

Trustees' Meeting, Friday 26th February 2021
9:30am online

Draft Minutes

Item	Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies with consent for absence All present; no apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Head teacher's update Catch-up funding has helped to pay some TA hours and resources to deliver additional English and Maths; the PE teacher (who has Maths as a second subject) is leading Maths catch-up for Year 11s. There is good progress in Maths in the primary school, and writing is expectedly lower (68% in primary and 51% in secondary making good or better progress). There is an additional emphasis on speaking and listening, and as well as measuring progress there will then be a focus on the broader curriculum. Attendance is expected to be normal and full-time for students from 8 March. Hannah (whose TLR was on the primary curriculum) is now focusing on behaviour and welfare, with '11 pledges by 11' to help achieve personal development milestones. The wellbeing team is embedding well, and additional offers – such as guinea pigs, which provide both therapy and good life skills (e.g. small animal care, which also has the potential for pupils to gain associated qualifications). Emotional literacy is also being developed by the educational psychologists' ELSA programme, which is a form of play-based cognitive behaviour therapy. Governors asked whether the school has met expectations in SEMH provision and safeguarding and were satisfied that the school has been integral to keeping children safe and that while some families may mistrust services there is a high level of trust in The Brookfield School (which is also part of the reason for high attendance rates through successive lockdowns). The school continues to champion safeguarding as well as development and data, has a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning, and the peer mentor / buddy system is working effectively.</p>	
2.	<p>Finance and policies Trustees approved the Finance Policy, which has been updated and is compliant with the Academies' Financial Handbook. Other finance-related policies are being updated, including the Allowance Policy (which requires some further amendments to reflect the different expectations of trustees and the local area board once this has been fully re-established), and the Reserves Policy (for when the school has built up a reserve). The monthly finance report is due in the week of 1 March, and the management accounts will then be uploaded onto GovernorHub. Signature of the annual SFVS (Schools' Financial Value Standard) was delegated to Craig. This will then be signed off by Companies House and be in the public domain. Trustees agreed to delegate to the Finance & Audit Committee the final approval of the revised budget. Trustees noted that around £1,500 has been received in Covid-19 top-up funding, against additional expenditure of around £4,500, and that the full allocation for ICT equipment has been received. Trustees queried the timeline for the costs associated with new staff appointments, the discussion of which is noted below.</p>	Craig

	<p>Other policies which are being updated include Curriculum, Data, Pastoral Care, and Health & Safety. Sheila and Mark will review the full list of policies and assign them to trustees, and schedule when these need to be reviewed and signed off by trustees. Susanna will lead the review of the Health & Safety policies (for all trustees to sign off) and ensure that the Safeguarding policy is reviewed twice a year.</p>	<p>Sheila / Mark Susanna</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Staffing structure</p> <p>Trustees examined in detail the organisational structure, noting the structure and job descriptions circulated on 25 February. Subsequent steps will depend on the outcome of the deputy head teacher recruitment process. Any assistant head teacher appointed for the secondary school would be expected to have a 0.4 FTE secondary teaching requirement. All agreed that the approach to the remaining restructure should focus on a cultural shift which sets expectations for TLRs around strategic development linked to outcomes (rather than e.g. operational management or day-to-day responsibilities such as safeguarding) and which provides fair opportunities for all teaching staff.</p> <p>Trustees agreed in principle to the restructure, recognising that this will need ESFA approval, and would like a final recommendation from Julia. It was noted that both Tim and Susanna have safer recruitment training; Susanna will definitely be on the panel, and Tim is happy to be. It was agreed that all applications for Deputy Head Teacher be shared with every board member for an initial ranking process, and that the post would be advertised nationally as this lifts the morale and profile of the school.</p>	<p>Julia</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Capital project</p> <p>Michael Griffin is taking over from Nigel at McBains, and Keith met with both on 5 February as part of the handover process. It was agreed with Michael that Keith would be copied into all correspondence, but neither Michelle nor Keith has heard anything from McBains since that date, other than a brief conversation with Michelle on 26 February about timeframes and the operational logistics of accommodating children during the build. There is a meeting booked in for the week of 1 March about the lease.</p> <p>Trustees went through the updated design, and raised questions about the feasibility of an outdoor gym area and about the wisdom of basing the Arrow's design solely on the location of two trees, noting that these trees are deciduous trees which present a health and safety hazard when fallen leaves result in slippery surfaces or blocked drains, and are not subject to a tree preservation order. Trustees would prefer these trees therefore to be removed and for new trees to be planted on the site in safer locations.</p> <p>Trustees also discussed a range of possible solutions for out-of-hours community access, which would help both to get grants and to repay over time the cost of kitting out the new build (as only fixed equipment e.g. ICT points and workspaces and storage etc. will be provided; funding for gym or classroom equipment is unlikely to be available from the 20% contingency, but will have to come from the school's capital funding over the next two years). Conversations with Scott at HALO (the nearby leisure centre) have indicated that HALO would be supportive and helpful around any plans to increase out-of-hours access to the community.</p> <p>Trustees noted that ESFA cannot reasonably withhold permission to surrender the existing leases and agree one new lease (as recommended by the lawyers), and that the project will be phased in such a way as to minimise the disruption of on-site contractors. At the same time a new funding agreement is being worked on by Nick (of Browne Jacobson) to reflect the change from HIBOS to The Brookfield School.</p>	

