



GOVERNING BODY

Thursday 26th March 2015 at 6.30pm

GOVERNORS (* indicates present):

<u>Parent</u>	<u>Co-opted</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Ms P Dixon	Mr M Dixon	* Mr C Kitson	Ms R Bynon	* Mrs K Wheeler (HT)
Ms R Medwynter	* Mr S Gascoine		Mr T Williams (Chair)	* Ms K Henderson
* Ms M Thomas	Mrs E Humm		* Mr J Blair	
	* Ms A Ross			
	* Ms B Whelan			
	Mr T Wilkins			

In attendance:

Mr M Parvez, Head of Secondary School
 Ms A Money, Business Manager and Clerk to the GB
 Mr M Beresford, Minuting Secretary

MINUTES

Min	Summary of Action Points or Matters Arising for next meeting	<u>Action</u>
19/15.2	December GB minutes to be signed by Chair	Clerk, Chair
19/15.4	Trust Board: Governors willing to nominate themselves to contact the Chair.	All Governors
19/15.6	Revised SEN policy: Governors still able to input / comment	All Governors
19/15.9	New Performance measures Governor training session to be included on Conference day 25 th April and/or at 6pm before a GB meeting	HT, Clerk
24/15	New building: continue pressing the EFA and /or LA to fund all or at least some of the additional costs until the deadline of 1 st April for signing the agreement, HT and Chair authorized to take appropriate action.	HT, Chair
27/15	Statements / policies approved, to be signed	Clerk, Chair, HT, Chair of Resources Committee

Governors' comments, queries, or challenges during debate are highlighted in these minutes in italic underlined text, with responses and debate following in italic text.

16/15 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

Recently elected Staff Governor Kate Henderson was welcomed to her first meeting.

Apologies and explanations for absence were received and consented from Governors Bynon, Poullette Dixon, Michael Dixon, Humm, Medwynter, Williams, Wilkins, and from the Head of Primary School, Jackie Bowers-Broadbent.

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, Belinda Whelan (Chair of Inclusion and Diversity Committee) agreed to chair the meeting.

17/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest on items on the agenda.

18/15 MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 5TH FEBRUARY 2015

The minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

19/15 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

1 Minute 02/15 - Declaration of interest forms

The Clerk reported that most Governors had now returned forms to her. One was outstanding but she would follow this up.

2 Minute 03/15 - Minutes of GB 4th December to be signed by Chair

In the absence of the GB Chair this action was deferred to the next available opportunity

**Clerk,
Chair**

3 Minute 04/15.1 - Lesson observations - Report to Performance Committee

Performance Committee of 12th February had received a report on observation and grading of teacher performance and minutes had been circulated with this GB agenda to all Governors.

4 Minute 04/15.2 - Trust Board nominee

One vacancy for a nominee still remained and Governors willing to put themselves forward were once again asked to contact the Chair.

**All
Governors**

5 Minute 04/15.3 - DBS disclosure - re-imburement of renewal fee

It was noted that the procedure for staff re-registering DBS disclosure involved practical obstacles like a time limit which complicated the issue of re-imburement. The HT said she would continue to try to resolve this as and when possible.

6 Minute 04/15.4 - SEN Policy

The revised policy remained under review until the next relevant meeting and Governors were still able to comment if they wished.

**All
Governors**

7 Minute 04/15.5 - Governors Handbook

The Clerk confirmed that this had been emailed to all Governors

8 Minute 06/15 - Les Enfants after-school club letting

The HT had not yet heard back from Les Enfants.

9 Minute 07/15.1 - Performance measures changes: training for Governors

It was agreed that appropriate training should be arranged either as a short session at the Governors' Conference on Saturday 25th April and/or before a GB meeting (c 6 pm).

Clerk, HT

10 Minute 08/15.5 - Behaviour points award scheme: publicity to parents

The HT reported that parents had been informed of the scheme on occasions such as Parents evenings, but larger scale publicity was yet to be done.

11 Minute 09/15 - School Admissions Service

The HT reported that LBWF had changed to a new on-line system, but at present this missed out information crucial to the transition of Buxton's Y6 to Y7, so the service had actually got worse. However, LBWF were tackling the problems with the system and already had 135 applications for Buxton, which was good considering there were surplus free school places, and could grow further by September. Admission arrangements were on the agenda (see Minute 23/15).

