

BRINE LEAS SCHOOL

An Academy

Extraordinary Local Governing Board Meeting

Held on Wednesday 26th February 2020

MINUTES – PART 1

Present:	Mrs A Ashley	(AA)	Appointed Governor
	Mr D Cole	(DCE)	Headteacher Governor
	Mr T Court	(TC)	Appointed Governor
	Mrs M Hennessy Jones	(MHJ)	Appointed Governor
	Cllr P Groves	(PG)	Appointed Governor
	Mr T Maclellan	(TMN)	Elected Staff Governor
	Mr T Marsden	(TM)	Appointed Governor
	Mrs J Thomas	(JT)	Appointed Governor
	Mrs S Turner	(ST)	Elected Parent Governor (Chair)
Mrs D Varley	(DV)	Elected Parent Governor	

In Attendance: Mrs E Fletcher (Clerk)

Please note – orange/brown text shows governor challenge/questions.

1. Apologies

The Clerk confirmed that she had received apologies in respect of Mrs M Mulliner along with her resignation from the LGB. In addition, the Clerk shared that apologies for being late were received from Mrs S Turner who should arrive part way through this meeting.

Apologies were considered carefully and governors agreed to accept them for this meeting and also expressed thanks to MM for her commitment to the school and LGB during her time as governor.

Outcome: Governors accepted apologies outlined above and the resignation from Mrs M Mulliner.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk asked governors if they had any declarations of interest in relation to this meeting's agenda. No declarations were raised by any LGB members.

3. Appointment of Vice Chair

The Clerk informed governors that she had received one nomination in respect of Tim Marsden. Other nominations were invited at the meeting, but none were put forward. The Clerk asked TM whether he accepted the nomination. TM confirmed that he accepted, and the nomination was seconded. All governors present were happy to appoint TM as vice chair for a one-year period.

Minutes Approved by Chair of Governors Date:

Outcome: Governors appointed Mr T Marsden as Vice-Chair of the LGB for a one-year period.

TM chaired the meeting from this point on, in the absence of the ST.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

A copy of the minutes from the meeting held on 23rd October 2019 were provided to governors prior to the meeting and it was proposed that these were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Outcome: Governors accepted the minutes presented as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 23rd October 2019.

A copy of the minutes from the extraordinary meeting held on 7th January 2020 were provided to governors prior to the meeting and it was proposed that these were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Outcome: Governors accepted the minutes presented as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 7th January 2020.

5. Sub Committee Feedback

A copy of the minutes from the January Sub-Committee meetings (ARR, Business and Students') were provided to the LGB prior to the meeting. It was highlighted that, at this stage, they remain a draft record pending the official acceptance by the sub-committees at their next meeting.

Governors were urged to read through the minutes of all sub-committees and comments/questions were invited.

AA shared that she wanted to acknowledge the staff that attended the students' meeting, and highlighted that in, her view, the agenda was detailed and powerful information and evidence was provided to governors. Governors present agreed with this view, and those from other sub-committees felt that it applied to their meetings also.

Outcome: Governors accepted the draft minutes from the January sub-committee meetings.

6. Whole School Development Plan

A verbal update to the SDP previously provided was given at the meeting by DCE:-

- DCE shared that the school is nearly ready to complete curriculum intent statements.
- DCE informed governors that work has been done with regard to the spiral of movement from KS2 to KS3 and then from KS3 to KS4. Governors were informed that a mini Ofsted style review has been done with one subject area and DCE is happy with the progress being made in this area. Affordable options are key for this particular development plan area.
- DCE informed governors that the new PSHE, SMSC and Relationships/Sex Education Policy is live from September. Governors were informed that the parental survey has been started and surveys are being done in lessons also.

