

The Harvey Grammar School

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body number A6 held on Thursday 6th March 2014 at 5.00 p.m. in the Trafalgar Room

Present: Present: Mr J Dennis (JD) (Chair), Mr J Batten (JB), Mrs P A Garrard (PAG) (Vice-Chair), Mr K Bridgland (KCB), Mr W Dawson (WD), Mr S Norman (SN) (Headteacher), Mrs J Reynolds (JMR), Mr A Scott (TS), Mr J Smith (JS), Mrs A Shone (AS) and Dr K Whitby (KW).

In attendance: Mr A Allon (AA) Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

Clerk: Mr M Hydes (MCH)

No.	Item/detail	Action
	Chair's Introduction	
	<p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and, in particular, Mr Scott Norman as the new Headteacher of the Harvey Grammar School.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Governors for their forbearance in downloading documentation from the Governors' site on the Intranet prior to the meeting noting that this was the first time the new procedure for communicating information had been used.</p> <p>SN was asked to give a refresher on how the system operated including logging in, changing passwords and downloading documents. Governors were invited to contact the school in the event of any difficulties.</p>	
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies had been received from Mr S Goodfellow (Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum) who had a family commitment. His apologies were accepted.	
2	Declarations of Business Interests	
	None were declared other than those already registered.	
3.	Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body Number A5 held on 12th December 2013,	
	<p>The following corrections were noted: P2 bullet point 3 to read: 'benefit pension scheme' P5 bullet point 1 line 2 delete second 'that' P6 11.1 line 3 delete letter 'k' Subject to these corrections the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	Matters arising from the Minutes	
4.1	3.Presentation on the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the period ending 31st August 2013	
	A Governor enquired about the references to 'a note being added' in respect of items 26(9) and 32(21). The Chair explained that these were an acknowledgment by the auditors that some additional information needed to be given for the two items to facilitate better understanding.	
4.2	4. Declaration of Business Interests	
	A Governor enquired about the provision of on-going IT support to the school on a fee basis by Wrighteous Solutions Ltd a company of which former Principal Bill Wright was a director. The Chair explained that a contract had been drawn up	

	whereby Wrighteous Solutions would continue to maintain the school's Talisman assessment and reporting system at a very reasonable price significantly less than the cost of a similar system purchased on the open market.	
5.	To consider Governing Body Matters	
5.1	Meeting Review document	
	Copies of a Meeting Review evaluation form were circulated to all Governors. The Chair explained that the form would enable Governors to comment on how the business of the meeting had been conducted and inform the aspiration for best practice in meetings. Governors agreed that an electronic version should be sent to all Governors so that Governors had further time to consider their response.	Clerk
5.2	Governing Body Committee Structure	
	Governors were informed by the Chair that TS had been asked to join the SPPC committee. The Chair noted that the terms of reference of the Harvey Academy Joint Board committee were being finalised.	
5.3	Governors' documentation	
	The Chair noted that the Code of Practice distributed to Governors in October 2012 needed to be acknowledged by all Governors on an annual basis in the same way as the Register of Business Interests. PAG commented that this had been picked up in the scrutiny of Governance documentation currently being undertaken in preparation for Governor Mark status. Accordingly, all Governors were issued with an up-to-date copy of the Code and asked to acknowledge receipt on a form provided for that purpose. Governors were advised by the Chair that a copy of the January 2014 version of the Governors' handbook had been placed on the Intranet	All /Clerk
5.4	Governor Mark	
	A progress report on the work being undertaken to attain the Governor Mark Award had previously been made available to all Governors on the Intranet. PAG and JMR acknowledged the return of self-evaluation forms by all Governors at the end of January 2014. All Governors had indicated their willingness to provide written reports of activities and training undertaken on behalf of the Governing Body and which could be used to evidence its work. It was apparent that all Governors shared the need for training in Ofsted expectations following recent Ofsted pronouncements on the role of governance in school leadership. PAG explained that arrangements were being made for school-based training on Ofsted expectations at a date to be agreed in the summer term. The training would include further up-dates on how to evaluate the school's performance from data and the use of the Pupil Premium. The Chair thanked PAG and JMR on their hard work and diligence in preparing for the Governor Mark Award.	PAG/ JMR
5.5	National Governors' Association	
	Governors confirmed that they were continuing to receive newsletters and up-dates from the NGA. A Governor enquired as to the commercial background of the organisation. The Chair noted that it was a 'not for profit' national organisation which reported on governance matters in maintained schools. Governors accepted that NGA publications contained useful materials which could assist them in their preparation for meetings and raising awareness of governance issues more generally.	
5.6	Governor training	
	Governors reported on a number of training activities as follows: New Governor Induction KCB reported that KCC training had been 'excellent' and had equipped him to take	

