



**Biddenham International School & Sports College: Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Board  
held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.00pm**

	<p>The Head Boy had sent his apologies to the meeting. Since the last meeting, the Student Forum had discussed whether there was a preference for online or face-to-face Parents’ Evenings. Students had been divided but a slight preference was shown for face-to-face meetings (8/5). The Student Forum had also discussed the re-wording of the small reports and had received feedback from the SLT that these were already being reviewed, with a view to making them more encouraging for students. The new PSHE curriculum was generally liked by students, but it sometimes caused “information overload” so the Student Forum had suggested that group work be increased, and more reticent students should be encouraged to get more involved. MC had attended the Year 7 First Give project. All seemed to be going well and the Year 7 students had worked hard on this project. The recent talent show had been very successful – MC and the Deputy Head Girl had both performed. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that participants had primarily been from Year 7.</i> The judging of the Year 7 presentations would take place on 21<sup>st</sup> March and MC was pleased that she would be involved. A Culture Day was being organised for 25<sup>th</sup> April and it was hoped that parents of 6<sup>th</sup> Form students would provide food to sell to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form students, to raise funds for the Prom. The Prom Committee was up and running. A 6<sup>th</sup> Form sweet sale had also been held last week to raise funds. The school-wide Christmas in a Box had been very successful, and the food bank had been very appreciative of the donations. The senior Prefect Team were organising this year’s Year Book, and it was noted that last year’s had proved very successful. DB added that the recent Spring into Dance – which had featured MC quite heavily - had been a great triumph. CB had attended this year for the first time and had been really impressed. <i>Governors were interested that students had discussed the various approaches to Parents’ Evening and queried whether parents’ views were known.</i> In response, MC explained that students had discussed their own parents’ views, which were also divided. Some felt that virtual meetings were better as they were more convenient, provided greater flexibility and did not involve a trip to school (which was tricky for some parents). The virtual approach had also increased participation. However, they were very short (5 mins) and there had been particular issues with Science where all three subjects had to be covered in one 5 minute appointment. Although the short sessions could help focus discussions, it was felt this approach might impact negatively on the affiliative nature of Parents’ Evening (both between teachers and parents, and between parents) and reduced the sense of school community. There had also been some connectivity issues and teachers being interrupted by people walking into the room during the meetings. Some parents also preferred face-to-face meetings as this allowed them to meet the teacher properly. Overall, it was felt there were pros and cons to both approach and the ideal would be to offer a blended approach (although this may not be practically possible). It was noted that the virtual approach had allowed feedback to continue throughout the pandemic. <i>Governors queried how many Parents’ Evenings were held each year and it was confirmed that there was now only one Parents’ Evening per year group, but there were also 2 further reporting points during the year.</i> In the past, there had been an additional tutor day, when the school had been closed for the day. However, this had stopped some years ago for most year groups (although was still done for Year 7 students). The LA had not been supportive of the school closing as it had resulted in a day out from teaching which wasn’t a teacher training day. Each Year Group’s Parents’ Evening was arranged for a different time of the year, to fit in with the assessment cycle. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that the SLT were currently considering the best approach for Parents’ Evening for next academic year, taking into account the feedback received.</i></p>	
5.0	<p><b>Governing Board:</b>  <b>Governor vacancies</b> – There was currently one co-opted and one parent governor vacancy. DB and CB had met a prospective new Governor (Caron Vacciana) who had a financial background and whose late husband had previously taught at the school. CB proposed that she be appointed as a co-opted governor, to start next term. This was unanimously agreed. The LA had also provided the details of someone who would like to join the Governing Board and it was also felt she would be a good addition. <b>It was unanimously agreed that she be asked to join as an Associate Governor, with a view to moving into another category as a suitable position became available. DB agreed to move forward on the parent governor election process and Governors discussed various arrangements that could be put in place depending on the outcome of this self-nomination / election process.</b>  <b>Governor Visits</b> - CB and CW had met with Emma Latchman and the minutes had been circulated and discussed by the Curriculum Committee. <b>All Governors were reminded of the need to set up a visit in their link area and EG offered to help facilitate initial meetings where required.</b>  <b>Skills Audit</b> – It was agreed this would be completed at the summer meeting, during some small group sessions.  <b>Safeguarding training</b> – see Item 3.  <b>DBS</b> – DB agreed to check whether the Governor DBS records were now complete. SH requested a new application form.</p>	<p>CB/DB DB  All  DB</p>
6.0	<p><b>Budget update and financial approvals</b>  <b>Forecast Out-turn</b> -This had been considered in detail at the last B&amp;W Committee meeting and was tabled today for any additional Governor questions. However, HH advised Governors that the out-turn had changed since this report was completed (in November) as the school had received an additional £34k in growth funding. This would</p>	