- Needs of learners and key aims was highlighted. DCE shared that he has been looking at whether this is appropriate for all, or whether there should be some adjustment for some students with regard to MFL.
- Attention was drawn to CPD and DCE confirmed that a lot of in house training and Chimney House Alliance CPD is taking place. **TC highlighted that CPD was discussed in detail at the Business meeting and the sub-committee agreed that the school does get the best out of its limited budget.** DCE shared that the focus is on exam and coursework feedback CPD, and that the school supports exam markers and staff that undertake subject lead courses, as this is beneficial to the school.
- DCE highlighted the work around Assessment and shared that this is shown through the ARR minutes. Governors were informed that the new Marking and Feedback Policy has been a big focus this year.
- DCE highlighted the work around the T&L Policy and informed governors that reading is the highest priority and, in particular, how children access age appropriate reading. In addition, Form Time reading has been adjusted to make it more relevant and, where appropriate, more boy friendly. More articles are part of the reading programme and discussions are taking place as well as reading literature. DCE informed governors that a literacy fund is receive for those below the secondary ready level, however, the school does spend more than the funds received.
- Pupil work has become a big part of Ofsted, this includes the quantity and quality of work. DCE highlighted that moderation of curriculum time and student work is key, to ensure balance. **TM asked whether the aim is for students work to be a revision ready document.** DCE confirmed that this is partly the case.
- DCE informed governors that Behaviour and Attitude is not a high priority area and, although he is still looking at house system, this remains a very strong area of the school. **TM asked whether the review of the House System is around its relevance.** DCE confirmed that it isn't about its relevance generally, but it is about making sure that it remains relevant for the changing cohorts, and that he is looking at trends and events. **MHJ asked whether the school tracks who wins and if there is any analysis over whether a particular House consistently wins.** DCE shared that the school does analyse results but this does not affect future results, highlighting that it is common for the Houses to have particular strengths. DCE shared that that the children are motivated to do well, and specialists are shared out across the Houses so that each gets a fair opportunity. **AA shared that, from her parental perspective, she felt the system was not stale and therefore it was about ensuring that this remains the case.**
- Personal development was highlighted and DCE shared that this includes SMSC and British Values, and also includes moving students on to the next phase of their life. DCE informed governors that the school's careers work is undertaken against the Gatsby benchmark and therefore the school scores highly on this provision. DCE shared that the school's Careers Advisor is very experienced and the school has contracted her out for one day per week and replaced this day with a person to undertake the admin elements of her role etc. DCE informed Governors that the school show was fantastic, that it was extremely well attended and even sold out on the second night. DCE highlighted that it was at the Crewe Lyceum for the second year which is an excellent opportunity and the school ensures it gets as many students as possible involved, on stage and behind the scenes.
- With regard to Leadership & Management, governors were informed that surveys are done at Parents' Evenings and are reviewed and followed up appropriately. DCE shared that Governance is an area for the LGB to review. ST highlighted that evidence of governance support is key and the LGB has done some work at improving reporting etc. from link visits.
- DCE informed governors that safeguarding remains a big strength of the school but this area still is high on the development plan.

- DCE highlighted that BL6 is still a separate entity on the Ofsted inspection but there is some overlap.

No other questions were raised and the Development Plan updated was accepted by governors.

Outcome: Governors accepted the verbal update to the Development Plan provided in November 2019.

7. Headteacher's Report

A copy of the Headteacher's report was provided prior to the meeting with the expectation that governors have read through this in advance, however, the following was highlighted/discussed specifically:-

