

Minutes
Surrey and Sussex (SAS) Hub LGB Meeting
10 March 2022 at 4.15 pm
Held virtually via Teams

Present: Julian Short, Chair (JS)
 Leigh Edser, Governor (LE)
 Martin Lowthian, Parent Governor (ML)
 Robin Bertrand, Principal, Grafham Grange School (JT)
 Vicky Perry, Principal, St Dominic's School (VP)
 Dafydd Roberts, Principal, Brantridge School (DR)
 Harry Moss, Governor (HM)

In attendance: Joanna Duncan, Grafham Grange School, Observer
 Susanne Wicks, Clerk (SW)

1	Welcome and Introductions JS welcomed all present and in particular, RB for whom it was the first meeting.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Sarah Baker, Lucy McMann, Michael Wood, Diana Puica and Amme Pryor. Dean Else did not attend the meeting.	
3	Declarations of Interest No declarations were made.	
4	Constitution and Appointments The LGB noted:	
	i The resignation of Liam Cranford (Staff Governor, Grafham Grange) from the LGB.	
	ii The resignation of Lesley Stonebridge from the LGB.	
	iii The resignation of Will Inchbald from the LGB.	
	iv That Lucy McMann would be taking some time out from LGB duties because of ill-health.	
	v That Amme Hayter's term of office as Staff Governor (St Dominic's) will end on 28 th June 2022. All staff at St Dominic's will be invited to apply for the role in the summer term.	
	JS thanked all of those outgoing governors stepping down for their commitment and for giving their time and efforts to the role. He offered to speak to any staff members expressing an interest in either staff governor vacancy.	

5	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair as soon as possible.</p>	
6	<p>Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
7	<p>Portfolio Reports / Principal's Reports</p> <p>The Chair invited each of the three Principals to present their report which had been shared with all Governors prior to the meeting. He confirmed that he carried out his portfolio discussion with all three on 7th March 2022.</p>	
A.	<p><u>Vicky Perry – St Dominic's School</u></p> <p>VP reported that Covid-19 remains the key challenge for St Dominic's School and in particular its impact on levels of staffing and consistency of curriculum delivery. Whilst every effort has been made to minimise the impact on students, some classes have been forced to close. Notwithstanding, life goes on and VP pointed governors' attention to the SIP which sets out the progress being made against many of the targets which are very ambitious.</p> <p>With a number of new staff joining the school in the Autumn Term, the focus has been on the consolidation and consistency of practice across the board, with increased CPD on offer for both new and existing staff. VP highlighted the delivery of CPI Safety Intervention training at an INSET day which is the new name for MAPA, and lends a focus on de-escalation where possible.</p> <p>VP noted the increase in concerns about student mental health and wellbeing and in particular incidents of suicide ideation. In order to support the staff supporting those young people affected by suicide ideation, there are now clinical supervision groups in place.</p> <p>VP updated the LGB on progress on works across the school estate and was pleased to confirm that the Sixth Form Hub is now open, and students are enjoying the space. She also highlighted the site-wide installation of fencing which is crucial in terms of safeguarding. VP and her team are now looking at projects to be undertaken in readiness for the new academic year.</p> <p>JS remarked that Covid continues to present challenges to schools especially as infections have risen among staff and students this term, and he commended the work of VP and her team to keep the school running. He also thanked her for excellent communication with families, ensuring that they not only know what is going on, but the reasons for it.</p> <p>JS suggested that the LGB received information from all three schools about the impact of staff CPD. He also welcomed some feedback from Sixth Formers on their new space. VP confirmed they were settling in well and undertook to invite Governors to visit the new Centre as well as The Hive, once opened.</p> <p>DR undertook to discuss the clinical supervision offer with VP, noting that it may be beneficial at Brantridge School to support staff, which could also encourage levels of staff retention.</p>	<p>VP</p> <p>DR</p>

