

BRINE LEAS SCHOOL

An Academy

Local Governing Board Meeting

Held on Wednesday 23rd October 2019

MINUTES – PART 1

Present:	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
	Dr K Jones	(KJ)	Appointed Governor
	Mr T Maclellan	(TMN)	Elected Staff Governor
	Mrs J Thomas	(JT)	Appointed Governor
	Mrs S Turner	(ST)	Elected Parent Governor (Chair)
	Mrs D Varley	(DV)	Elected Parent Governor

In Attendance: Mr A Cliffe (CEO, Brine MAT) and Mrs E Fletcher (Clerk)

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs A Ashley and Mrs M Mulliner. Apologies were considered carefully and governors agreed to accept them for this meeting. In addition, absence without apologies was noted in respect of Mr T Marsden.

Outcome: Governors accepted apologies from Mrs A Ashley and Mrs M Mulliner.

Outcome: Governors noted absence without apologies in respect of Mr T Marsden.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded that they are required to complete an annual Declarations of Interest form which is available via Governorhub and needs to be forwarded to the Clerk as soon as possible.

No declarations of interest were raised in respect of this meeting's agenda.

3. Appointment of Chair

The Clerk chaired this agenda item on behalf of the LGB.

Requests for nominations were requested prior to the meeting. No nominations were submitted prior to the meeting and the Clerk therefore asked for any nominations to be put forward at the meeting.

Minutes Approved by Chair of Governors Date:

One nomination in respect of Su Turner was put forward and this was seconded. The Clerk asked ST whether she would like to accept the nomination and ST confirmed that she would accept this. The Clerk then put this to the vote and all governors present were in favour of the appointment of Su Turner as Chair for a one-year period.

Outcome: Su Turner was appointed as Chair of the LGB for a one-year period.

4. Results

A copy of the results presentation was provided to Governors in advance of the meeting. ST explained that a full presentation would not be done at the LGB meeting as this had been presented and discussed in detail at the recent ARR meeting.

DCE confirmed that he has had an opportunity to analyse the results in more detail since the presentation to the ARR Sub-committee and shared that, although the formal results for the area are not known yet, the information received to date suggests that BLS is in the top 3rd of the county and achieved just above 0 (zero) for progress.

TC asked if this was down or up compared to last year. DCE confirmed that this was down overall for a mixture of reasons, DCE shared that there is a belief amongst schools that English results are being brought down nationally so that they are more in line with Maths. DCE shared that, if this is the case, then it would explain the drop in BLS results for English. DCE highlighted that MFL results are low but shared that this is the case nationally.

DCE highlighted that Ebacc seems to be very high on Ofsted agenda so the school must consider this carefully when it reviews the stance it has on option choice at KS4. DCE shared that some schools are choosing to do different entering strategies and these need to be considered. TMN asked how wedded the school is to the Ebacc route. DCE shared that this is something that needs careful consideration by governors and it will come down to the direction the governors would like to take.

MHJ queried whether the school has staff who are markers in school for any subjects. DCE confirmed that there are and that most subjects are covered. DCE shared that this includes principal examiners also.

TC asked whether the areas for addressing will be followed up through the sub-committees. Both DCE and MHJ confirmed that this is the case. TMN queried whether this applied to 6th Form outcomes also. DCE confirmed this is the case.

TC asked how BL6 performed compared to other institutes. DCE shared that national figures aren't confirmed yet but highlighted that BL6 was very close to its target. DCE highlighted that the pass rate is good, the points per student is good also, and the destinations is very good. KJ asked what the numbers were in Year 13 and DCE confirmed this was 137. KJ highlighted that the school was only one child away from the target based on those figures. MHJ highlighted the gender gap at Year 11 and asked this was the same for the Year 13 group. DCE informed governors that he can't do this until the national figures are known, but shared that from experience, maturity has a significant impact on the gap in Year 11 for boys and this often closes and can sometimes reverse itself by Year 13. DCE shared that Sandbach Boys have had a higher attainment rate than BLS this year, so that is something to consider.

DCE informed governors that the new data system (SMID) is much clearer and staff are relishing this and the data it can provide them.

DCE shared that development plans have been updated to reflect the areas of focus following the results. ST highlighted that the ARR Sub-committee have been through the results in fine detail.

5. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes from the Part 1 meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019 were provided prior to the meeting and were put forward for approval as a true and accurate record of the meeting. All governors present approved the minutes.

Outcome: Governors accepted the Part 1 minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019 as a true and accurate record

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by this meeting's agenda.

7. Visioning Exercise (July)

A full report was not available at the time of the meeting, although ST highlighted the post-session discussion notes that were included on the July minutes.