Admissions and Mobility

- DCE confirmed that the school is over PAN, but at actual capacity at the moment. **TM asked for clarity about the current process for in-year admissions.** DCE provided an update on the previous agreement around in-year admissions and shared that the PAN remains at 215, but the school is able to admit above this number, up to actual capacity with the aim to maximise funding without increasing the number of classes. DCE informed governors that if the school has capacity at any ability level in the year group in question, then the school would recommend admitting. If it cannot do this, then it will not recommend admitting.
- DCE shared that he has spoken to families of children that have left the school and had no concerns about trends or school related issues.
- **KJ queried the lateness of the student in Year 11 going to a special school.** DCE confirmed that BLS had been trying to facilitate this for some time.
- **KJ queried the managed move entry on the report.** DCE shared that this was a student which BLS had taken on a managed move that was unsuccessful. DCE shared that this is not technically a leaver as we didn't have them fully on roll. **KJ queried why they were included in these figures.** DCE confirmed that this is because of the dual roll position for managed moved students. **AA highlighted that new advice is not to do managed moves but instead to 'permanently exclude' in order to make the LA responsible for the child, and asked whether the school had considered this new information.** DCE shared that he was aware of this and suggested that was a turnaround which wouldn't always benefit the child. **AA felt that Ofsted will be scrutinising managed moves, alternative provision and registrations with C codes, forcing schools to change practice.** DCE shared that when schools are trying to off-roll then this is appropriate, but if it is not about off-rolling and it is about continuity of education, then managed moves can still be considered. DCE shared that for BLS, managed moves are done through the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) Group, which is driven by the LA.
- **ST highlighted the feedback from new starters visits was she felt was positive.**

Attendance

- DCE highlighted that detailed reporting is done via the students' sub-committee and therefore the information included in his report is just a summary.
- Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) were highlighted and DCE informed governors that this is a way of the school notifying the LA of unacceptable attendance levels. Following this there will be a package of support to improve attendance. DCE highlighted that although the number of FPN issued looks high for one month, this will be the full Autumn term notices.
- CMOOE (Children Missing out on Education) was highlighted and DCE informed governors that this category includes students that may be on part-time timetables, medical leave etc. DCE also highlighted Children Missing from Education (CME) and explained that children in this category is those who are not attending school.
- **Governors queried whether there was any scope to include BL6 in the future reporting, highlighting that this could include reports on warning letters issued for attendance, for example.** DCE shared that this report covers the statutory elements only, but there is some scope to extend this. DCE highlighted that the attendance in BL6 is very good.

- JT queried whether there is an overlap with students across the different categories. DCE confirmed that they are all different and there wouldn't be a cross over a student would fall into one category or another. MHJ asked whether DCE feels that issuing a FPN has an impact on attendance. DCE confirmed that the school does not benefit from an FPN as the LA collect the fines, however, reiterated that from the school's perspective, it is helpful in notifying the LA of absenteeism. MHJ asked whether the school has found itself having to reissue FPN's to the same families. DCE confirmed that he is not in the situation at the moment, but it has in the past.

Action: DCE to incorporate BL6 data into the attendance report.

LAC / PLAC / SEN / Disadvantaged

- DCE highlighted that both LAC (Looked after Children) and PLAC (Previously Looked after Children) are treated the same in terms of funding and intervention/support required.
- DCE drew attention to the numbers of SEN children and highlighted that 120 is a significant number to have in this category. AA stated that, as the SEN link, she felt the school's SENCO was excellent and had a wealth of information and evidence to support what she had done with the children in school.
- Governors were informed that the school's FSM and PP numbers were lower than national average.

Correspondence

- DCE highlighted that he has recently received some positive notes from parents about their child's education at BLS which is welcomed.
- AA asked if there was a button on the website that parents could press and send a message about what is great and what they are happy with. DCE said that he would look into this. TC recommended DCE looks into Net Promoter Score.

Action: DCE to look into a link from the website for parents to share positive feedback (to consider Net Promoter Score)

Uniform

- DCE shared that he has been looking at some piping on the blazer and recommends that governors consider this change to the uniform, but highlighted that he is not recommending any other changes at this stage. AA felt that reflective strips could be considered as some children are working down country lanes and this would be reassuring for some parents. DCE shared that he would look into this but was not sure that this was an option available. Examples of a piped blazer was shown and governors agreed to go ahead with some consultation around this. It was also agreed that governors who are also parents shall be part of the working group to look at consultation feedback.
- TM asked whether the school could consider a fleece rather than the jumper. After brief consideration, it was felt that this could be something to consider in the future.
- TMc asked whether the school can we revisit skirts that can't be rolled up. DCE shared that girls from other schools with kilt like skirts share that this style is a big issue for them, therefore he felt that the school's approach should be to make sure that uniform is worn correctly.
- JF and ACE confirmed that the Trust do not need to be involved with decisions around uniform as it forms part of the school identity.
- TMc asked about sixth form uniform and whether this was going to be considered. DCE shared that this is difficult as no-uniform is something they bought into.

