

Minutes
Surrey and Sussex (SAS) Hub LGB Meeting
2 December 2021 at 4.15 pm
Held virtually via Teams

Present: Julian Short, Chair (JS)
 Leigh Edser, Governor (LE)
 Dean Else, Parent Governor (DE)
 Martin Lowthian, Parent Governor (ML)
 Amme Hayter, Staff Governor (AH)
 Lucy McMann, Governor (LM)
 Harry Moss, Governor (HM)
 Vicky Perry, Principal, St Dominic's School (VP)
 Diana Puica, Staff Governor (DP)
 Dafydd Roberts, Principal, Brantridge School (DR)
 Lesley Stonebridge, Governor (LS)
 Janet Tremble, Principal, Grafham Grange School (JT)
 Mike Wood, Governor (MW)

In attendance: Lynn Barratt, OHC&AT Executive Head of Development (LB) (for confidential item only)
 Susanne Wicks, Clerk (SW)

1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chair varied the order of the agenda items in order to take a confidential item first. He outlined his intention to focus on two key items in this meeting; the confidential matter and the expansion of Brantridge School.</p> <p>JS particularly welcomed DE to his first LGB meeting. DE gave a brief outline of his background.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Sarah Baker, Liam Cranford and Will Inchbald.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>JS advised that he has joined the Income Generation Board of the NSPCC which does not present any conflict with his role on this LGB.</p>	
4.	<p>Format of future meeting</p> <p>JS confirmed that efforts would be made to hold at least one meeting in school during this academic year.</p>	
5.	<p>Constitution and Appointments</p> <p>The LGB noted the resignation of Kate Palmer as Parent Governor (St Dominic's School).</p>	

6.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising not otherwise covered on the agenda.</p>	
8.	<p>Portfolio Reports / Principal's Reports</p> <p>The Chair invited each of the three Principals to introduce their report which had been shared with all Governors prior to the meeting.</p>	
A.	<p><u>Brantridge School</u></p> <p>DR set out the background to the proposed expansion of the school to include a secondary phase and to admit girls into the secondary provision, but not the primary phase. He explained that the school's future financial viability relied upon at least 65-70 on roll, and that there is an urgent need for special school places in the West Sussex area. In addition, the negative impact on all children, but particularly those with SEND, of transitioning from one school to another, is well known. He reported that the consultation ran through November and that responses were overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>DR advised that if the proposal goes ahead, two Year 7 classes, housed in the existing premises, will be introduced from September 2022. In the first year, the 14 places available will be offered to current Year 6 pupils. Construction of a new building will commence in autumn 2022 in readiness for autumn 2023 on the area behind Home Lodge.</p> <p>DR set out the school's planned approach to delivering a secondary curriculum and explained that support will be sought from secondary provisions within OHCAT, but Years 7 and 8 will follow a primary model, in that the pupils will not move from class to class, other than where necessary, e.g. for PE. From Year 9 onwards, pupils will be taught by specialist teachers on a GCSE pathway if appropriate, or for vocational classes. For the latter there will be some provision on-site as well as accessing local colleges. As with the current arrangements, the entire curriculum will be underpinned by the school's therapeutic approach and mental health support.</p> <p>DR acknowledged that there would be some challenges but they would not be insurmountable. Chief among them would be staffing, particularly when recruiting specialist teachers but DR informed Governors that the school normally manages to attract a field of applicants when seeking to fill teaching vacancies.</p> <p>DR set out next steps in the process; the Regional Schools Commissioner will make a decision by 16th December 2021.</p> <p>ML asked, given the need for Special School places in the area, how confident DR was that West Sussex County Council would not seek to put pressure on him to admit more than 14 boys in Year 7. DR acknowledged that was a risk but the school would continue to assess each application individually.</p> <p>HM welcomed the news but sought some clarity on how the scheme would be sequenced in terms of admissions, finances and the construction of the new build. DR acknowledged it would be a complicated process but reiterated that the first Year 7 intake could be accommodated on the current premises. He explained that the capital build costs would be covered by West Sussex County Council, and would remain separate from pupil funding.</p>	