B.	<p><u>Dafydd Roberts – Brantridge School</u></p> <p>DR flagged the increased demand for places at the school, with 61 boys on roll on Monday 7th March, and around 20 more applications under consideration. The increased demand has been discussed with colleagues in the Trust, due to the restrictions imposed by the school site and its PAN. DR advised that, not long ago, local authorities were adamant that there was little demand for places at the school, and he suggested that the impact of the pandemic may have contributed to the shift in attitude. JS asked if there has been a change in local authorities’ understanding of the need for specialist placement rather than keeping children in a mainstream provision as long as possible, despite the financial implications. DR could not say for sure but he suspected that on returning to mainstream school, children may have demonstrated that they could not cope and neither could their school and local authorities had no option but to acknowledge the need for specialist provision.</p> <p>DR flagged some of the CPD undertaken by staff, and in particular the sessions delivered by ‘Trauma Informed Schools’ which have given staff real practical measures to implement. He advised that the school is on a journey in this area and has plans to appoint a Trauma lead to assist all staff to become cognisant and conversant of the challenges facing the boys. DR gave a specific example of a recent Parents’ Afternoon where parents were asked to tell their child’s story to all staff working with them, to build their knowledge and understanding of the child. JS noted that as part of the portfolio discussion, he and DR had discussed the kind of trauma that the students may have been exposed to, and whether its impact on them would be determined by the kind of trauma they had suffered or a predisposition to be more affected than others might be. HM asked what “trauma” meant in this context and DR described a range of Adverse Childhood Experiences that they may have suffered. He agreed with HM’s point that you cannot change what they may have experienced, but a large part of the training was about helping them to develop resilience and move onto a positive future. VP advised that a qualified play therapist now works at St Dominic’s to support the younger children and DR noted that may be helpful at Brantridge too. ML welcomed the update on the training and echoed DR’s comments about getting to know individuals in order to be able to support them and identify their triggers.</p> <p>DR noted that staff must be appropriately equipped and supported in order to have the emotional availability needed to support the boys. To that end, support staff have been invited to arrange their work pattern, based around some set parameters. This has been put in place on a trial basis and will be evaluated at the end of term. JS welcomed the move to more flexible working where possible.</p> <p>DR gave an update on the introduction of a secondary phase and confirmed that progress has been made, although there will be challenges around managing the phasing of the work that’s needed to existing provision and the new build to accommodate current and future pupils. However, he confirmed that he was getting strong support from both OHCAT colleagues and West Sussex County Council officers.</p>	
C.	<p><u>Robin Bertrand – Grafham Grange School</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, RB gave a presentation to the LGB.</p>	

RB advised that this was his 18th day in post and that he was in the process of meeting all staff. He noted that feedback he had received so far was largely focussed on safeguarding, behaviour and process / strategy. RB stated that, from his first week in school, it had been clear that safety was a concern with neither staff nor students always safe. He explained that his concerns around safety focussed on three main areas:

1. Site related issues such as fencing;
2. A lack of structures in place to support students' in their relationships with each other, some of which are unhealthy and dangerous;
3. The safety of staff, especially in terms of their mental health and wellbeing, which is leading to some sickness absence.

RB confirmed that he had reported his concerns to the Chair, to LE when she visited the school the previous day, and to the OHCAT CEO, John Prior.

RB set out how behaviour feeds into and impacts on safeguarding and noted his concern that in this school students, rather than staff, are in charge of their behaviour. He commended staff for wanting to help and support students and noted their high levels of tolerance but advised that this has led to poor behaviour being tolerated which has impacted negatively on levels of engagement, so the students can't learn. He described the culture of reacting to incidents, at the expense of strategic planning and building processes and procedures.

RB advised that he organised an SLT Awayday on Friday 4th March, to enable SLT colleagues to come together and think about the vision and purpose of the school and to consider ways to address the prevalent behaviour among the students. He presented the LGB with the set of values agreed for the school:

Achievement

Respect

Community

Honesty.

And the mission they agreed, although RB noted that this may be altered slightly:

"At Grafham Grange we work together, with families, to provide students who have significant social, emotional and mental health needs with:

- *a great education that leads to the next steps in their learning*
- *a secure and loving environment*

So that they leave us with all the attributes, knowledge and opportunities they require to contribute positively to society and lead fruitful, happy and fulfilled lives".

RB noted that the SLT had agreed that although the environment at Grafham Grange was supportive and caring, students were not sufficiently encouraged to aspire and attain. RB recognised that the sense of community in the school is strong, with adults working very hard to support each other and the students. However, the expectations for the students must increase and they must be given the best education possible to equip them for their next stage in life and beyond.