Outcome: Governors agreed for the school to commence consultation on potential changes to the blazer which forms part of the school uniform.

Outcome: LGB members who are also parents are to be part of the working group looking at feedback from the consultation.

Action: DCE to commence the uniform consultation as per the agreement above.

Achievement and Standards

- DCE informed governors that work has been done on mock predictions to make them more accurate and current indications suggest that English seem secure, maths appear to be underestimating and textiles seems to show a big turnaround. DCE shared that this topic was looked at in more detail within the ARR sub-committee.
- DCE shared that data suggests that more children are getting better in the 8 subjects that they do.
- **Governors wished to express congratulations to the headteacher and staff on BLS' position within the league tables that have recently been published.**

SLT Performance Management

- DCE informed governors that the process for SLT is less defined than the one included in the PM policy for other staff. DCE shared that he would like to put forward a proposal around how he thinks it could be improved.
- DCE shared that the Headteacher standards are being updated and he plans to include elements of these. DCE also gave an overview of the areas that he feels the process should be based around. Governors were provided with a copy of DCE's proposal for consideration and recommended that this was put forward to be considered by the Trust.
- **KJ felt that there was a lot of statements included in the document and JT also agreed with this.** DCE shared that this follows the HT model and the expectation is for comments on the range of areas rather than individually. **KJ agreed that he was satisfied after this clarification.**
- ST asked about the governance element and queried if there is a focus on encouraging middle leaders to be members of governing boards in line with national recommendations to improve knowledge of governance. **JT felt that this was covered to some extent with the sub-committee structure. TC asked whether all SLT members take part in governors' meetings to some extent.** DCE confirmed that they take part in sub-committees. Governors therefore felt that this was being picked up through the current structure.

Outcome: Governors agreed to put the proposed SLT PM process forward to the Trust for consideration.

CIF

- DCE informed governors that the school is unlikely to be successful with its CIF bid due to new criteria that was not obvious at the time of applying. DCE highlighted that included in the criteria was the requirement for 3% in order to qualify. DCE shared that he was not certain how critical this criteria was, so remained uncertain about the likelihood of success.
- **TM stated that the criteria seems to make no sense as the schools who didn't have 3% reserves were in greater need.** DCE highlighted that the number of projects has reduced over the years and this may be a factor in the changes to criteria. **KJ asked who sets the rules for the CIF bid** and DCE confirmed that this is the government.
- ACE shared that there is a fallback position which is that the school could get a loan to achieve the 3% needed, but queried whether a school could afford a loan if it is in this position.
- **DV asked whether the white mobile should be taken down if it is in such a bad state of repair.** DCE shared that it needs to be there to support CIF bid but that measures have been taken to secure it.
- The outcome will be known on 31st March. DCE will share the outcome with governors.

Action: DCE to share the outcome of the CIF bid with governors.

Expansion

- DCE provided an update on the Phase 1 part of the plans with the LA and clarified that this is the reason the school has updated its in year admissions process.
- Governors were informed that an update on Phase 2 would be given under the Part 2 agenda.

Business Case

- DCE confirmed that there has been no representations made to him, nor any Trade Union representations. DCE shared that a lot of effort went into the case and feels that this is shown through the lack of representations made.

- Governors were informed that letters of formal notification will be sent to staff by 9th March 2020.