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	<p>increase the estimated carry forward to approximately £150k (and possible slightly more). This was recognised to be a strong position, especially as nationally schools were struggling to meet the additional costs associated with Covid. <i>Governors queried what the likely impact would be of the energy price increases and it was confirmed that this was not yet clear.</i> However, it was recognised that the expected increases would impact on all schools. <i>Governors noted that the cost of agency staff had been comparatively low throughout the pandemic and queried whether this was because high staff morale had minimised sickness absence.</i> It was acknowledged that this might have had some impact, but agency cover had also been minimised by the cover arrangements in place in school along with the decision for the SLT to return to the classroom to cover some of the recent absences. Between Christmas and half term there had been 6-8 members of staff off with Covid at any given time. This had reduced around the half term break but was now increasing again. The SLT had felt it was important for them to help cover the absences to show their support during these challenging times. This would also help maintain good behaviours in class, which could sometimes drop when classes were covered by Agency staff. The SLT were enjoying their time in the classroom. DB stressed that all staff were being tremendous at pitching in to keep the school running and to support each other. <b><i>Governors noted that some other schools had received a reasonable amount of funding through the School Supplementary Grant and queried how much BISSC had received. HH agreed to provide this information after the meeting.</i></b></p> <p><b>Finance Manual and scheme of delegation</b> – These had both been considered by the B&amp;W Committee and recommended for approval by the FGB. There were no changes proposed to the delegations in place. The FGB unanimously approved the Finance Manual and scheme of delegation.</p> <p><b>Costed SDP</b> – This had been considered by the B&amp;W Committee and was circulated to the FGB for information.</p>	HH
7.0	<p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>The draft SFVS had been considered by the B&amp;W Committee and the issues raised could be seen in the minutes of that meeting. It was noted that the staff to pupil ratio in school was good. There had been few changes to previous years returns, although a question had been added to capture details of how many staff were paid over £100k. It was noted that the draft SFVS identified no new issues of concern. <i>Governors noted that question 8 referred to the school belonging to DFE’s RPA and queried what this referred to.</i> In response, it was explained that this stood for “Risk Protection Arrangement”, which replaced the need for insurance cover. This approach had saved the school approximately £26k. <i>Governors also noted that question 15 only referred to the LA School Improvement Lead carrying out the Headteacher Appraisal and asked for this response to be expanded to clarify that Governors were also involved in this process.</i> <i>Governors queried whether the school still had a chequebook and whether this still required two signatories.</i> In response it was confirmed there was still one which required two signatories, but it was almost never used. <i>Governors then queried how BACS payments were checked to ensure they were legitimate, and it was explained that BB inputted the invoice onto the system, then HH would check the paperwork and the bank transaction, and then finally DB checked the payment run and countersigned the payment.</i> In addition, EG countersigned every payment over £750. All Governors agreed to approve the draft SFVS and for it to be submitted. Governors reviewed the self-assessment dashboard and were pleased to note how positive it was. The only areas flagged as red were issues where this was actually a positive, such as the pupil to teacher ratio. The “view my financial insights” report - which was part of new benchmarking on the SFVS – had also been circulated. HH explained this was quite a useful exercise, but had been time consuming to fill in. <i>Governors noted that BISSC were paying more in exam fees than the average schools of similar type and queried whether staff were comfortable with this.</i> In response it was explained this was because BISSC did not charge for any exams, where-as some schools charged for re-takes etc. Non educational support staff was also flagged as “amber” (although the median was not given). This was at least partially due to higher cleaning costs, as a result of having so many blocks on site.</p> <p>HH left the meeting.</p>	
8.0	<p><b>Getting Back to Normal</b></p> <p>DB had prepared a presentation for Governors setting out the Covid measures that were to be introduced from 28<sup>th</sup> March and highlighting the current priorities for staff. However, DB explained that these were all subject to possible change due to the current surge in Covid cases in school (and across the Borough). <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that many of these cases were being identified through the current testing regime but that the school were no longer able to order test kits for students.</i> Staff had been issued with a supply and had been asked to continue testing where possible. Governors discussed this issue and noted that individuals were unlikely to continue testing once they needed to pay for the tests, and this may well result in parents keeping their children off school whenever they had potential symptoms. It was also acknowledged that this – and positive cases - may be an issue during exam time, leading to students missing their exams. Given the lack of a national approach this year, there was some concern that it may prove difficult to ensure a fair situation for all students. The need for mask wearing in communal areas in school had been removed last week. However, any student or staff member who wished to continue wearing a mask would be supported to do so, and masks were still being provided in</p>	