	<p>RB explained that SLT have developed some behaviour structures around the ARCH values. This includes the behaviour that will be challenged as well as that will be rewarded with a focus on expectations. The new strategy will be implemented after Easter and it's anticipated that there will be some resistance from the students, so appropriate staff CPD is planned to support staff to manage that. RB outlined his intention to share the new behaviour strategy with families as well, and to introduce a new information management system to support the process.</p> <p>RB confirmed that, once the new behaviour strategy is firmly in place, he would then start to focus on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.</p> <p>JS acknowledged that it was a concern for Governors to hear that children and staff are not consistently safe. However, he confirmed that he had discussed this with the OHCAT CEO and had been reassured that the full weight of the Trust was behind RB in his plans for improvement. To that, JS added the support of the LGB.</p> <p>LE described her visit to Grafham Grange on the previous day, which RB had called a 'good day' and confirmed that she witnessed some behaviours that could have escalated but were managed well by RB and his team. Although the cohort is undeniably complex, LE felt reassured by what she saw and had been further so by what she had heard at this meeting. RB thanked LE and reassured the LGB that he was excited about the future of the school and that the staff were 100% behind his plans which would be key in effecting improvements.</p> <p>In terms of site safety risks, ML asked if RB had identified a top five things to be addressed, noting the need to have a costed plan in place to address them. RB advised that the top two issues were site fencing, for which the main challenge is not funding but lack of planning consent. The second issue is around the presence of an asbestos dump on site which is not adequately secured and which is extremely dangerous. ML pointed out that the Governors had no knowledge of this and suggested that if they had regular sight of the risk register for each school they would have been aware. RB confirmed that an asbestos audit is carried out termly and that the Trust is aware of the issue. Governors acknowledged that they should avoid operational issues but that they must be confident school sites are safe. JS undertook to raise this with the OHCAT CEO, echoing ML's concerns.</p> <p>LE encouraged fellow Governors to visit all three schools at least once per term in order to get to know the children and staff better. Similarly she encouraged Principals to invite Governors into school on a regular basis.</p> <p>Noting the scale of the challenge facing RB and his team, JS asked that he provide an update before the next LGB meeting. He suggested that RB come up with some meaningful KPI which could be used to track progress.</p>	JS
8.	Portfolio Reports	
	<p>i <u>Ethos, Vision & Strategy</u></p> <p>JS advised that matters discussed during his portfolio meeting had been covered by the Principals' presentations.</p>	

ii	<p><u>Teaching & Learning</u></p> <p>Governors noted that MW had not been able to conduct a visit this term.</p>	
iii	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>LE presented the reports of her visits to Brantridge and St Dominic’s Schools and advised that she would be meeting the DSL at Grafham Grange before the end of term.</p> <p>LE set out some site-related issues at St Dominic’s and advised that the Safeguarding Team’s key challenges include student self-harm, their mental health and wellbeing, and inadequate support from CAMHS. She explained that CAMHS often attribute student behaviours to Autism rather than to their mental health and that she and Kirsty Glaysher discussed using some Pupil Premium Grant to fund private assessments where appropriate. She commended Kirsty Glaysher’s attempts to build relationships with CAMHS and the work being done to support staff wellbeing.</p> <p>With regard to Brantridge School, LE flagged that, despite the increase in students, the numbers of those in receipt of social care input has remained static which is testament to the support given to families by the school. She noted with interest the pilot scheme for support staff working and looked forward to hearing more about it.</p> <p>LE noted her intention to look at the Single Central Register for all three schools in the future.</p>	
iv	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>HM presented his report, flagging that all schools are rated Green. He noted that recruitment and retention of staff has an impact on the budget, as agency costs account for around 7-9% of expenditure. He also noted that the five year forecast is based on a 2.75% inflation rate which is well below the current rate of 7-10%. He acknowledged that this could impact on the year-end forecast and undertook to discuss with Sharyn Purewal what the Trust’s approach is on the school’s exposure to inflation and what’s in place to mitigate that.</p> <p>DR noted that where the agency rates have increased, he has passed that cost onto local authorities, by raising the levels of funding for 1:1 support. He confirmed that they have not pushed back on that so far.</p> <p>At the request of the LGB, HM undertook to ask Sharyn Purewal for an explanation of fixed asset additions, and for some advice on how depreciation is calculated within the accounts.</p>	<p>HM</p> <p>HM</p>
v	<p><u>Business Development and Marketing</u></p> <p>ML advised that he had arranged to meet DR on 6th April, would be speaking with RB on 28th April and would arrange a date to visit St Dominic’s School.</p>	ML
vi	<p><u>HR and OD</u></p> <p>JS noted that this portfolio is vacant and undertook to discuss with the clerk outside of the meeting.</p>	JS

8	Governor Visit and Development No matters were discussed.	
9	Policies and Procedures Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board on 10 December 2021, details of which have been shared on GovernorHub. ML asked which policy touched on verbal abuse and SW undertook to find out and report back.	SW
10	OHC&AT GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION Governors noted the updated governance documentation approved by the OHC&AT Board and available to view on GovernorHub . SW set out the process underway for reviewing the Scheme of Delegation and associated governance documentations, with the aim of introducing them across the organisation from September 2023 onwards. JS suggested that it would be very helpful for the review to include some clarity on the role of LGBs.	
11	Any Other Business No items were raised.	
12	Dates of Future Meetings 30 th June 2022 at 5 pm at St Dominic's School.	
13	Confidential Items No confidential items were discussed.	

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm

Signed: Date:

Julian Short, Chair of LGB