ST shared that, in her view, work needs to be done using the Ofsted Framework and that Link Governor roles will be tweaked as a result of the discussions.

Governors asked their view on how useful the session was. Overall, governors present felt that this had been a useful exercise and felt that it would be a good exercise to ask staff their views on how useful this was. It was agreed that TMN would follow this up as the elected staff governor. DCE felt that they value the time of governors and feel they have been listened to.

DCE shared that as a result of the session this year, departmental development plans link with the whole school one better.

ST felt that July gives an opportunity to decide the key lines of enquiry for the forthcoming year and MHJ felt it was useful to meet with the staff.

Action: TMN to ask staff their view on the usefulness of the July visioning session from their perspective.

8. Sub-Committee Feedback (ARR, Business and Students' Sub-Committees)

- A copy of the full set of draft minutes from all three sub-committee meetings held in September were provided to governors prior to the meeting. Comments were invited and although none were raised, governor were invited to pass any issues with the minutes to the Clerk in advance of the next set of sub-committee meetings.
- Governors agreed to accept the proposed Terms of References put forward by each sub-committee.
- A copy of the updated Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy was put forward and asked the LGB to approve this for submission to the Trustees for final approval. It was highlighted that this had been seen by the Students' committee who are recommending its approval. **MHJ asked about gaming and the trend for young children to develop gambling addictions and questioned whether this featured significantly enough in the new policy.**

Governors felt that this needed following up despite the policy following the guidance which is to follow the CE model policy exactly, particularly given the situation with the Local Authority's Ofsted position regarding safeguarding. DCE shared that the Board who produced the model policy are a newly formed panel that have been set up since the Ofsted findings and therefore the school has no reason to be concerned about the suitability of this. In addition, DCE shared that Cheshire East schools have agreed to follow this model. **Governors noted that the safeguarding at Cheshire East have failed their Ofsted and they needed to be mindful of the decision to rely on this authority on safeguarding issues.** DCE confirmed that SCiES, who have led on the writing of this policy, is different to the safeguarding team and governors accepted this.

The use of the term 'children' was queried as this is different that the school's normal use of student in policies. DCE confirmed that this is a legal term and would be used in policies such as the Safeguarding policy when there is a need to emphasise the fact that they are children and therefore the imbalance of power between them and adults. Governors accepted the policy as presented, subject to Trustee approval.

- A copy of the new Assessment (ARR) Policy was provided to governors prior to the meeting. It was highlighted that due to the number of absences at the meeting, it was not quorate to approve this after taking DCE out of the equation as he was putting it forward for approval. The sub-committee confirmed that they had no issue with the policy and recommend its approval. Governors present all agreed to approve the policy.
- There were no other matters arising from the sub-committee meetings held in September.

Action: Governors to pass any comments on sub-committee minutes via the Clerk.

Outcome: Governors accepted the Terms of Reference for the ARR Sub-committee.

Outcome: Governors accepted the Terms of Reference for the Business Sub-committee

Outcome: Governors accepted the Terms of Reference for the Students' Sub-committee

Outcome: Governors accepted the updated Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

Outcome: Governors accepted the new Assessment (ARR) Policy

9. Whole School Improvement Plan and SES

A copy of the Whole School Development Plan was not provided as DCE confirmed that the version presented at the July meeting (available on Governorhub) was still relevant although it was in the process of being updated. This will be provided to governors at the next meeting.

A copy of the SES was provided to governors prior to the meeting and DCE highlighted that the areas in bold are also featured in the improvement plan. **TC asked if the areas that aren't bold are already good enough?** DCE shared that these will still feature in the development plan, but not the improvement plan.

The key areas were highlighted as follows:-

Quality of Education

- Work scrutiny – HMI research visit has triggered this area of improvement in that the school now follows what they would look at in an inspection pattern.

- Curriculum intent – DCE shared that the school has nearly completed for this year, which ahead of schedule. DV asked if the curriculum changes much from year to year. DCE shared that at KS3 it's about ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum is offered, rather than preparing for KS4. At KS4 there will be changes to an extent, depending on what exam boards are being used. MHJ asked about the regulations around SEN students' curriculum to ensure that it is still relevant, appropriate and tailored to meet their needs, rather than simply being a lower level version of the main school curriculum. DCE gave examples of changes made for a group of students in science, which gave them an appropriate curriculum. Governors were satisfied with the description, but all agreed that this could be a topic for discussion at Students sub-committee to ensure that governors were completely satisfied on this issue.
- EHCP – DCE reminded governors that the school has a significant number of children with an EHCP coming through.
- DCE shared that quality of education is 50% of an Ofsted inspection, which he felt was completely appropriate.
- DCE shared that he has gone through the SES with staff although work on this is still quite raw.
- ST shared that all the schools she works with, at inspections, governors are expected to understand the curriculum offer, how it has been reached and how it is delivering this. ST suggested that governors need to understand this better. DCE shared that key thing is the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum; if a school isn't following national curriculum there may be issues. DCE confirmed that that school follows the national curriculum as a minimum. DCE then highlighted that at KS4 and KS5 it is about what courses and qualifications they are being entered in, Ebacc subjects, then attainment. DCE shared that data is less relevant for quality of education and therefore a list of standard questions for link visits is probably the way to address this. ST to look at this and prepare a framework in conjunction with the Clerk.

