



NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

Part A Minutes of Local Governing Board meeting

Held at the school on

Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

Naureen Khalid (NK)	Appointed Governor, Chair	Present
Jonathan Capon (JC)	Appointed Governor	Present
Ade Fasui (AF)	Appointed Governor	Present
Sol Ade-Otchere (SO)	Appointed Governor	Present
Steve Penny (SP)	Appointed Governor	Present
Eileen Xiaoyu Zhang (EXZ)	Parent Governor	Present
Jenny Wilkins (JW)	Appointed Governor	Present

In attendance:

Alan Blount (AB)	-	Headteacher
Claire Viner	-	School Business Manager
Mary Rider (MR)	-	Croydon Education Partnership Clerk

Agenda Item	Minutes	Action No.
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting at 6.36 p.m., welcoming attendees and thanking them for joining online.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>The meeting was confirmed to be quorate.</p>	
2	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <p>There were no declaration of interests beyond those already declared.</p>	
3	<p>Governing Board Business</p> <p>There are no vacancies on the Governing Board.</p> <p>AF attended Governor training.</p>	



	Governors were reminded that UL provides training.	
4	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2023, previously circulated, were considered by Governors.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any comments.</p> <p>DECISION : Governors AGREED that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Minutes were approved by the Chair.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5	<p>Finance and Audit</p> <p>CV informed Governors that the Audit in July went well. All Audit open actions have been completed or annotated with a completion date – see document.</p> <p>There were a couple of issues at Trust level rather than local level which the Auditor was challenged on.</p> <p>The budget came in on budget at year end. Governors will be aware from AB's report that the budget had to be resubmitted several times for this year because of the increased pay awards. The pay award for this year has not yet come in as the unions are in negotiation with the Trust. This is quite disheartening as many staff now enjoy the benefits of having a UL contract after transferring. It is hoped that staff receive their pay award before Christmas. The pay review and it has not had a big impact on the budget for this year.</p> <p>There were technical difficulties with budgeting software with some data being omitted.</p> <p>Planned capital works have been approved including the external pathways being widened and resurfaced to give more outside area for students to move around, mainly by the science area, and the car park re-marked.</p> <p>There is agreement in principle of approximately £500k; the majority will come out of capital expenditure but also some SCA.</p> <p>Works have been planned for flooring, painting, decorating and finishing the fire door project. There is a third of the school left to do.</p>	



<p>We are looking to get two science labs refurbished and are awaiting two quotes. This work will have to take place in easter or summer next year.</p> <p>Q : Is the house at the entrance of the school part of the school estate? A : No, it was sold some years ago and is now private property.</p> <p>Q : Is there a list of backlog maintenance and an order of priority? A : The £500k is to improve the look and feel of the school and is separate money, not for maintenance. The majority of the large maintenance works have been carried out – drains, boilers, pipework is in the pipeline as part of the boiler project and the fire doors are partly complete. It is all well and good meeting the benchmark on budget and building up reserves but we need to look at the aesthetics of the estate.</p> <p>Q : Out of the £500k, where do we have to go out to tender? A : At £250k. For anything over £2k we have to get three quotes. Quotes are submitted to our FBP or to the Finance Committee at Trust level and are approved through business partners and regional directors: there is a comprehensive process.</p> <p>There is a framework we can use. CV likes to use local tradespeople from a sustainability perspective.</p> <p>We want to use the same people who installed the flooring in the Sixth Form to get the same flooring throughout the school.</p> <p>Q : Why is some only agreed in principle? A : There were tight deadlines to get projects in and are still awaiting a detailed breakdown. We are starting the toilet refurbishment, firstly with the staff toilets at about £40k for one washroom which is four or five cubicles – this is a lot of money for not much space. We will try and get economies of scale. Now the drainage is more sufficient it should cope with the toilet upgrade which is well overdue.</p> <p>Q : Regarding the value for money section in the Audit and that the school should fully comply any contracts, what does this relate to? A : This relates to a grounds maintenance company. They were procured before CV started and have carried on doing it. The Auditor said we should go back out to tender.</p> <p>Q : Another Audit action was expenses? A : We have very few. The Auditor expressed a concern about a member of staff buying something for science and claiming it on expenses advising</p>	
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	<p>that staff should not be claiming expenses for something bought for the school. However, this was an exception as the purchase was for maggots for science which cannot be bought in advance.</p> <p>We raise a lot of purchase orders. Barclays in Orpington is closing on 29 November 2023 which means we will struggle to get cash. We currently withdraw £250 per term which isn't always used.</p> <p>Q: Can you assure us that when you procure you look for value for money? A : Always. The Auditor's issue was that the grounds contract had not been retendered.</p> <p>Q : There is an open Audit action that at the time of the Audit only 85% are aware of cyber security. What does this relate to? A : This refers to security awareness and GDPR training for all staff. However, this doesn't include cleaners who are on the staff list but don't use computers.</p> <p>CV is data protection lead.</p> <p>Governors were informed of Modeller.</p> <p>Q : Does it benefit you or not? A : Yes, we have made it more personal to Newstead. AB has a live working document which changes throughout the course of the year and helps to keep track of where resources are. We can look where there may be excess capacity. It allows us to plan the curriculum and look at what we need. There is a format that goes into the Trust.</p> <p>Further questions were invited but there were none.</p>	
6	<p>Premises and Risk</p> <p>Governors had been informed of planning and ongoing building works during Item 5 which includes pathways, science labs and toilets.</p> <p>Q : Cross checking against Audit actions in different formats, who is updating? A : AB with CV.</p> <p>Q : Are risks becoming static? A : We have got the school to a point where we have mitigated a lot of the risk. We are a full school and getting results and are mitigating risk by</p>	