20/15 CHAIRS' ACTION

There were no actions to report but the HT advised that action by the Chair might be necessary in the future following, and depending on, the outcome of Governors' decisions about the new build project (see minute 24/15 below).

21/15 COMMITTEE UPDATE

1 Performance Committee 12th February 2015

The minutes of this Committee had been circulated with the agenda. The HT briefly commented that matters such as the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum, and options continued to be subject to close scrutiny. There were no Governors' queries so the minutes were noted and the Committee's decisions ratified.

2 Resources Committee 19th March 2015

Minutes were not yet available due to the short time since the meeting. In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, the Business Manager summarized the main matters the Committee had considered, viz:

- Projected surplus for 2014-15 had increased to £729,712
- The first draft of the 2015-16 budget, which projected a £400,000 surplus. Last year's equivalent draft budget projected a deficit of c£100,000.
- Report of Audit visit June 2014 and subsequent documentation of issues arising (see minutes 26 and 27/15 below)
- Statements related to internal controls, schools' financial value standard, stock take and introduction of electronic payments by LBWF (see minute 27/15 below)

Did the budget strategy devote extra funding to buildings and premises, or to pupils?

The first priority was educational spending that benefited the children. Not much of the schools' budget was spent on non-essential items like decorations or environment, and the school endeavoured to obtain best value from external suppliers and contractors. Spending on vital premises issues, e.g. maintaining health and safety, also meant managing risks and cash flow carefully. For instance, one of the school's two boilers had stopped working and, in light of the probable replacement cost of £30-40,000 and timescale for the new building, it was not currently proposed to replace it.

Would surplus resources be subject to claw-back?

This was unlikely as Waltham Forest Council were already aware of Buxton's need for savings to support changes to its premises.

Matters discussed at the Resources Committee were noted and its decisions ratified with specific approvals also recorded in minutes 26 and 27/15 below.

22/15 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Action

The Spring 1 update of pupil performance (Buxton School "Data Dashboard") had been circulated with the agenda. The HT updated Governors as follows:

1 OFSTED - aborted pilot visit

OFSTED had announced that it intended to conduct a "pilot" inspection of Buxton during March. This was to test a revised inspection process for Good schools: this would have been an unpublished visit but in future if good progress was considered to have been maintained, a letter would be sent confirming this; if the school improved to outstanding, a new inspection date would be arranged; but if the school was judged by the pilot to have deteriorated, the inspection would be scaled up immediately.

To date OFSTED had not arrived, but the prospect of imminent inspection at half a day's notice had meant everyone being "on alert" throughout the month. To prevent the situation continuing through Easter the HT had contacted OFSTED today and had been told it was now no longer intended to carry out the pilot. OFSTED had apologized and sent a letter of apology.

The positive aspect of this was that the HT had learnt from LBWF's Divisional Director of Education Improvement, Cate Duffy, that Buxton had probably been selected because Buxton's rating of Good was deemed to be more secure, and improving.

1 Achievement

Turning to the data dashboard, the HT commented that Y11 performance was comparable to last year. Y10 performance appeared to have had dropped, but this was also similar to last year's pattern and, while there was work to be done, she did not feel it was a cause for serious concern. She reminded Governors about the introduction of new performance measures. There was a question mark over whether the computer system used to track performance (4matrix) was yielding realistic figures, especially the Progress 8 measure, which at +0.75 would be a significantly positive jump. Our data manager had reported a bug in the system to 4Matrix.

What was the difference between the target figure and % A-C column for Departments e.g Spanish 59:82?

The latter figure was the teacher's assessment and only an indicator. The target is taken from each individual FFTD target. Hence an aspirational target.

The HT pointed out that Performance Committee on Wednesday would review the updated performance picture in detail, e.g. Maths (a dip in performance last year following a steep rise), Geography, and music in particular.

3 Attendance

Data showed gradual year-on-year improvement in attendance. While this was going in the right direction it was not achieved without much effort by the school (e.g. preventing/discouraging term-time holidays), and changes in a family's circumstances such as loss of the home could have significant impact.

Exclusions

There were more days reported than last year, but fewer students involved, largely related to serious incidents that had been reported previously. The HT advised that the worsening behaviour of 2 pupils in Y7 might mean a Governor panel needed to be convened.

