

GRANTA SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

THURSDAY 26th April 2018, 6.00pm
AT THE SCHOOL

MINUTES

Present:

Governors: Caroline Ilott (Chair)(CI), Lucie Calow (Headteacher) (LC), .Jeff Andrews (JA), Lucinda Billington (LB), Chris Seaton (CS), Steve Hannington (SH), Tony Orgee (TO), Alison Walker (AW).

Ian Wilson (IW) present from 6.30 pm.

Associate Members: Linda Alefounder (LAF), Sarah Crouch (SC), Chris Cole (CC), Tanya Seaton (TS).

Ann Abineri in attendance as Clerk.

The meeting was quorate.

1. **Welcome and Apologies for absence were received and accepted** from Paul Ilott, David Champion Jo Clarke, David Jones, Paula Nixon and Linda Kahr.
2. **Pecuniary interests:** none declared
3. **Governor Body Membership**
Vacancies & elections. Review of Governor terms of office and proposal of Paula Nixon as Co-opted Governor.
Co-option agreed.
Action: Clerk to inform Governor Services.
4. **Minutes of Full Governing Body meeting 22nd March 2018 including matters arising not included on this agenda**
Agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.
Matters arising
LC will invite Vanessa Whitcombe to an FGB meeting – so far dates have clashed.
Prevent training: Wed 4pm 16th May.
LC has updated staff on location of defibrillators. **Action: LC still to update poster.**
Due diligence: see item 6.
LVC: LC clarifying link.
CCTV Policy for future agenda. **Action: CI.**
Cams Transport Consultation: LC confirmed that she had responded
5. **Discussion of budget with a view to ratification**
Budget documents were circulated prior to this meeting.
Carry forward £91,747
LAF explained that she has based the budget on expectation of increased pupil numbers. The current position is £10,000 overspend.



The budget is founded on expansion to 142 pupils. We are currently funded for 130. Therefore base funding at approximately £10,000 per pupil would be received for each additional 'spot purchase' pupil.

LC pointed out that the school is able to offer places to pupils from adjacent counties.

A Governor asked if other counties pay same amount and LC confirmed that this is the case.

LC wished Governors to note that Emma Stubbings is doing an excellent job processing admissions. 124 admissions have been confirmed. LC has offered 135 potential places 5 of which would be spot places.

In response to a **Governor's question**, LC confirmed that 145 pupils is the highest capacity.

A Governor asked about timing for admissions and LC explained that whilst in some ways it is preferable if all start at start of time there have been increasing numbers of pupils arriving during the year. It is important to meet their needs to re-enter schooling when the time is right for them as individuals and it can also useful to be able to settle them in at a less busy time of year. LC explained that she has needed to run open meetings this year (3 have taken place, 2 more in diary) to enable her to meet families.

After School Club will be free-standing following the adjustments made as a result of Parental Consultation but grant is still unconfirmed.

A Governor asked about Supply Teaching assistants. LAF explained that costs were high this year to cover vacancies and long term sickness. It was not possible earlier in the year to take on extra staff without plans for expansion finalised so cover was required. LAF explained that overall the staffing overspend for the year was £14,786.

A Governor expressed the view that while safety and pupil outcome was the most important factor, cover was an expensive way of doing this. LC explained that she would try advertising for staff rather than using cover but the level of applications for fixed term roles such as maternity cover is low. The training commitment for new staff is a major factor. The cover staff from agencies have often received training and are a known factor. They can be cancelled if the need is no longer there.

A Governor asked about teacher insurance. LAF explained that this does not cover teaching assistants. LAF is currently exploring insurance cover with a range of brokers which offer a range of services with diverse exclusion causes. Cost of teacher insurance in relation to this year's income in insurance receipts cost £26,000, income £4,625.

A Governor asked about school insurance which we have through the LA. The premium has been raised this year although the initial increase has been lessened after negotiation by LC. LAF will shop around for next year.

Staffing costs predicted to increase by £180,000 for 2019-20 based on staffing structure for 2018-19.

A Governor asked if Pupil Premium has increased. LC stated that there has been no increase in amount per pupil. However changes may occur.

A Governor asked if the school has any bad debts and LAF explained that the only major debts are related to LA funding and are being pursued. A number of small debts are also being pursued, including one reported to HR committee on 24th April 2018.

Solar panels: **a Governor had sent questions** in advance and LAF responded to these: Solar Panels: JA cautioned that savings on energy consumption may be penalised if our consumption is lower than predicted. LC explained that Jo Clarke had negotiated amendments to the contract in relation to this when the contract was commenced.



A Governor asked about the accuracy of 3 year budget. LAF confirmed that the Orovia system makes some adjustments. It was noted that Orovia can run a range of models.

It was noted that income from funding has not increased in this model despite other costs rising. **A Governor asked** what the funding increase is likely to be and LC explained this is unknown. It was noted that there is no increase to Higher Needs Block funding. LC represents special schools on Schools Forum and a working party and is lobbying for an increase. **A Governor offered experience** from another funded public sector and warned that there was likely to be clawback.

A Governor pointed out that the proposed Budget would be a concern to Academies carrying out due diligence and that their main scrutiny would be likely to involve future staffing. It was also pointed out that if we entered into an academy situation our carry forward would be at risk.

A Governor asked if the carry forwards of other special schools are shrinking and LC and LAF confirmed that their experience confirms this is the case, and that the matter has been discussed with the LA. **A Governor expressed the view** that other schools are in similar situations and that there are unknown variables related to staffing and pensions. LC also expressed the view that our pupil numbers and needs can be variable due to a wide range of factors such as those related to pupil's health meaning that they no longer attend.

A Governor asked LAF to provide a figure for the percentage uplift which would be required to cover costs. **Action: LAF to report back to F & GP 2nd July 2018.**

A Governor asked why we have set a deficient budget in view of the carry over and LC and LAF explained this was due to the unpredictability of pupil numbers requiring a prudent approach and that while an in-year deficit was a realistic approach, it was possible that the Carry Forward would be higher. **A Governor confirmed** that discussion at F & GP committee supported this view.

A Governor pointed out that carrying a carry forward that could be perceived as high could be seen as a threat to future funding.

The consensus was that as a Governing Body we should be proactive in making representations to Government for increased funding and that we should keep a close watch on ongoing budgeting particularly in relation to how our finances may be perceived due diligence of academies.

TO proposed that the Budget is submitted, based on an income of £3,041,200 and expenditure of £3,051,300 resulting in balance carried forward of £81,600.

JA seconded.

All Governors in agreement.

Governors wished to record thanks to staff for hard work throughout the year and particularly to LAF for her work on this.

6. Any Other Urgent Business



LC has a meeting on 27th April 2018 with CHET on due diligence. They have asked for an independent review of teaching in school and LC is arranging this. LC will discuss this further with the FGB in due course.

FOGS fete: Saturday 16th June 2018.

LC explained how successful the new outdoor equipment is proving with pupils and thanked Governors for their role in improvements.

JC has prepared a report on incidents in school which will be presented to the Health and Safety Committee who will report back to FGB in due course.

Positive feedback has been received from a teacher with considerable knowledge of special needs education who was a guest in school on 26th April 2018.

7. Date of next Meeting: Thursday 24th May 2018 at 6.00pm

Meeting closed 7.35 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' or 'G' shape with a horizontal line extending to the right.