

MINUTES OF THE ST ANN'S SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY:

Monday 29th January 2024 in School and by GOOGLE MEET at 6.00pm

Present: Arthur Batalona (Chair) (**AB**) Mandeep Bhamra (**MB**) (by GOOGLE MEET) Rosh Carter (**RC**) Kathleen Hau (**KH**) (by GOOGLE MEET) Dmitri Hall (**DH**) Nicola Inson (**NI**) Timmy Holdsworth (Headteacher) (**TH**) Julian Hillman (**JH**) (Vice Chair) and Tsu Pin Huang (**TPH**) Others present: Mike Herlihy (Clerk) (**MH**)

Apologies for Absence Joe Codrington (**JC**) Dr Nasrullah Khilji (**NK**) Steve Miley (**SMi**)

Welcome: **AB** welcomed all Governors to the meeting

Declarations of Interest: None in addition to the standing interests. Governors have updated their interests form for 2023-24, details have been posted on the school website.

Monitoring

1.1 Headteacher Half Termly report and key headline updates: Spring Term 1 2024

TH highlighted the following matters, in addition to the summary detail provided in the report including updates to progressing the SDP priorities in advance of the detailed update to the Committees in Spring Term 2. GB noted some very successful events before Christmas coordinated by **KH**. **TH** was sad to report that a student is now in a hospice and the school are supporting the family and the class staff.

TH then took the GB through the report on a section-by-section basis.

(a) School Development Plan RAG rating

Premises has now been reduced to a medium risk whilst post-16 is a medium risk, mainly due to the lead staff member being on a sabbatical.

(b) Student Numbers: Future Planning including Year 7 students for September 2024

GB noted the following update:-

- The LA-projected school roll for 2024-25 is 125 and **TH** has accepted to date 118 students and expansion on this number depends on progressing the building works, as well as the caretaker's house being vacated on time.
- The school are receiving referrals from Belvue for non-Y7 places and also receiving more students from Castlebar this year; currently there is a waiting list at St. Ann's.
- In terms of the current school roll, there are 116 students currently in school with 1 being placed in a residential school; 1 potential new student is currently being assessed.
- **TH** will be discussing with the Leadership Team the future planning document displayed at the GB meeting and GB noted key issues related to the safety of the school and staffing levels.
- In terms of the 3 class PMLD provision for the current school year, **TPH** explained how the staff team have begun collaborating across the 3 classes and the process for setting goals and planning for their students; the Leadership Team are observing encouraging signs of progress.

(c) Leadership

The response to the senior school social worker job advert was disappointing and the school will be advertising again and will also include recruitment of a family worker. In the interim, **TH** will look at agency provision on the basis of a short-term contract. GB noted a very challenging recruitment environment for social work positions.

In terms of safeguarding, the school are seeking assistance from Judicium to support TH as the DSL and **TH** explained their services that includes training and a helpline, but it is expensive at c.£4200p/a. **NI** asked whether the helpline was available to all staff and **TH** believed this to be the case. **JH proposed that TH discuss a service proposal with SMi and TH agreed that, upon receipt of the information, he will liaise with the SBM and report back to the F&P Committee.**

(d) Teaching and Learning

GB noted that Peter Imray was visiting the school on 31/01/24 and his input is valuable to the school's development.

(e) Social and Emotional Learning

GB noted the positive input of the team led by Abid Ayoub and the use of the CPOMS system for recording incidents. **TH** reported on a challenging incident the previous Friday with a student and the Leadership Team are looking at ways to prevent a recurrence and possible changes to bus routes/timings as a result thereof. GB was assured by the way the school handled the incident.

(f) Post-16

GB noted the project on transition leaver students being led by MK, who is conducting a review of post-19 options and considering the future of St. Ann's provision. **TH** placed on record his thanks to **DH** for supporting MK with the action plan and the GB also extended its thanks.

(g) Assessment

TPH has visited the Village School and arranged a visit to Mandeville to assess their respective systems. GB noted that the Assistant Heads are chairing a greater number of annual reviews and using the new template that has been well-received by both families and teachers.

(h) Curriculum

GB noted that the PMLD students received a visit from the St. John's Ambulance and that an update on the 5-year curriculum review will be discussed by the Curriculum Committee in February.

(i) Parental Engagement

GB noted that the recent coffee mornings have been successful, with a St. Ann's parent sharing insights into the secondary transition experience and **TH** hopes that **RC** will be able

to do a similar session in respect of PMLD leavers in the next school year. Seesaw has proved to be an essential tool for connecting families and **TH** presented some positive data. **NI** asked whether the school can track that parents are accessing Seesaw and **TPH** confirmed that this is the case.

(j) Premises

TH referenced some health and safety assessments relating to the upstairs windows and staircase and an improvement plan is in the process of being developed. **NI** offered some advice from her professional experience on a possible solution.

(k) Staff Attendance

The attendance data is similar to the 22-23 data and benefiting from attendance action plans being in place.

(i) Communication Policy: Hospital Policy

TH presented a draft communication policy, giving the background to its proposed use, and that the Leadership Team are also looking at the home learning agreement. **TH** believed that the draft policy sets the correct boundaries and the school will make families aware of this for its introduction and particularly at the start of the new school year. **GB** noted that the LA HR section have been consulted on the draft. **GB agreed that MH will email the draft policy for sign off by Governors by 02/02/24.**

In respect of the hospital policy, **TH** stated that this was a work-in-progress and it was important that there be guidelines for the healthcare assistant's role.