Had these pupils attended Buxton Primary phase?
At least one - possibly both - were from other schools.

4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

Lesson observations continued to be conducted on the basis of trying to gauge what was “typical teaching”, although this did not mean observation being carried out completely without warning. The latest results indicated sustained improvement overall, with 88% Good or better, 11% requiring improvement (RI), and 1% inadequate (although the latter concerned a teacher who had performed better on other observed occasions). The HT emphasized that for the quality of teaching to be judged good or better it needed to be consistent and demonstrated across a range of factors, including included books and results, not just observed performance.

The HT pointed out that all teachers requiring improvement were on programmes working towards Good and there as an upward shift in quality both through the year and year on year. However, new starters and other staff turnover meant that the school was unlikely ever to achieve its aim of 100% Good or better teaching. In the English Department in particular it had been found that it was better to retain and try to improve supply teachers graded as RI, because this was better than students experiencing repeated replacement of their teacher.

How does the school help teachers observed as requiring improvement, e.g. by partnering them with Good teachers ?

If a teacher was normally good, they would be re-observed. But if a pattern of RI emerged they would work through a support plan with an experienced leader. All Buxton staff were keen to improve - in contrast to some early concerns that they would be stigmatized - and there was now a waiting list for the school's Improving Teacher Programme.

Will the data show the proportion of outstanding teaching separately?

Performance Committee received more detailed figures, but proportion was around 20%.

23/15 ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

The HT updated Governors, the key points being:

- As a Trust school, Buxton decided its own admission arrangements but any changes were subject to consultation, which took time
- LBWF had gone to consultation about awarding a degree of priority to children of members of staff from next year, so Buxton's admission policy was now out of step with the LA
- Apart from Reception it was not thought that adopting a similar change would affect Buxton very much
- Subject to consultation, Buxton could also consider allocating greater priority to admitting pupils from Nursery who attracted pupil premium. However, the LA had rejected this idea over concerns about equalities.
- In addition, Buxton's policy needed wording changes to clarify that only pupils in the Primary phase before the application deadline of October 31st would qualify automatically to transfer to the Secondary phase, otherwise they would depend on places available

Did this mean pupils in the Primary phase would take preference over children from outside the school?

Yes if they were there before the application deadline of October 31.

Should the Primary and Secondary admissions process be better linked?

More co-ordination of admissions was planned for when the new building was available.

24/15 BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had appointed a Derby-based firm of architects to work on plans with the school. However, discussions with the architect, specifications and the budget were tightly controlled by the EFA, insisting on standardised buildings, for example. Following several weeks of meetings, the building proposed had been found to be significantly smaller than Buxton needed. This was because Buxton had a higher proportion of students with SEN and/or from poorer backgrounds than allowed for in standard plans. Their space requirements were larger, because more interventions smaller student groups, and more staff were involved. Without this, future performance and results would be threatened and Buxton would struggle to remain a good school.

For comparison, Willowfield School's redevelopment - which was being funded through the LA programme, not the EFA - had some 30% more teaching space. Buxton's need for more space had been acknowledged, in that the plans had been modified to a workable, if not ideal, 3 storey building. However, this increased costs by £766,000 plus VAT (c £153,000), although VAT might be reclaimable through the Trust. The EFA had twice refused to meet this extra cost, seeking instead to reduce costs by restricting administration and circulation space. The HT had today written to the Head of the EFA again asking it to pay the increased cost, and was also asking for financial help from the LA via Cate Duffy, the Divisional Director of Education Improvement.

Unless either the EFA or the LA agreed to meet the extra cost the school faced the prospect would of having to find the money, either to prevent the building being inadequate at the outset, or to prevent the project stopping altogether. The EFA had conceded that costs met by the school could be spread over 3 financial years rather than all in one go. However, the school also had to meet the costs of furniture etc in the new building. In addition, the decision had to be made by 1st April as, to adhere to the planned timetable, this was when the agreement was due to be signed.

In discussion Governors were in full agreement that it was unacceptable for the new building to be inadequate from the start, and several felt that the LA should be held responsible. They were also concerned about the short time between now and the school being obliged to sign the agreement.

Would the LA agree to match fund the additional cost?