	<p>refurbishing the estate. We are in a MAT who are horizon scanning and we cannot see a huge amount of political change.</p> <p>Q : With staff turnover a national issue, are we fully staffed? A : Yes.</p> <p>The IT infrastructure is more stable with the most recent incident some months ago caused by an external factor.</p> <p>Q : What do you consider to be your three greatest risks? A : Sixth Form - We are enrolling good numbers of students and achieving good outcomes but we need to ensure we maintain those outcomes. With finance, if we lose numbers in the Sixth Form we can mitigate some of that. With teaching and learning we get good results but we need to make sure there is constant emphasis on high quality teaching and learning.</p> <p>Q : What about staff retention? How do you mitigate losing key staff? A : We will always have some staff turnover and we are in a National recruitment and retention crisis. There are benefits of being in a Trust and Trust-wide working and being a selective school with well-behaved students. There is enhanced pay through being part of UL, there is employee assistance in place and rewards. We are replacing two senior members of staff at Christmas and interviewing in December. The Safeguarding Director position will be a non-teaching role. They should be in post by the end of January at the latest. All of the pastoral team are trained DSLs; there are three named DSLs and the Trust Safeguarding Lead is on hand if needed.</p> <p>We are not in window for an Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Q : How is attendance being affected by Autumn illnesses? A : We have not been adversely affected by staff absence. We have had the highest student attendance levels across the Trust. The Trust gives a weekly comparison. We are having a conversation around study leave. There are marginal gains with attendance at 96%, nationally 93%.</p> <p>We are having conversations with a company who provide an attendance package to our MIS. Parents can report absence straight into Arbor so the work is already done for the Attendance Officer allowing them to focus on those we have not heard from. When the register is closed it will automatically contact parents if girls have not come into school. If there is a case of a specific illness, an NHS alert goes out advising this is what you</p>	
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should do and when we expect a student to return. If they don't come back at that time a further email is sent out. This is still being explored.

Q : Looking at study leave and following Covid when everything closed down, surely there is a mechanism registering students as active but not in school. Would that not be allowed by the Trust or be seen as sleight of hand?

A : This is not Trust but DfE attendance regulations. Students have to be on site. Unless a student is on work experience, they are marked absent. There is no working from home option.

Newstead have always permitted students to revise independently.

Q : If teaching has finished what is the point of them coming in?

A : The point of them coming in is that a teacher will offer them something better, supporting with their revision. Teachers should go through a question and unpick it, showing what makes the difference from 20/20 rather than 17/20. Allowing students study leave gives teachers time to do marking and feedback. We have to look at how we evolve our culture here. If there is not study leave we may have unauthorised absence.

Q : Regarding the new package, what about where there is a special need or safeguarding issue?

A : We will always have oversight. There are cases where there is a genuine social or family reason for someone not to be in school.

Q : Presumably the system won't send adverse messages to those families?

A : No.

Health and Safety

There were a couple of accidents in same event (a football match) which unfortunately resulted in a broken bone. This was reported correctly.

JC has met the new Head of Design and Technology and the new set of staff in that department.

There is a recommendation of how many students per toilet there must be. The School Business Manager has thoughts on how to repurpose cloakroom areas.

The outside pathways have been planned.