(j) Important Dates

TH welcomed any Governors who can attend the EQUALS visit day scheduled for Friday 1st March at the school. The event will take place between 10am and 2.30pm

GB thanked TH for his report .

2 Finance and Operational

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

GB noted the latest budget overview from the **SBM** in advance of the February 2024 Committee meeting. **TH** reported that the budget is in a better position than previously anticipated with the projected year end deficit reduced to c£125K. The LA have greater confidence in the **SBM**'s management and explanation of budget variances

3 Strategy

3.1 Update on Increased School roll and Satellite Provision plans from the LA

In addition to the update given in Item 1(b) above **TH** highlighted the following:

- In terms of satellite provision, **TH** will shortly attend a key meeting with Tamara Quinn (Ealing) and will report back to Governors on the key outcomes.

- There was a positive building works meeting on 26/01/24, which also covered health and safety risks. **NI** asked for an update, in the event that the caretaker's house is vacated on time, whether PA Finlay had been given the contract for its adaptation and **TH** stated that this is yet to be determined but it could be included in an extension of the current site remodelling phase. **NI** explained the LA responsibility for the condition of the house and the requirement for a full refurbishment and demolition survey.
- **TH** stated that currently there is a lot of drilling on site and this might necessitate some classrooms being swapped.

3.2 Report back from 23 January 2024 meeting of the Development Steering Group

JH highlighted the following key issues discussed at the DSG:-

- A focus on the existing expansion linked to the school's ambitions for post-19 but recognising that the 11-18 student cohort is the key priority. DSG noted that, in the long term, there could be a split school site in terms of some students potentially being educated on a satellite site.
- The LA have issued their all-age disability strategy for 2023-2026, but DSG are concerned that the LA have not been represented at the last 2 DSG meetings . The LA have been asked to review the Project Initiation Document (PID) and that St. Ann's are mentioned in the strategy document. In respect of the latter, **GC** is following up on the existence of an action plan to deliver the key strategic priorities.
- **JH** referenced a meeting with Mencap, also attended by **DH**, which examined potential joint-working and DSG noted the huge student costs involved in residential provision. **TH** explained student rights under their EHCP and the risk of a student being out of education for a year , regressing significantly and then converting to adult social care provision. **JH** mentioned Mencap's "power group" provision, which can be very beneficial.

Discussion centered on the following:-

- **TH** asked about **HH**'s commitment to DSG as independent Chair and **JH** undertook to discuss this with **HH**, but it was important that there is an independent contribution to the DSG's work. **TH** added that it was important that there is a clear distinction between the governance role of the full GB and the strategic input from the DSG. **TH** referenced the risk to St. Ann's if it grew too big in losing its distinctive ethos and values and **AB** and **TH** are clear high-quality provision at St Ann's School should not be compromised by rapid expansion.
- **AB** stated it was clear that the school do not have accountability for post-19 provision as this lay with the LA and that the school and the GB should focus on initiatives that are under our control / we can influence; for instance the discussions that took place and are still current, as it pertains to federations /partnerships with other Special Schools in any shape or form i.e. to spend time and energy on things that will directly impact St Ann's if they go ahead.
- **TH** reiterated the dilemma of supporting St. Ann's families post-19 but his primary focus is on delivering 11-18 education against a backdrop of the LA's significant shortfall of secondary school places.
- **GB** also discussed whether DSG should now revisit its terms of reference

In conclusion, GB noted that the review being carried out by MK will be a very important document to influence next steps, particularly as the LA are aware of the post-19 problem and the school have clearly brought examples to their attention. **JH** would also discuss separately with **RC** her potential input on a case study relating to her own child. GB supported continued discussions with Mencap, whose input could be vital. **GB noted the report back from the meeting of the Development Steering Group and JH will update the DSG on the points raised by the GB as recorded above.**

Governance

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body 30 November 2023 and matters arising

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

4.2 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, plus the following updates:-

- **TH** will email the relevant extracts **GC** and he had contributed to a recent book on special education

4.3 Governance and Chair's Update

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

.GB noted the Ealing governor recruitment fair will be online on Thursday 7th March 2024, 6 – 8pm and this will be a useful event to participate in. **MH** will liaise with **AB** and **JH** in terms of St Ann's participation

-GB noted Ofsted had published an update to their safeguarding inspection handbook, explaining how they inspect safeguarding and **TH** provided an analysis of further possible changes to the framework including as a result of the publication by the coroner of a prevention of future deaths report following the former headteacher's (Ruth Perry) inquest . Safeguarding will be a focus at the EQUALS Day on 1 3 24

5 Any other urgent business: None

6 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 6pm

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Arthur Batalona (Chair)

Confidential Minute

Assistants Heads

(NB **TPH** and **KH** left the meeting prior to discussion of this item.)

TH gave a confidential update on the position regarding the 3 Assistant Heads who have been acting in the role for over a year and he sought a steer from the GB on proposals he would report to February F&P Committee in considering permanent positions as the current structure is functioning effectively.

GB had a discussion on the new structure, having regard to **MK**'s reduced working commitments this school year, and supported a recommendation to F&P Committee and that

this should include some financial modelling from the SBM in terms of comparison of costs to when the school had 2 Deputy Head positions, as well as MK's possible future plans.

NI asked about the career path for the expansion of the middle leaders within St. Ann's and **TH** in response stated he wanted to support the professional development of the expanded Leadership Team, who might seek Headships or Deputy Headships. **TH** reported on how he viewed the current structure and any potential future recruitment if staff left.