



MINUTES OF THE ST ANN'S SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY:

Tuesday 10th October 2023 in School and by GOOGLE MEET at 6.00pm

Present: Arthur Batalona (Chair) (**AB**) Rosh Carter (**RC**) Timmy Holdsworth (Headteacher) (**TH**), Dimitri Hall (**DH**) (Julian Hillman (**JH**) (Vice Chair) Dr Nasrullah Khilji (**NK**) by GOOGLE MEET/Steve Miley (**SMi**) and Tsu Pin Huang (**TPH**)

Others present: Mike Herlihy (Clerk) (**MH**)

Apologies for Absence Juliette Fenton (**JF**) Kathleen Hau (**KH**) Nicola Inson (**NI**) Sallie Mercer (**SM**) and Joe Codrington (**JC**). **Welcome:** **AB** welcomed all Governors to the meeting

Declarations of Interest: None in addition to the standing interests. Governors are currently updating their interests form for 2023-24, details to be posted on the school website.

Monitoring

1 Headteacher report on Reopening of School in September and key headline updates including Safeguarding

TH highlighted the following matters

- A very positive staff training day with a mental health input. GB's attention was drawn to the DFE's Staff Well Being Charter and toolkit which the Leadership team are reviewing and he asked Governors to be aware of the reference to the responsibility of GB's in the documentation
- Staff attendance data and GB noted the latest figures which marked a significant improvement on Autumn term 2022. **AB** asked whether the 2022 figures were impacted by COVID related illness and **TH** stated that this is a factor, but the biggest impact has been new management processes in place for sickness absence, as well as incentives for the highest staff attendees (e.g. time off in lieu).
- **TH** provided a confidential update on two recent safeguarding incidents involving members of the public (one inside the school site and one on a trip) and GB was assured by the way the school handled both situations –that led to no harm – and their processes for managing such risks including communication with neighbouring schools. **SMi** identified the main safety net in such incidents being staffing numbers and GB had a discussion regarding a perception amongst some members of staff that staffing levels are being reduced. **AB** is prepared to write to staff on behalf of the Governing Body to provide assurance that this is not the case, **TH** stated that a letter is not required at the moment as he addresses concerns at Staff briefings but he will contact **AB** if the situation changes.
- **TPH** referenced the recent recruitment of SMSAs/TAs and cleaners, which he believed would help assist the situation, and GB noted that there was still a small number of support posts to be filled. **TH** added that a positive induction session has taken place with the new staff and probation processes are in place.

- There are currently 116 students on roll, with 2 students currently not in school. **TH** outlined the position regarding one student, who will be the subject of a tribunal hearing in January 2024, and the other case of a student whose family believes St. Ann's is not the right setting. GB noted that **TH** continues to liaise with the families. The LA student census day is in January 2024 there are still 2 spaces to fill and **TH** will ensure that these are filled by the appropriate student and the school is not impacted financially.
- GB noted that John Lyons (JL - senior school social worker) is retiring in December and his post will be advertised after October half-term and the school are looking to recruit a social worker, but will consider a mixture of a social worker/family worker if necessary. **RC** recommended that **TH** send a letter out to parents to reassure them that this crucial post will be filled. **TH** added that he is concerned regarding the level of safeguarding support to the Leadership Team when JL departs and **SMi** stated that JL's huge contribution to the school and invaluable support to parents is clearly evident and GB noted that there will be a proper handover. **GB agreed the suggested steps for JL's replacement and that the advert should stress the highly positive element of the role. GB placed on record their sincere thanks for JL's services over the years.**
- **TH** reported that Chike Nuale (Head of SEN at the LA) will be leaving Ealing and he referenced a positive visit from the Director of Children's Services, Robert South (RS), and some accompanying social media publicity for the visit. **AB** believed that RS recognised the student complexity at St. Ann's and was made aware of post-19 issues during the visit
- Finally, **TH** stressed the importance of parents understanding the unique curriculum at St. Ann's, including at Y6 parent visit days.

2 Overview of School Development Plan (SDP)2023-24 and School Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

GB received the newly integrated School Development Plan and SEF drawn up by the Leadership Team and the individual Sections will be reviewed by the Committees this term and GB noted the lead Staff member for each area. GB noted the Lead Governor allocation needed to be updated particularly for the Curriculum section.

TH offered the following additional comments :

- There is now a 5 Year Curriculum Plan
- Governors are welcome to attend school trips and this can form part of their Governor visits role
- In response to a question from **JH** **TH** explained the contextual statement on the current student roll within the SDP and clarified the existing 4 Level Descriptors vis a vis the student roll and the possible addition of a Descriptor E following discussions with the LA.

GB noted the updated SEF and the SDP and welcomed the new format. Committees will review their sections in the Autumn Term .