School Improvement

- DCE informed governors that the focus is now on being Ofsted ready and that he is planning on making visits to some schools that have been recently inspected to gather information.
- Governors were informed that English is an area of focus due to the mismatch with results last year. DCE shared that he has looked at work, groupings, boys' engagement and the texts being used.
- Governors were informed that the SLE visit for MFL gave some powerful suggestions and the new HOCA is keen to work with these.
- AA shared that the English and Maths Hubs have said that schools can register for their next round of free training (not sixth form). DCE will look into this to see if the school is eligible.

Action: DCE to look into training opportunities via the English and Maths Hub.

8. Pay Progress / Performance Management Report 2018-19

A copy of the report with the overview of decisions from the Pay Panel was provided to governors prior to the meeting and DCE confirmed that no appeals against decisions have been lodged.

The Pay Panel confirmed that they were satisfied with the process, which they felt was comprehensive, robust and transparent. The Business Committee also confirmed that the report had been discussed within their sub-committee meeting.

DCE shared that you need to factor in the gender balance of staff when looking at the figures.

Outcome: DCE to look into training opportunities via the English and Maths Hub.

9. School Term Dates 2020/21 and 2021/22

2020/21

- Governors were provided with the recommendation to change the Inset Day in December from Friday 18th to Friday 11th.
- TC asked why the school wanted to change the inset day. DCE felt that this would make it more Inset and work focused rather than Christmas based. MHJ supported this reason and agreed that it is important for inset days to be for staff development.
- Governors were in agreement with the proposed change.

Outcome: Governors agreed to change the Inset Day in December 2020. The new Inset Day will be Friday 11th December 2020.

Action: DCE to ensure that appropriate stakeholders are informed of the change to the Inset Day.

2021/22

- A copy of the proposed model for term dates 2021/22 was provided to governors in advance of the meeting and DCE recommended that these are approved.
- ACE queried whether these fit in with other local authorities and local schools. DCE shared that the Cheshire East model has been used and this sits very closely to the Chester and Cheshire West model also. DCE shared that the model for April, using the first two weeks in April, has become relatively common.
- Governors agreed to accept the recommended term dates for 2021/22.

Outcome: Governors agreed to accept the term dates for 2021/22 as presented to them.

10. Policy Approval

There were no policies for approval at this meeting.

11. Governance

Membership

- Governors were informed of the new appointment of Mr M Webb earlier in the meeting and ST formally welcomed him to the LGB.
- Governors were informed of the resignation from Mrs M Mulliner earlier in the meeting. ST shared that MM has done this reluctantly due to personal reasons, but is keen to support the school in any way that she can.
- As a result of MM's resignation, there is now one vacancy and ST asked for any recommendations for a replacement to be forwarded to her or the Clerk.

Link Governors

- Link visits – ST confirmed that the newly agreed model appears to have worked well, as did the filing system on Governorhub. The Clerk confirmed that visits for all link roles have either taken place already or are scheduled and due to take place imminently.
- All governors to ensure their Link reports are handed in to the Clerk as soon as possible.
- The updated Link Grid was accepted but one change - TM is Chair of Students sub-committee (not KJ).

Skills Audit

- The Clerk to update the skills audit following MW's appointment and MM's resignation to ascertain where there are skills gaps. This can then be used to aid the appointment to the current vacancy.

12. MAT Update

A copy of a report from the CEO was provided prior to the meeting. The following were highlighted for particular attention, or were raised for discussion at the meeting:-

- ACE confirmed that currently the CEO, the PA/Trust Clerk and Finance Officer are the only paid members of MAT staff.
- ACE shared that point 8 of the headlines from the year was the most significant; pointing out that there is true separation from the LGB and the Trust. ACE shared that Governorhub is used for Directors and Members.
- ACE informed governors that it is likely that there will be two more schools in the Trust, possibly from September.
- ACE highlighted the opportunity that the Trust has to bid for funding to support expansion.
- ACE thanked the governors that were involved in the expansion event this week and shared his view that the event had been successful. The following was discussed linked to the event:-
 - TMc asked how many schools were at the expansion event and ACE confirmed that there were five schools, including BLS.
 - TC shared that his view that transparency around the scheme of delegation is essential for the MAT to expand successfully. KJ agreed that there appeared to be different understandings on various points within this document. ACE confirmed that the scheme of delegation has been shared with all schools and that it will be reviewed in due course.