	<p>an active role in school governance e.g. by seeking clarification of matters raised</p> <p>Governors E-learning (Ofsted Framework)</p> <p>PAG explained that she had recently completed a GEL module on Ofsted as a result of the high demand for guidance on Ofsted evidenced in self-evaluation forms recently completed by Governors. The training demonstrated the importance of the Governing Body having a strategic role, being a critical friend of the school and ensuring accountability. These concepts would be expanded upon in planned training in the summer term.</p> <p>The role of the clerk</p> <p>MCH (Clerk) highlighted aspects of a conference on the role of the clerk in school governance including the importance of demonstrating impact in Governor visits to the school</p>	<p>PAG</p> <p>All</p>
5.7	Governor Visits	
	<p>Governors commented on visits undertaken as follows:</p> <p>Sixth Form Information Evening</p> <p>JMR reported on her attendance at the Sixth Form Information Evening on 28th January 2014. After hearing excellent presentations about the life in the Sixth Form and opportunities beyond in higher education and the world of work JMR explained that she had been able to speak to a number of students, parents and staff about their impressions of the evening. Governors were informed of one particularly significant outcome in that approximately 12 students from outside the school had been recruited and (subject to GCSE grades) would be joining the school in September 2014. This was in comparison to the much smaller number who had joined the school in past years.</p> <p>Harvey Environmental Network (HEN)</p> <p>PAG and JMR reported on the developing work and range of activities of the pupil-led Harvey Environmental Network. From small beginnings three years ago the group has expanded its scope to include a variety of recycling projects and support of an overseas eco initiative in Kenya. Parents were actively involved in the work of the group e.g. by transporting materials to the recycling depot. Governors noted the article about HEN in the Harvey Newsletter and commended the involvement of pupils from across the school including the proposed visit of sixth formers to the Kenya project.</p> <p>Finance Office/PPPF liaison</p> <p>JMR reported on the informal monthly meetings that were taking place between the Finance Team and the Chair and vice-Chair of the PPPF committee. The meetings were proving valuable in gaining understanding of financial requirements following the school's move from LA control to Academy status. As a result, they were able to communicate financial information to members of the PPPF committee in a format that was clear and comprehensive enabling Governors to have a good insight into school finance's (including Pupil Premium) and ask questions as appropriate.</p> <p>Future visits</p> <p>Governors were informed that the next Parent Forum meeting would be on 20th March 2014 followed by a Learning Walk on 25th March. The meeting would be focusing on the Year 11 experience. Expressions of interest in participating in these activities should be e-mailed to HTurnbull@harveygs.kent.sch.uk</p> <p>Governors also noted that AS (Chair SPPC committee) had been invited to participate in the forthcoming Design & Technology department review (date to be confirmed).</p>	<p>All/AS</p>
5.8	The Governor	