3 Finance and Operational

3.1 2023-24 School Budget – Latest Summary Update from Headteacher/School Business Manager in advance of Autumn Term meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee

GB noted the latest budget overview from the **SBM** in advance of the November Committee meeting with the updated notes including the revised projected deficit.

3.2 Report back from July Finance and Personnel Committee from Chair of F and P Committee

GB received a report back from July Committee from **SMi** who highlighted the following:

- The Committee expressed thanks to **TH**/ **SBM** for their work on budget processes that have increased LA confidence.
- The issue regarding health costs is important and **SMi** asked for **TH**'s assessment regarding liaison between health and the LA. **TH** stated that it was very difficult to get "the right people in the room" and **SMi** considered that the LA needed an integrated approach to ascertain health-related costs across the special schools.
- GB noted the latest update regarding the teacher pay awards and schools are awaiting the LA decision on the final reimbursement and this applies similarly regarding the support staff pay awards, which need to be factored in. **TH** added that the budget is very tight and it will be very challenging to cover the pay rises, if not fully funded. **AB** believed the school can evidence to the LA the robustness of their budget calculations.
- **TH** updated GB on **MK**'s revised working hours and that she is providing valuable support to middle leaders. **SMi** commented that the move to the new leadership structure requires delegation to a wider group of teachers and the **SBM**, and **TH** stated that the Assistant Heads have provided significant input into the structure. GB noted that the **SBM** now supervises the administration team.

GB thanked SMi for his report back.

4.1 Report back from Nicola on key outcomes from Premises Committee 29 September 2023 including Site Remodelling

GB received the report back from **NI** and discussion centered on the following:-

- GB noted the very positive input of the Facilities Manager and also that the site remodelling contractors **P A Finlay** have performed very well.
- **JH** asked for an update on the site remodelling phase 2 process and **TH** provided a confidential briefing and that the outcome of the tenders should be known by the end of October. In response to a question from **RC**, **TH** summarised the range of work under phase 2 and it was hoped that **P A Finlay** will be successful to allow continuity. **TH** added that the school might have to close the kitchen for a month as part of phase 2.
- **TH** reported that the LA are looking to hold a meeting on future expansion of the school roll in early 2024 and GB stated that the school need full details of the LA's plans at an early date.

GB thanked NI for her report back.

Strategy

5 A New St Ann's fit for the 21st Century:

Review of the work of and future agenda of the Development Steering Group

GB received a draft position paper from **JH** setting out the DSG's work to date, key concerns identified over the past 3 years and 12 suggested key action points for the DSG in 2023-24.

Discussion centered on the following:-

- **TH** stated that, whilst post-19 is a huge problem for the school, in real terms the LA have greater challenges in finding additional SEN places across the borough and this falls within Children's Services. **AB** stated that it was important therefore to find out where the LA see their main pressure points post-19 and where benefits outweigh any costs for the LA providing additional post-19 provision.
- **SMi** stated that this falls part of the remit of the Adult Social Care team and **TH** highlighted that it was crucial to get parents on board to create a strong voice, as well as engagement with politicians. **AB** agreed that the stakeholder engagement was vital and needed to be progressed by the DSG in 23-24 .

- **TH** commented that the school have to weigh up the resources required for post-19 initiatives and must balance this against meeting the needs of the 11-19 student cohort.
- **AB** referenced the importance of taking a systems approach and he gave an example from his own professional duties of how this could operate in practice and he offered to discuss this with **TH** and **JH**.

In terms of the conclusion section and the action points, **JH** highlighted the following:-

- For communications work, **JH** was pleased to report that **NI**'s husband has offered to work with **GC** to publicise her award of the MBE by way of an interview and for this to be used in future promotional materials.
- Some interesting fundraising ideas have been put forward and **TH** referenced the possibility of the hall being rented out as an option.
- **JH** identified research assistance as being important to drive the work of the DSG and **TH** stated that **MK** could be a resource.
- **JH** would like to make his summary paper, once finalised, more public.
- A partnership approach for additional Post 19 provision is the most likely option

GB offered the following additional steer to **JH** in updating the summary paper to be submitted to October DSG:-

- **AB** believed that DSG needed to be clear what the expected outcomes are, together with timescales for their priorities, and **JH** agreed that, in the first instance, this should be set out for, say, 2 or 3 key priorities in 23-24.
- **TH** stated that, when outside people are invited to contribute to the DSG, **JH**'s paper will be a crucial reference point particularly when the LA representation changes
- **SMi** identified a key barrier being that, whilst the DSG focus has been on developing the site, the other area has been post-19 outcomes as part of a shared endeavour with the LA. His concern is that **JH**'s review is not a joint review with the LA at this stage and **GB** agreed that this be relayed to the DSG in terms of signing up (e.g. a charter with agreed milestones) and that this review paper and the work on the PID (Project Initiation Document) is a starting point to encourage LA to look again at the evidence the school has provided in terms of numbers and costs of the post-19 leavers over a number of years. **SMi** recommended that the DSG need to continue to raise the profile of issues relating to inadequate housing of families/education for post-19 and think about how this can be pitched to officers.
- **AB** reiterated the project management dimension and gathering key stakeholder views, building on the draft stakeholder map.
- **TH** believed the voice of the parent is crucial and **GB** noted that the school have repeatedly reminded the LA of the difficulties with post-19 college placements and have provided evidence.
- **SMi** recommended that, in the 23-24 future work of the DSG, to add "review the PID and to continue to track the outcomes for post-19 students."
- Finally, **TPH** referenced the importance of parents being supported to think about contacting colleges at an early stage of the Post 19 process.

