
	<p>e) Governors approved the budget, and MLa thanked CM, SH and other staff involved in the detailed work preparing it.</p>
	<p>f) Governor support package: MLa said that our purchase of governor support services from the LA had to be submitted by 23rd June. We are charged 'per governor' at a rate of £66 each. There is scope to reduce the total cost if we amend the Instrument of Government to reduce governor numbers: at present we have four parent and nine co-opted governors, but have been carrying vacancies for some time. MLa has checked that, if we can agree any changes formally at the last FGB this term on 3rd July, changes could be introduced from September. HD asked if governors could 'job-share': MLa said the regulations do not allow for this.</p> <p>It was agreed to reduce the number of parent governors from four to two, and buy the governor support package on that basis.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: MLa for next FGB</p>

	OTHER BUSINESS
6	<p>Revised school visits policy</p> <p>MLa invited comments on the policy, which had been circulated in advance. The aim of the policy was to keep the structure already in place, following up specific areas of work which had already been the subject of visits. NB confirmed that the draft did not take account of the new governors' competency framework.</p> <p>CM commented that it would be helpful if there were more governor visits. Governors need to get to know the school better, so they can speak knowledgably and contribute to forward strategic planning. It was also important to have a grasp of the SDP and SEF. ML suggested visits should be a standing item on FGB agendas. The meeting agreed this and agreed to adopt the policy.</p> <p>CM reminded the meeting that there was a regular LA KIT (keeping in touch) visit the following week. She also reminded governors that post-16 and early years were areas to be inspected by Ofsted. It was agreed that MLa would email governors to see who can visit before the end of term.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: MLa</p>
7	<p>Governors: Health & Safety</p> <p>MLa had circulated some information from The Key on governors' role in relation to H&S, and asked how this should best be handled. It was agreed to make it the subject of a report once a term as a standing item.</p> <p>In reply to a question, CM reported that there are robust arrangements in place for keeping pupils safe and our perimeter secure. Hazards have been assessed, and staff know who is most likely to try and breach our current fences and other security arrangements.</p>
8	<p>Governing Body development</p> <p>MLa reminded the meeting of Maria Landy's contribution to the March meeting, re-circulated as an annex to the minutes with papers for today. In particular, Maria recommended that governors take time to identify the school's current priorities, i.e. 4 to 5 key issues contained within the SEF and SDP, adding that they should be able to explain clearly if asked why they believe the school is now 'Outstanding'. CM added that we needed to be clear about what we're proud about; share a vision of where the school is going; and what we as governors are doing to ensure we achieve what we aspire to.</p> <p>JF suggested this should be an agenda item for the next FGB: governors agreed this.</p> <p>It was suggested by both CM and MLa that governors undertake a skills audit. HD suggested that someone with fundraising skills would be useful to recruit to the GB, though MLa did not feel this was a central role for governors. Previously, NB and ML had compiled a skills audit: they agreed to repeat this,</p>

	<p>taking account of the competency framework, with a view to having results ready for the start of the Autumn Term.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: NB / ML</p>
9	<p>Clerking update</p> <p>In response to this position being readvertised we have received one response. MLa has spoken with the applicant and now proposed to move forward to interview in w/c 3rd July. The panel would consist of MLa, NB and a third governor. Katy Roberts had offered to take part subject to availability: JB offered to act as reserve. It was agreed the interview would be on 4th July.</p>
10	<p>Planning for 2017-18</p> <p>The meeting agreed to keep to the present structure – ie FGB plus F&P as our committee structure.</p> <p>The meeting confirmed that Mondays were most appropriate for meetings to take place.</p> <p>Regarding <u>daytime meetings</u>, it was noted that some governors found them difficult to attend due to other commitments. However, their value was recognised in allowing governors further opportunities to see the school in action, and also raised governors' visibility with staff and pupils. CM suggested there should be one or two GB meetings in the daytime during each year.</p> <p>MLa thanked governors for their input: she will now put together a meeting calendar for 2017-18, and at the next FGB we can discuss which meetings would be suitable for daytime.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: MLa</p>
11	<p>Staff Tea</p> <p>Governors were reminded of the staff tea on July 17th . Please let MLa know if you can help on the day or provide food for the event.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: ALL</p>
12	<p>Items for the next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal approval of new Instrument & Articles of Government • Brainstorm vision for the school and governors' role • Meetings calendar for 2017-18
13	<p>Date of next meetings:</p> <p>F&P: Monday 19th June 1000</p> <p>FGB: Monday 3rd July 2017 at 6.30pm</p>

The meeting closed at 2110.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....