	The Chair drew Governors' attention to the new Service Level Agreement for Governor Service in Kent. Governors agreed that useful and productive training activities had been provided by the local authority e.g. Pay Policy (including an academy focus), Governor Induction and Clerk Training. At the Chair's suggestion, it was agreed that the choice of package to be purchased for 2013-2014 should be determined by the Chair and the Chairs of the PPPF and SPPC committees.	JD/AS/ PAG
6.	Headteacher's report	
	The Headteacher's Report had previously been circulated to all Governors via the Intranet. Governors noted aspects of the report as follows:	
	1.School Improvement and Self-Evaluation	
	In response to a query from the Chair, SN confirmed that the 20.0% of FSM/CLA pupils was the highest for selective schools in Kent and the fourth highest for all selective schools in the country. This meant that the achievement of 97.0% A*-CEM for this group was particularly impressive against the national average of 95.0% for selective schools. The number of middle attainers in the cohort at 30.0% was also one of the highest in the country at 7/164 for selective schools and again at 93.0% A*-CEM was 2.0% above the national average for selective schools at 91.0%. The school also matched the national average of 97.0% for A*-CEM for high attainers. Governors also noted that data revealed that the Harvey was not a typical selective school in the light of the wide range of ability on entry with only one other selective school in Kent having a wider ability group. More importantly the school was performing at a similar level to most selective schools despite them admitting brighter pupils on entry. Governors agreed that an important reason for the quality of the results lay in the continuing focus on teaching and learning through lesson observations with senior staff able to identify areas for improvement.	
	2. Pupil Performance	
	SN drew Governors' attention to a number of DfE changes to the 2015 performance tables including the revaluing of BTEC qualifications to just one GCSE equivalent compared to, for example, four GCSEs for BTEC sport. Governors were provided with data recalculating CPS results from previous years to assist Governors in measuring performance on a like for like basis. Governors were pleased to note that pupil progress in terms of progress for the best eight qualifications could well improve even further for 2014 if current predictions proved accurate. A Governor ascertained that the revised arrangements for BTEC assessment would not have a major impact at the Harvey because students followed a personalised curriculum tailored to their abilities. Governors acknowledged the outstanding progress made in English significantly ahead of national averages for progress at all levels. Expected and more than expected progress overall in Mathematics was also above the national average but Governors also noted the work in the Mathematics department to highlight and ensure that more than expected progress for level 5 students improved further, with 2014 levels predicted to be above the national average. At A level Governors were pleased to see that there would be an outcome at least comparable to 2013 at 61.0% in light of the fact that the cohort had a similar prior attainment profile. A Governor noted that the accelerated cohort would not be sitting their final exams until 2015 at which point it was expected they were predicted to add approximately two percentage points to results.	
	3. Staffing	
	SN advised Governors of recent and forthcoming staff changes at the school in the Science and Business Studies/Economics departments. SN commented that the	

	<p>three new colleagues were all highly regarded specialists in their respective disciplines and would be an asset to the school. The Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body asked for thanks to be conveyed to the two departing members of staff and good wishes for the future.</p> <p>Governors were also advised of rationalisation measures that had been taken with regard to the school cleaning team in light of the impending retirement of the Caretaker and another long-serving member of the team. The steps taken would facilitate enhanced site security and some cost savings.</p> <p>A Governor enquired whether the employment of agency workers posed any risks and was informed that when they were employed recruitment procedures were the same as for permanent staff.</p>	JD
	<p>4. Pupil Census</p>	
	<p>A Governor enquired about school policy in respect of pupils being taken on holiday in term time. It was noted that school heads no longer had the authority to sanction such arrangements and, as a result, requests were invariably declined. AA reported that just two pupils in the current academic year had nonetheless been taken on holiday albeit the circumstances were exceptional. In both cases, the regulations for unauthorized absence had been closely adhered to. Governors were also assured that such pupils were given maximum support by staff so that they could meet curriculum requirements and prepare for assessments as appropriate.</p> <p>A Governor enquired about how the school's absence statistics compared to the national picture previously raised as in issue in Governor training. SN reported that no national data was available for just the autumn term but the fall in the overall absence figures from 3.74% to 3.48% in terms 1 and 2 meant that the outcome for the year augured well when comparisons were made with national statistics. Governors noted with approval the measures implemented by the DHT (Pastoral) the better to track pupil absence.</p>	
	<p>5. Finance Update</p>	
	<p>Governors noted the likely rise in funding for 2015-2016 as a result of the increased number of boys joining the school in September 2014. Governors recognised, however, that sixth form funding remained a concern and acknowledged the steps being taken by the school to ensure that the financial allocation for September 2014 was maximised. Governors were pleased to learn that a potential £15,000 shortfall occasioned by a clerical error in Sixth Form retention statistics had been identified and that it was expected that the money would now be allocated</p>	
	<p><i>JAS left the meeting at 6.35 p.m.</i></p>	
	<p>6. Performance Management</p>	
	<p>A Governor enquired about the impact of the new pay policy on staff retention. SN commented that the new policy gave talented staff every opportunity for pay progression.</p>	
	<p>7. Admissions</p>	
	<p>Governors welcomed the news that the school was at full capacity (150 pupils) for the September 2014 entry recognizing the significant vote of confidence in the school's future that this represented by parents. SN acknowledged that there could be some slight variation in this figure since a small number (8) of those allocated a place were 'second preferences'. However, Governors agreed that even if these pupils did obtain a place on appeal elsewhere it was often the case that boys who had made significant progress in Year 6 would be able to join the school.</p>	
	<p>8. School events and achievements</p>	