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	<p>school. From the week after next, staff would be advised that external doors could be closed, but windows should remain open. The one-way system would be retained as this improved flow around the school, and students would still take their breaks outside as this provided wider health benefits. The increased cleaning regime and elements of social distancing would also be maintained.</p> <p>Teaching &amp; Learning – the current focuses were Ready, Respect, Reward, Aspirations &amp; Expectations, and Quality Work, Quality Feedback. There would be an emphasis on consistency and collaboration, and it was noted that young staff – in particular – had missed out on this due to social distancing. There was great benefit in bringing the school community together to learn from each other, and to use all the expertise in school to help every student reach their full potential. It was also hoped to return to a full programme of trips and external activities. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that a wide range of school clubs were already back in operation.</i> Other priorities included: expect more, expect better, deliberate and purposeful practice and quality first teaching. Governors discussed what these all meant within the school context.</p> <p><i>Governors noted that the proportion of written to spoken work had changed during the pandemic and queried whether this was now returning to normal.</i> One of the restrictions in the early days of the pandemic had been for students to sit in rows, which had discouraged spoken / group work. It had also been difficult to retain any form of structured discussion during periods of on-line learning. However, there was now a much more normal approach in school. Seating plans continued to be in place for all lessons, although there was no longer any need to use these to “track and trace” (which had been very labour intensive). Pair and group work had been reintroduced and there had been a move away from rowed seating where the learning dictated. Whole staff team face to face training had also been reintroduced, to replace the on-line learning that had been necessary over the last few years (although this would depend on the number of staff Covid cases). Virtual lessons would still be made available for students who could not be in school. <i>Governors queried whether students should automatically receive a link to these lessons if they were off, as this did not always seem to be happening.</i> In response, it was confirmed that staff should receive an e-mail to let them know a student was off and a link to the lesson should be made available through google classroom. However, it was accepted that this link may not always be created by staff. Overall thought, it was positive that this provision – which many other schools did not have – could be put in place. The number of visitors, workshops and external agencies in school had increased but this had become discretionary again since January due to the increase in Covid cases. The 6<sup>th</sup> Form Awards Evening had been able to go ahead. There would also be a greater focus on quality first teaching and more in-class feedback on work in books. Assemblies were to be reintroduced this week, and face to face meetings with parents were taking place where needed. Both were important for promoting the sense of school community. Small group work with external agencies and mentoring (both in and out of school) were also now being arranged in person. The non-negotiables and “meet and greet” would both be re-emphasised. It was hoped that face to face transition work could be undertaken this year but would depend on the local Covid situation over the next few months (for Year 6 to 7, Year 11-12 and Year 13 – University). Governors were pleased to hear that – subject to the local Covid situation – the summer term should be much closer to a normal experience. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that sporting fixtures against other schools were now happening again and had been for some time (although with risk assessments for any minibus journeys).</i></p>	
9.0	<p><b>Principal’s Report</b></p> <p>A written Principal’s report had been circulated before the meeting. The current situation with the PAN had been discussed earlier in the meeting. Work to convert the classrooms in T Block (into 4 Science Labs) would need to be completed by September 2022, so alternative accommodation would need to be found for these classes for the end of the summer term. Staff were currently working on the programming for this, using creative solutions to identify additional space which could be used as classrooms temporarily (such as the mezzanine in the new block and the Year 7 break out space). This planning would need to include all required infrastructure (such as additional electrics for the ICT rooms). <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that £100k had been included in the overall build programme to cover the cost of this work (within an overall budget of £4.5M).</i> Consideration had been given to bringing in temporary mobile units, but this would have cost almost £1m – which would have had to be met from within the £4.5M. At present there was only a pathway down one side of the driveway, which was seen to be a safety hazard as students had to cross the road. As part of the Science Lab works, it was hoped to install a pathway along the other side of the driveway. The rest of the works should follow on by September 2022, to be ready for use by Easter 2023.</p>	
10.0	<p><b>Chair’s Report</b></p> <p>A report had been circulated, providing a summary of the Chair’s recent meetings in school. The Chair had attended the carol concert, which had been a fantastic event bringing together a strong school choir with instrumentalists from across the Borough. Adults had also been invited to join in with the Manchester Carols. Students had performed incredibly well, and the event was quite a distinction as few state schools still had a choir. As a result of the event, the Bedford Choral Society had asked the school to provide a junior choir to join them for a concert next</p>	



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	<b>Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance</b> – The draft policy was approved as circulated. It was noted that the review date remained as September 2022 as there were some further changes expected to the national guidance.	
13.0	<b>Any Other Business</b> None.	
14.0	<b>Next Meeting</b> The next meeting was scheduled for 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2022.	

ACTION POINTS		
Item No.	Item	Action
1	Governors to complete on-line Safeguarding training, if not already completed.	All
2	Student Forum to revisit issue of new changing rooms to ensure this was no longer a concern.	MC
3	New Governor to be appointed and Clerk to make contact with prospective new Governor put forward by Bedford Borough.	SN
4	Parent election process to be arranged.	DB
5	All Governors to set up a visit in their link area (EG to help facilitate where required).	All
6	DB to check whether the Governor DBS records were now complete. SH requested a new application form.	DB/SN
7	HH to provide information on funding received through the School Supplementary Grant.	HH
8	B&W Committee to discuss CW's report on safeguarding issues identified by Ofsted.	AD
9	Staff to check whether the Police had the legal right to come into school to arrest a student.	DB/EG
10	Attendance policy to be amended to state that any student arriving between 8am and 8.30am would be marked late.	DB/EG