	<p>Trustees expressed their concern the current planned location of the playground adjacent to the pavement, which presents a significant safeguarding concern, and discussed solutions including rattan fencing and banners.</p> <p>The latter would cost £1,375+VAT, plus £180 for artwork, for 9 5m x 2m panels in 500gsm tarpaulin) panels of 2m x 5m; these could not be advertising within planning rules (which cannot remain beyond 26 weeks) but could showcase the school's community partnerships.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the site would already have a range of contractors' banners and company logos anyway once building is underway, as is standard practice, and approved school and community partnership banners as the best temporary solution. In the medium term, trustees will explore more permanent solutions, and in the meantime ESFA should be approached for financial support given the safeguarding implications of a playground so close to and so visible from the street.</p> <p>Trustees asked Keith to explore with McBains opportunities for the build to provide apprenticeships or work experience for students.</p>	Keith
6.	<p>Minutes of previous meetings</p> <p>Trustees confirmed their unanimous approval of the minutes of the meetings of the academic year to date (9 September, 13 November, 27 November, 11 December and 15 January) to ensure that these can be shared with Ed at ESFA. These have already been uploaded to GovernorHub.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>There were no outstanding actions or matters arising not already dealt with on the agenda.</p>	
8.	<p>Head teacher performance review</p> <p>Michelle left the meeting, and this item is minuted in a confidential annex.</p>	
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Trustees noted again the possibility of becoming a Herefordshire hub of the Shaw Trust, and agreed to proceed with asking the Shaw Trust to conduct an external review and to add to this some peer coaching for Michelle from a SEN-experienced SEMH head teacher. Trustees were satisfied that as this had been recommended by the DfE and Bridie would trust the result, and as there would be a limited range of people with relevant NLE, HMI, SEN and SEMH experience, and given that it is within procurement rules, there was no requirement to go to tender.</p> <p>Trustees noted the outcome of a grievance review, minuted in a confidential annex.</p>	
10.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>9:30 am on 12 March 2021 [subsequently postponed]. It was agreed that this meeting will prioritise the health & safety and safeguarding reports and other updates on capital, quality assurance etc..</p>	
11.	<p>Confirmation of matters to be discussed at future meetings</p> <p>In addition to those matters listed above, trustees noted the need to have on the agenda of forthcoming meetings: OfStEd-readiness [noting that the school was subsequently inspected (remotely) on 16 March 2021]; ESFA; MAT merger, and; Board succession planning.</p>	

[ends]