	<p>Governors noted the need for legal support to ensure clarity in this matter and around the issue of future admissions, particularly around the question of offering spaces to the current cohort, many of whom are not residents of West Sussex County Council.</p> <p>LS asked if any specific plans had been discussed around the gender mix of pupils and DR explained that there had not at this stage but it would be important to ensure that there's an even mix of both boys and girls.</p> <p>In terms of the rest of his report, DR highlighted the introduction of the Tapestry software which is being used to capture the pupils' active learning through filming and photography as well as examples of work. He noted that the software is online so can be viewed by parents who can comment and give feedback on activities the boys are undertaking outside school and highlighted its positive impact on engagement with families.</p> <p>DR pointed the Governors' attention to really positive and impactful training sessions delivered to students (Give Racism the Red Card) and staff (Trauma Informed Schools training).</p> <p>Finally, Governors were pleased to note the very encouraging and positive feedback received from parents which was a testament to the school.</p> <p>JS thanked DR for his report.</p>	
<p>B.</p>	<p><u>St Dominic's School</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, VP flagged some positive news and challenges facing the school currently.</p> <p>Governors were very pleased to hear that the school has retained advanced status from Autism Accreditation, and thanked all staff involved for this great achievement.</p> <p>VP updated Governors on the estates development work and reported that work is well underway on the Lodge, which is being converted from flats to a Sixth Form Independence and Employability Centre. Work to Phoenix House, formerly a residential building to be repurposed for Sixth Form, is also underway. Both projects have faced delays due to workforce but are scheduled for completion in January. Governors noted the positive impact the new facilities will have on the employability and independence curriculum and looked forward to the open day to take place in the spring term. VP was pleased to report that a former St Dominic's student would be returning to the school as part of his Masters on drama therapy and would be working with learners in the Drama Club. He had also undertaken to speak at the open day.</p> <p>VP also flagged the excellent KS4 and KS5 outcomes achieved in the summer, despite the additional challenges brought by the pandemic.</p> <p>In terms of key challenges, VP advised that the pandemic continues to impact on staff attendance and recruitment and the school has been forced to use more cover staff than it would normally like to. However, recruitment is underway for some teaching roles.</p> <p>VP highlighted some powerful and impactful training undertaken by the entire staff team on 19th November. She reported that the morning session covered the cost of caring and the afternoon session was around student self-harm and suicidal ideation. She reminded Governors of the additional pressure on schools to bridge the gaps left by other agencies such as CAMHS and Social Care and described her intention to ensure staff in school can</p>	

	<p>best meet that challenge and keep the young people safe. To that end, she had arranged for small groups of staff working with students with the most complex needs to undertake clinical supervision through Innovating Minds.</p> <p>JS thanked VP for her report.</p>	
C.	<p><u>Grafham Grange School</u></p> <p>JT advised Governors that she has tendered her resignation and will leave the school in the second half of next term. She confirmed that staff were aware, set out her reasons for leaving and reassured Governors that recruitment for her replacement is already underway.</p> <p>In terms of key challenges facing the school, JT reported similar issues with regard to staffing which impacts on staff morale and student behaviour and had led to the imposition of a two-day partial closure earlier in the term. JT updated Governors on current and future staff recruitment and also described her plan to offer opportunities for career progression to teaching assistants, including recruiting to HLTA roles, ELSA training and Mental Health support. Governors were pleased to hear that the staff body now includes two Mental Health First Aid trainers and two Team Teach trainers.</p> <p>JT confirmed that the budget has been approved to cover the cost of the conversion of the bungalows into teaching spaces and for the toilet conversion works. However, the challenge is in finding a contractor to carry out the work. JT also described further plans to convert a bungalow into a therapy suite</p> <p>In terms of number on roll, there are 55 with three offer letters pending. There are two assessments underway with another booked in before the end of term. As observed in many other schools, the needs of learners are becoming increasingly complex.</p> <p>JT emphasised the hard work and commitment of all staff in school in very challenging circumstances and described their continued focus on keeping the students safe, happy and engaged in their learning. She advised that student attendance has dropped this term and the school is taking appropriate steps where necessary.</p> <p>In terms of positive news, JT reported that some more football matches with other schools have taken place and the students are keen to extend the competition to chess, rugby and cross-country. She also noted some very good GCSE outcomes in the summer.</p> <p>On behalf of all Governors, the Chair thanked JT for her hard work as Principal of the school, noting that it will be handed over to her successor in a tremendously good state. ML echoed those comments, noting the scale of JT’s impact on the school and the students.</p>	
D.	<p><u>Portfolio Reports</u></p>	
	<p>i <u>Ethos, Vision & Strategy</u></p> <p>Governors noted that this had been covered in the Principals’ reports.</p>	
	<p>ii <u>Teaching & Learning</u></p> <p>MW and LM introduced their reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting. MW welcomed LM’s input into this portfolio and she welcomed the opportunity to take it on. MW set out his changes to the format and content of the agenda and</p>	