GB thanked **JH** for his comprehensive paper and agreed that **JH** will amend in the light of the above discussion. **GB** also noted the report back from 3/7/23 meeting of the Development Steering Group.

Governance

6.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body 6 July 2023 and matters arising

The minutes of the July GB meeting were approved as an accurate record.

6.2 Decision Tracking

GB noted the paper from the Clerk and that some additional actions have now been updated as a result of discussions at the meeting

6.3 Governance and Chair's Update

GB received the half-termly paper from the Clerk and the key outcomes are recorded as follows:

- GB formally place on record their appreciation of Shahid Khan's services as a Governor and noted MH and **AB** are liaising with Governors for Schools to source a replacement for Shahid.

- GB agreed the recruitment of 2 Parent Governors is a priority and MH will liaise with **TH/TPH** and **RC** to progress this. **TPH** asked that Governor attendance at the Open Evening on 12th October would be welcome. St Ann's representation at the Ealing Governor recruitment event in early 2024 will be important

- GB re-elected **AB** and **JH** as Chair and Vice Chair for the 23-24 school year.

- GB agreed that Safeguarding/ training was a priority for the Governor replacing **SM** as Lead Safeguarding Governor when she stands down as Governor on 30 11 23 and Safer Recruitment training a priority for the GB

- AB** will co-ordinate the Governor dinner to mark the retirements of Shahid and Sallie for later in the Autumn Term

- GB confirmed the Committee allocations for 2023-24

- GB formally adopted the 23-24 NGA Code of Conduct

- GB noted MH will be standing down as Clerk at the end of March 2024 and F and P Committee in November will discuss the next steps in recruiting a replacement.

7 Update on CIO

GB received a presentation from **TPH** covering the following

About St. Ann's Foundation including its renaming/changes in trustee membership / induction and training for the role. GB noted **DH** and **AB** have stood down from their Trustee role

Planned activities for September-December 2023 and activities undertaken in 2023 including World Mental Health Day

Proposals for holding monies. GB noted that F and P Committee will have an overview of funds transferred

Social Media and Fundraising .GB noted that **TPH** and the Trustees are working on brand development before working on new grant applications.

Discussion covered the following:

- **TH** referenced the need to re-brand the current St. Ann's logo and **AB** offered to provide some assistance.

- **JH** sought assurance in terms of both transparency and accountability of the CIO when allocating funds for projects and their liaison with the Headteacher to ensure that these were the school priorities. **TPH** explained the reporting requirements to the Charity Commission, and that the CIO was independent of the school but there would be close reporting and liaison with the Headteacher to ensure appropriate priority expenditure. **DH** had looked at the various rules and where the money is best used is a matter for the trustees.

- **JH** referenced potential long-term implications if there were issues with how the trustees operated and sought some clarification regarding the terms of reference/charter and **TH** and **TPH** would be able to provide the necessary information and assurances. **JH** also believed it would be appropriate for the Headteacher to observe trustee meetings if he so chose and there needed to be guaranteed communication between the CIO and the school and **TH** provided assurance that this will be the case.

In conclusion, GB noted **JH**'s particular concerns and the assurances that will be put in place to ensure as a separate identity to the school the required rules are followed and any conflicts of interests handled. There will be future updates to the F&P Committee as a routine item of business during the school year to ensure transparency and accountability of this valuable initiative for report through to the GB via the Headteacher report.

GB considered the two options in relation to funds. **TH** and **TPH** explained the options and **DH** clarified within Option 2 the mechanism for account being checked by an independent examiner. GB noted Option 1 was the preference of the SBM. **GB agreed Option 1 : the £10K from the 100 Club will be transferred to St. Ann's Foundation immediately so the account can be closed The 27K from Santander (the unofficial fund) will remain and will be used for the minibus once the grant of Clothworkers' Foundation is approved.**

GB thanked DH for his work in progressing this initiative along with TPH and KH

8 Any other urgent business:

TH reported the need to conduct his performance review by 31st December and **AB** undertook to liaise with Gill Waseba and **SMi** to finalise arrangements

TH reported that St Ann's will be involved with two schools (In Nottingham and Sunderland) as part of an EQUALS research project

9 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 30th November 2023 (Start time tbc)

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm
Arthur Batalona (Chair)