Action: ST and the Clerk to prepare a link governor framework.

Behaviour and Attitudes

- DCE shared that the school is strong on behaviour and attitudes, including surveying children and parents. DCE highlighted that lesson observations include asking children their views. MHJ asked whether the school is checking their thirst for knowledge as raised at last Ofsted. DCE shared that this is demonstrated through positive behaviour in lessons.
- DCE informed governors that he is working on demonstrating the effectiveness of intervention groups. DCE highlighted the Think Reading programme which, in one case, has made 7 years difference to a child's reading age. DCE confirmed that reading isn't included on a deep dive inspection, but literacy and numeracy is.
- ST highlighted that governors should also be noting behaviour when they are in the school and queried how governors can demonstrate/share this. It was highlighted that governors should be challenging the behaviour reports in sub-committee meetings also. TC asked if DCE felt that there were areas for improvement in all sections of behaviour and attitudes, as the SES suggests. DCE confirmed that there was work needed on evidencing it rather than it being an area for improvement. DCE felt that nearly everything in this section is around evidencing. ACE suggested that an observation on this could be included in the link governor reports. JT also felt that it would be useful to include this in the reports, to capture things seen during visits that they don't normally have a formal route to share.

- DCE shared that the new Pastoral Manager is reviewing and making changes to the pastoral system so this will have an impact on the document in due course.

Personal Development

- DCE informed governors that updates to this section will be made when he has investigated this area in more detail.

Leadership and Management

- CPD remains a focus.
- DCE shared that he needs to investigate what is being done with the surveys completed and what impact they are having.

Overall Effectiveness

- DCE informed governors that this is about how students are involved in personally improving their progress.

Governance

- DCE highlighted that this section needs reviewing and completing by governors.

ST shared this document is about DCE cross-checking all areas of school against the Ofsted key lines of enquiry then ensuring that leaders are aware of their roles in achieving this and are putting it into their improvement plans. DCE confirmed that this is secure with middle leaders and impact will be looked at over the next few weeks.

TC queried how governors would go about looking into one particular element and then following this up. DCE confirmed that this would be done like a deep dive process, looking for it everywhere, using the sub-committees, discussions with DCE, information from link governors.

KJ asked if there was a timescale for when things were going to not be bold any more. DCE confirmed that there is a timescale on the improvement plan that sits below the SES. DCE confirmed that he is being very cautious now and feels that some things will move very quickly.

ST shared that she would welcome a few governors to meet outside of this meeting to look at the SES and Improvement plan in more detail, to look for change. After consideration, it was agreed to hold a separate additional LGB meeting for this specifically.

Action: The Clerk, in conjunction with ST, to arrange an additional LGB meeting to look at the SES and Improvement Plan.

10. Head's Report

A copy of the full Headteacher's Report was provided to governors prior to the meeting. DCE highlighted that some standing items on the report are now fully reported within sub-committees following the recent structure changes and therefore, it may not be necessary to report in the same way as before.

- Mobility
 - DCE shared that it was very early in the year, so this will be updated at the next meeting. In the meantime, DCE informed governors that over 400 applications had been received so far for Year 7 places in September.

- DCE highlighted that 1075 is the technical PAN for the school Year 7-11; this has not been determined again since the capacity of the school has been increased.
- Governors were informed that the Gazetteer is about to be redone which may have an impact on admissions.
- DCE shared that numbers on roll are pleasing and he had no concerns regarding mobility.
- Governors were informed that there will be two big year groups next year; the new Year 7 to replace current Year 11 and also the current Year 7 into 8.
- With regard to in-year admissions, DCE highlighted to governors that they will need to review how this is done to maximise income where possible, without causing prejudice to the current children on roll. DCE shared that his recommendation is that consideration to capacity within the Year Group at any ability is considered rather than just looking at the PAN. In summary, his recommendation is that when looking at in-year admissions that potentially takes the school over PAN, the school must be satisfied it could take a child in any ability group without causing prejudice to other students already on roll and basing the recommendation to governors on this. Governors all agreed with this general philosophy and agreed to hold a more detail discussion in the Part 2 meeting.