		<p>report for this area in order to bring it in line with the Ofsted framework and set out the eight areas covered, which gives a flavour of the schools and enables both he and LM to see some of the amazing teaching and learning taking place.</p> <p>LM and MW thanked VP at St Dominic's and Danielle Harry at Brantridge for meeting with them.</p>	
	iii	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>LE delivered a verbal report, confirming that she had visited both Brantridge and St Dominic's Schools and undertaking to visit Grafham Grange by the end of term. She noted that she was very reassured by what she had seen and heard at both schools, particularly in terms of the systems in place to transfer student data where required. LE flagged that both schools are looking into introducing one system to log and monitor safeguarding and behaviour incidents, which will be very positive.</p> <p>LE left the meeting at this point.</p>	
	iv	<p><u>Business Development and Marketing</u></p> <p>ML confirmed he would undertake visits next term and, given that pupil numbers are now much more positive, would shift his focus to communications. ML reported that he had spoken to all three Principals already about the support he can give the schools in terms of their assurance framework, which includes communication.</p> <p>HM congratulated VP on the St Dominic's School video, which is available on the website, noting how inspiring it is to watch.</p>	
	v	<p><u>HR and OD</u></p> <p>LS thanked VP for her visit earlier in the week and for showing her around the school. She reiterated that the key challenge facing the school from an HR perspective was staff recruitment, which is a national issue. LS undertook to visit Brantridge and Grafham Grange next term and JS suggested that she could visit one school per term if it would assist with her workload.</p>	
9.	Finance	<p>JS introduced his report of the portfolio visit he and HM undertook with Sharyn Purewal on 5 November 2021. He reported that all three schools are now in a surplus budget position which indicates that the balance of pupil numbers, income and expenditure is correct. All three schools currently are within the Trust's reserves target and each of them has plans to spend their reserves, some of which are more advanced than others in terms of execution.</p> <p>JS and HM outlined their intention to review in more depth at the five-year forecast at future meetings.</p>	
10.	Governor Visit and Development		
		There were no further visits reports. Governors looked forward to receiving details of the open day at St Dominic's School.	
11.	Pay Committee meeting		
		JS set out the remit of the Pay Committee which meets annually to receive and scrutinise the Principal's anonymised salary recommendations for teachers at all three schools. He	

	<p>confirmed that the Committee agreed that the recommendations were robust and in accordance with policy and procedure, and noted that the Committee encouraged Principals to maximise teacher pay where reasonable and appropriate to do so, particularly as this is one of the few levers at a school's disposal in terms of staff retention.</p> <p>JS advised that he has raised an open question to each of Principals about what they would include in a benefits package, if they had the opportunity, and welcomed ideas from Governors about any financial incentives that could be offered, acknowledging that any ideas would have to be approved by the Trust.</p> <p>LM advised that in her organisation, staff are offered a financial reward (in the form of a voucher) for referring someone they know to apply for a vacancy, which they receive after that person has been appointed and completed six months in post. VP and JS welcomed this idea.</p> <p>VP outlined the intention to increase the use of social media in the recruitment process from the new year onwards, and to further develop the CPD offer to staff, particularly in terms of teacher training. She described plans to offer to support graduates into teaching through engagement in a training agreement. JT noted that she has similar plans to support teaching assistants to progress into teaching and also outlined her intention to review their job descriptions to ensure they remain up to date in the context of a much more complex cohort.</p>	
12.	Policies and Procedures	
	Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board on 2 July 2021, details of which have been shared on GovernorHub .	
13.	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021	
	JS asked all Governors to read this document and confirm to the clerk when they have done so.	
14.	Academy Trust Handbook 2021	
	JS set out the purpose and content of the Handbook and commended it as a very helpful background document for Governors. It can be found on GovernorHub .	
15.	Any Other Business	
	<p>It was agreed that Governors should only use their SAS Hub email address for school related communication in future (other than those working in an OHCAT school, as their email is already secure). Governors undertook to contact the clerk to reset their password if necessary.</p> <p>HM referred to social media use by schools and asked how much it is used and if there's a consistent approach to its use. ML undertook to pick this up as part of his portfolio work.</p>	
16.	Dates of Future Meetings	
	10 th March 2022 and 30 th June 2022 at 4.15 pm.	
17.	Confidential Items	
	A confidential matter was discussed and is captured in Part B minutes.	

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm

Signed: Date:

Julian Short, Chair of LGB

Summary of Actions

Agenda item	Action
8B	VP to share details of the open day with the clerk, to circulate to all Governors.
13	Governors to read Keeping Children Safe in Education and to confirm to the clerk when they have done so.
15	Governors to use only their secure school or SAS Hub email when communicating about governor related business and to contact the clerk about any problems with their account.