- ACE confirmed that he would send out the feedback from this event to all governors.
- MHJ shared her experience of a similar event previously and the focus had been about resources etc., not the children, and therefore felt that the starting point for this group on Monday was very positive. ACE agreed that the focus was on the children but shared that the NEP, which was a collaboration of schools was most effective when there was money involved as this gave focus and direction, so the financial side was still important and joining the MAT is a step further at hardening these relationships
- AA felt that the potential improvements to transition could be seen as a positive for parents.
- The updated structure diagram was highlighted and ACE highlighted the various functions of different groups. ACE shared that he felt that the operational group was the most significant section for governors; the trust feel that direction should be significant from the HT and LGB's. ACE shared that the Shadow Operational Group is due to meet for the fourth time this year.
- ACE highlighted that LGB's of schools that join the MAT will have to move to similar style structure with sub-committees covering the same topics, so that the Trust can monitor effectively and with ease.
- ACE shared his view that to choose not to take the lead in its own expansion, then this could be a mistake as it could lead to forced expansion. ACE also highlighted that a MAT of one school is unsustainable as there is duplication. In addition, ACE highlighted that there is a wealth of skills and experienced staff across the schools that are interested which will benefit the MAT.
- AA asked whether the interested schools/academies would join this MAT rather than re-broker a new MAT. ACE and JF confirmed that this is the case. Governors asked whether there is a threat to existing CEO's by joining Brine MAT. ACE shared that in the schools involved, the CEO is the Headteacher and therefore there will be no threat of redundancy although they will not be CEO. ACE highlighted that at the expansion event, schools shared that they were concerned about losing their Headteacher, but highlighted that this is not the plan with the schools involved in discussions currently.
- ST felt that the next piece of work is around the offer to the schools joining the MAT. ACE informed the LGB that schools have also been told that there is not going to be a top slice initially, and that services will be charged on an SLA basis. ACE also confirmed that he is due to go to two schools to meet with governors. ST highlighted that we are still at a very early stage and due diligence will follow.
- ST asked about access to Trustees minutes, as this is not available via Governorhub, and shared her view that the inclusion of BLS and the LGB in Trust decisions/outcomes has been limited. ACE and JF confirmed that the minutes are public documents and are uploaded onto the MAT website. ACE accepted that until recently the Operational Group has not been in place but this is being addressed now. ACE and JF both confirmed that the aim of the Trust is to improve outcomes and experiences for children and they will address the necessary issues in order to reach this aim. TMc felt that staff have had a limited amount of information about the MAT, and shared his view that the staffs' general view is that the MAT is about saving money rather than improving outcomes for children. TMc recommended that information should be provided to staff around this. ACE shared that the updated vision came out of the Shadow Operational Group meetings, and the event on Monday showed that there was agreement on vision and values. ACE also felt that something could be produced to provide to staff giving more information on the MAT.
- ST asked about LGB attendance at the AGM's in future and asked whether this can be considered.

Action: ACE to share outcomes of the MAT Expansion Event to all LGB members.

Action: ACE to look at an information document for BLS staff to give more detail about the MAT and its aims.

13. Cheshire East Directors' Report

A copy of the Spring Term Director's Report was provided to governors prior to the meeting and the Clerk highlighted the sections of the report that were particularly relevant for governors.

DCE shared that the fact that the Local Authority's Children's Services being rated 'requires improvement' is still an issue and schools are being asked to demonstrate how they are coping with this.

14. Future Meetings

Wednesday 20th May 2020 at 6.00 pm
Wednesday 8th July 2020 at 3.45 pm

Governors should note the dates of sub-committee meetings as per the calendar of meetings and the latest set of sub-committee minutes.

End of Meeting