Outcome: Governors agreed, in principle, with the recommendation regarding in-year admissions, subject to a detailed discussion and approval in Part 2.

- Attendance

DCE shared that this is slightly lower than target, but this was due to the widespread absence in February due to illness.

- LAC, SEN and PP

- DCE confirmed that numbers in this category are increasing.
- Governors were informed that some of BLS' high needs children are very high needs.
- TC asked if the categories were mutually exclusive and DCE confirmed that there is overlap.
- It was agreed that national figures will be included on future reports. In the meantime, DCE confirmed that BLS is certainly above national average. TC queried whether this places an additional strain on the school. DCE confirmed that it does, and highlighted that although there is funding, the school is required to pay for the first proportion of resources for that child. DCE also highlighted that the gap between what is received and what is required is significant, but he tries to maximise funding as much as possible.
- DCE shared that there is an opportunity to challenge the admission of EHCP children if the school feels it cannot meet their needs but highlighted that this is difficult if the funding is significant.

Action: DCE to include national averages on reporting in this category in future reports.

- Build Projects

- DCE confirmed that the new extension to D Block has been handed over and is at practical completion stage. There is snagging to be done and a programme is planned over half term.
- The main hall lights and ceiling have been completed on the back of the roof project.
- The labs replacement works have finished on time and in budget.

- School Finances – Outcomes of SRMA Report

- DCE highlighted that the % of the budget spent on staff salaries is an area of critique, however, governors were reminded that the number of staff per student is average so this supports the theory that the income is too low.
- DCE shared that spending on resources has also been raised as a concern and shared his view that this is correct and needs addressing.
- Reserves has been raised as an issue, however, DCE pointed out that the school is in this position because it doesn't receive enough funding to have a reserve.
- ACE shared that lots of positives have still come out of the report.

- School Funding
 - The governors reviewed the funding grid for the Cheshire East area that was provided to them via DCE.
 - DCE shared with governors that, in his opinion, the ESFA visits to schools must have shown the government that more funding is needed, and this has been addressed. DCE is relatively confident that funding will increase to £5k per student in 2020. DCE shared that they are still going to parachute some schools down to the minimum. DCE confirmed that he is not as concerned as he was about the method that Cheshire East chose to apply the funding formula, as the guidelines that have been released state the minimum £5k per student should be received by schools. DCE shared that it is possible that the school could receive more than £5k per student.
- Ofsted

An update on where we are with regard to recommendations from the last Ofsted report was provided and DCE shared that this is all factored in the improvement plan.

11. Teacher's Pay Award

A copy of the full proposal was provided to the LGB prior to the meeting. DCE recommended that LGB should follow other schools and apply the 2.75% across the board. DCE shared that the school will receive funding for 0.75% of this and school will need to fund the remaining 2%.

ST felt that it was important to follow the recommendation but queried whether can it be afforded. DCE felt that other schools have all asked the same and outlined that he feels there are things in the budget can be delayed in order to make it affordable without impacting too greatly. DCE also highlighted that very few staff in school are not already on the top of their scale anyway.

TMN highlighted that the school is about to go through a cost saving business case and therefore asked whether governors felt this was appropriate. DCE felt that this was still appropriate as the business case is not focusing on redundancies.

MHJ shared a view that staff are always being asked to do more so therefore if it is affordable then governors should approve this.

JT felt that turnover of staff could be affected if it was not approved.

After consideration, governors felt that it should be approved on the basis that they are satisfied with the savings needed to achieve this and subject to union consultation and Trustees reaching the same overall decision.

The Clerk confirmed that Trustees also felt the school should follow the recommendation to apply the 2.75% across the board on all salary ranges.

Outcome: The LGB, with Trustee approval, accepted the recommendation to apply the 2.75% teachers pay award to all salary points, across all pay ranges with effect from 1st September 2019.

12. Policy Approval/Acceptance

Governors were informed that the Pay Policy has been delayed due to the late pay award announcement. Work is also being done to simplify this document. This will be brought to the LGB in due course.

13. Governance

Link Visits

No visits have taken place this term so far.

Changes to Membership

Governors were informed that since the last meeting, Kerrie Salisbury has resigned from the LGB. ST highlighted that she remains very involved with the school in other capacities and the LGB was grateful to Kerrie for her input.

This leaves one appointed governor vacancy on the LGB.

Action: ST and the Clerk to review the skills audit information to identify needs for LGB Governor vacancy.

14. Future Meetings

ST and the Clerk will look for a suitable date for an extraordinary meeting prior to the February schedule meeting. Governors will be informed of the date/time in due course.

Subject to the above, dates of future LGB meetings are as follows:-

- Wednesday 26th February 2020 at 6.00 pm
- 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