	<p>AB commented that he has been working with DT; it is a joy to be in the department and they are doing some really nice projects. JW commented that the department is very active, very buzzy. The local primary school drew a picture of a monster and the students are making them. Students will take them back in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>CV was thanked for her contributions and left the meeting at 7.26 p.m.</p>	
7	<p>Headteacher Report</p> <p>The Headteacher's report for T1 had been uploaded for Governors' information and questions were invited.</p> <p>Q : Regarding the HR manager, what is the delegation of responsibility between that post and UL?</p> <p>A : They are suggesting someone to manage our HR at NWS, increasing capacity and supporting CV in her role. The HR manager will oversee all HR matters in school.</p> <p>Q : Regarding History, we are looking at options including a new exam board. Are there still significant differences between the exam boards?</p> <p>A : Yes, in some subjects more than others. We are also considering Computing.</p> <p>JW agreed with reviewing exam boards regularly. It is important syllabuses are looked at in light of world affairs to ensure we are not complacent with teaching.</p> <p>Q : Regarding the comment on social mobility and reviewing entrance procedures, is it because we don't get a proportion applying in the first place or those that do apply don't do as well in the entrance exams?</p> <p>A : It is both. Over the course of this term we have looked at other schools who have good practice. There are options on the table. We need to work with children in schools from Year 3 or 4 and we need to put capacity in to do it. When the KS2 data is released we will look at this alongside schools with SEND and PP.</p> <p>Q : Is it mainly schools or parents, thinking Newstead is not the school for them?</p> <p>A : Partly thinking that it is not for them but also not knowing the system and when to apply for the test.</p> <p>Privileges have been removed. Sixth Form used to be allowed privileges – not having to come in Monday Period 1 or Friday last Period if there is good attendance and targets achieved. There will be some children who use that time for counselling appointments and they would still be allowed to use that.</p> <p>Q : What is the thinking behind removing those privileges?</p>	



<p>A : We are a school and there is compulsory study for Year 12. Students should be in school and learning. It also meant having to do attendance more than once a day.</p> <p>Q : With the recruitment of a new Deputy Head, will there be a covering of their roles and responsibilities in their absence?</p> <p>Q : Yes, and we have started the handover with that now. We will divide up the year groups. The Data and Assessment team is in place informing people what they are taking over and keeping everyone in the loop.</p> <p>Q : DSL is now a non-teaching role which affords a number of things, one of which is more time. What are the implications from the maths department point of view if they leave and are replaced by a non-teaching member of staff?</p> <p>A : There are two new maths teachers starting in January who will fill that gap in the timetable.</p> <p>Q : Does that impact on staff numbers salary wise?</p> <p>A : It does, but there are still that many lessons that need to be covered. The cost of a teacher and DSL non-teaching is not hugely different from a Deputy Head salary.</p> <p>Q : Are you balancing out? Are you net net?</p> <p>A : Yes, and it is adding more capacity. When you look at your safeguarding caseload, the Newstead children with mental health and wellbeing are being affected as they get older. Year 9 is where safeguarding referrals increase. There are an extra 100 students joining the Sixth Form we have to onboard. Capacity at the top of the school is high.</p> <p>Q : How does our safeguarding compare to a girls' grammar school with highly capable students? Do we have a different profile? What is our experience?</p> <p>A : Anecdotally these are issues all students are facing. A lot of grammar schools are smaller than ours and don't have as big a Sixth Form. They have the same issues but not at the same volume. There are some differences but it comes down to intake.</p> <p>Q : With the Deputy Head leaving, are you rethinking your leadership structure?</p> <p>A : Instead of two Deputy Heads we are looking at one Deputy Head and a DSL lead.</p> <p>Q : Will the DSL be part of the SLT?</p> <p>A : Yes.</p> <p>Q : Are there any safeguarding issues?</p> <p>A : Only those as listed on the report</p> <p>JW informed that there is nothing to report.</p> <p>There have been no GDPR breaches.</p>	
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	<p>There has been an FOI request relating to our admission test results. There has been a request for information on cut off point. There is a SAR related to the complaint Governors are aware of.</p> <p>T1 meeting has taken place with the Regional Director. They are experienced and will be good to have as our Regional Director.</p> <p>Further questions were invited on the T1 Headteacher's Report but there were none.</p>	
8	<p>Policy documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Admissions Policy ○ Charging and Remissions Policy ○ Freedom of Information ○ Image Use Policy ○ Privacy Notice ○ SEND Policy ○ Students with Medical Needs Policy ○ Visiting Speakers Policy & Visiting Speakers Agreement <p>Questions were invited on the policies for consideration.</p> <p>Q : Is the Visiting Speakers a UL policy?</p> <p>A : No, with an increasing number of speakers coming in we are setting out expectations.</p> <p>Governors commented that the calibre of speakers is very high and asked if they would be able to join these events. Governors would be welcome to attend.</p> <p>Q : In the past we have allowed older children to ask questions. Can anyone come in and share information on issues such as Israel? Is this something you are looking to?</p> <p>A : This is a very sensitive issue and are working with our parent and student body. The situation is very fluid. It takes time for staff to be ready. The Trust is supporting us.</p> <p>We will have to test the Business Continuity Plan at some point during the year. Governors will discuss the Business Continuity Plan at the meeting after next.</p> <p>Further questions were invited on the policies but there were none.</p> <p>The Board considered and APPROVED the Business Continuity Plan.</p>	
9	<p>Confidential matters</p> <p>A confidential matter was discussed and in recorded in Part B minutes.</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	



NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

"creating opportunities for success"

11	Closure of Meeting The next meeting of the LGB will take place on 23 rd January 2024 from 6.30 p.m.	