	Governors' attention was drawn to the first edition of Harvey News for Terms 1 and 2 published in January 2014. SN explained that it contained a wealth of information about school events and the achievements of individual pupils. Governors commented on the quality of the newsletter and extended thanks to AA for his lead role in its publication.	
	The Chair thanked the Headteacher for a detailed report and for raising salient issues.	
7.	Chairman's Report	
	The Chair reported that his main focus since December 2013 had been ensuring the smooth transition in the leadership of the school from Bill Wright to Scott Norman. Bill Wright's retirement had been celebrated at the Three Hills Sports Park by a very large gathering of staff (past and present) together with friends of the school and Governors. The Chair noted that he had recently received a letter to Chairs of Governors from Lord Nash and David Laws which inter alia drew attention to the crucial importance of good governance in the leadership of schools and the need for robust performance management procedures. It was also noted that references provided for staff should be true, accurate and fair.	SN
8.	To receive Committee reports	
	SPPC and PPPF committee reports had previously been circulated to all Governors via the website.	
8.1	SPPC	
	AS drew Governors' attention to the key issues that had been discussed in the meetings on 19 th November 2013 and 26 th February 2014 i.e. Safeguarding, Pupil Progress, Pupil Premium and Curriculum Planning. Governors were advised that information and data provided at the meetings had been scrutinised and fuller details could be viewed in the minutes of the meetings available on the intranet. Governors noted the ways in which the Pupil Premium was being applied and the evidence of effectiveness as against whole school targets. Governors also noted that Pupil Progress at GCSE and A level was in line with expectations to meet Ofsted criteria for 'Outstanding'.	
8.2	PPPF	
	PAG drew Governors' attention to the key issues that had been discussed in the meetings on 21 st November 2013 and 16 th January 2014 i.e. Finance, Premises and Personnel. The committee was informed that the draft Finance Policy had been carefully scrutinised and, following a number of comments and queries, an amended version had been placed on the Intranet prior to adoption at the next full Governing Body meeting. Committee members remained seriously concerned about the level of future Sixth Form funding and its impact on the school and were awaiting further detail from the DfE. Committee members continued to be mindful of the effectiveness of the school's fire alarm system and agreed that funding should be provided from the school's reserves in the event that safety concerns became apparent. The committee had been pleased to learn of the significant progress made in the bid for a new classroom block and the benefits this would provide for the growing school community. Performance Management reviews for 2012-2013 were discussed and the rationale for the Principal's recommendations were discussed and accepted.	
8.3	HAJB	
	JD explained that, following changes in the committee structure of the Governing Body, minutes of the new HAJB had now been published on the Intranet and Governors were invited to send any queries to Chair.	All