The LA had seemed more supportive than the EFA so far and was supposed to hold a contingency budget, but it had not explained whether this meant any money would be available, or what for.

Despite the EFA being the main source of funding Buxton still had scope to negotiate with the LA, as it was anxious for Buxton to be signed off. But the LA would be concerned that if helping Buxton would be at the expense of other schools Given this position, Governors had to decide how demanding they could or wanted to be.

Buxton should be free to instruct the architects if using its own budget. Could the project cost be overrun?

Action

The costs were fixed.

Was there still scope to negotiate with the EFA?

A response to the HT's letter was awaited. The key obstacle for the EFA was that additional costs for Buxton might set a precedent for other schools e.g. George Mitchell

Is the expansion of Buxton bigger than other schools?

No: Willowfield was the same, expanding from 4 to 6 forms of entry

Can we reduce the number of pupils we accept ?

The PAN (Planned Admission Number) was based on 30 per class, and there had been no suggestion that this could be reduced.

All Governors agreed that the school must get the building it needed, even if this meant the school having to accept responsibility for paying the extra itself. However, until the deadline of 1st April for signing the agreement, the HT was asked to continue pressing the EFA and /or LA to fund all or at least some of the additional costs. Governors were also willing to support and sign correspondence to this effect if required and approved the Chair taking appropriate action.

HT, Chair

25/15 SOUTH AREA PARTNERSHIP (SAP) COLLABORATION

The HT reported that all HTs involved had strong commitment to working together to share good practice and this was gradually becoming more formalised.

26/15 AUDIT VISIT

Governors received the report on the Risk and Financial audit, the key issues of which had been discussed at a previous meeting, and noted that action to address these points were included in the Statement of Internal control and had been put in hand.

27/15 POLICIES

The following documents had been circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting:

1. Statement of internal Control
2. Schools Financial Value Standard
3. Stocktake certificate, including inventory and list of disposed assets
4. Introduction of electronic payments by LBWF

The Business Manager gave a brief overview of each of these documents and pointed out that the audit recommendations noted at minute 26/15 were relevant to and repeated in documents 1 and 2.

All 4 documents were approved, and it was agreed that documents should be signed as follows: GB Chair (Docs 1 and 2), Chair of Resources (Doc 1), HT (Docs 1 and 3), Business Manager (Doc 3).

**GB Chair,
HT, Chair
Resources
Committee,
Clerk**

28/15 GOVERNING BODY CONFERENCE 25th APRIL 2015

All present agreed to attend except Governor Kitson, who gave his apologies. It was noted that it had previously been agreed to focus on the NGA key questions for Governors and how to move the school to outstanding. As per minute 19/15.9 above, consideration was to be given also to fitting in a short session on new performance measures.

29/15 GOVERNOR FEEDBACK

1 Link Governor Reports

The Safeguarding Governor had visited the school on Monday 9th March to monitor inclusion and reported that he had been impressed by how staff had tackled a dispute between students involving bullying and unfounded rumour. He had also carried out a spot check on the single central record. The HT added that a new member of staff had recently commented to her that she found Buxton outstanding in pastoral care matters.

2 & 3 School related events attended & Governors' contributions to school life

Governor Whelan Had attended the Y2 Parents Maths workshops on Friday 20th March, seeing what happened in class and working with children afterwards.

She had also attended the Gifted and talented drama performance which was students' own play about news events such as EBOLA and also involved students from other schools

Governor Thomas Had attended the Arts and Drama Evening on 3rd February which she found well organised

4 Training planned or undertaken

Training for Governors in new performance measures had been discussed and agreed above at Minute 219/15.9. The Clerk reminded Governors that the list of training undertaken and brochures for Waltham Forest training events had been emailed to them.

30/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 Staff Disciplinary Appeal Panel 27th March 9.45 - 12 noon

In light of the Chair's sickness absence the HT asked for a replacement non-staff Governor to accompany Governors Whelan and Bynon, but unfortunately no-one was available. It was noted that if proceeding with 2 Governors was unacceptable, the panel would probably have to be cancelled.

2 Additional INSET day to cover changes in Maths levels

The HT reported that, working with other local schools, she had proposed holding an extra INSET day in the summer term to the Strategic Education Board to address the alternatives to levelling. Governors approved the proposal, unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.35