

Thursday 28 June 2018

## PRESENT

Anthony Alonzi AA
Sara Anstee SA
Adrian Canale-Parola ACP
Janet Gilbert JG
Colin Goodier CG
Mark Grady MG
Sandy Marley SM
Charlotte Marten CM
Anand Pophali AP
Elizabeth Pyne EP
Peter Reaney (late) PR
Rachel Street RS
Gideon Walters GW
Lee Williams (late)
Allan Kerr (Clerk) AK
Susan Heinink (Minutes) SAH

## APOLOGIES

Michael Moran MM
Shakeel Saghir SS
David Robson DR

*Adrian Canale-Parola took the Chair in the absence of Peter Reaney. He expressed his apologies to the QAC committee for not being present at the recent meeting and to governors for the increased business for this meeting.*

**17.30 QUORUM:** The meeting was deemed quorate.

**17.31 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS** Janet Gilbert expressed her interest as Vice Chair of Avon Valley Governors for the MAT item.

The two new governors, Anand Pophali and Colin Goodier, were welcomed to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

**17.32 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 March 2018**

These were agreed and signed by the Chair.

**17.33 MATTERS ARISING**

**Item from the introduction (Responsible Officer)** – AK reported that there had not been an appointment but Rachel had agreed to do the checking process and would be attending the school on 4 July. AK said it was an internal audit role to ensure that the school was acting in compliance with financial procedures. This took place about three times a year. Rachel agreed to take on the permanent appointment to this role. AK said that Rachel should be a member of the trust and she accepted this. All were in agreement.

## 17.34 MINUTES FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

**Finance** – CM said it was important to carry out a skills’ audit. SM asked if there was now a full set of governors and was informed that a community governor was still needed but that it would be best to make an appropriate appointment after the skills’ audit. AA asked if the school still had the capacity to make all the changes to the Sixth Form common room and library. AK said some of the work would be delayed because of the windows work and work such as decorating would be delayed. Any work not possible would be completed later in year. The windows work was due to be completed by 19 October with most of the work taking place in the summer holiday.

a) **Privacy Policy** – It was confirmed that students and parents would be directed to the electronic version on the website. The policy was proposed by Sandy Marley and seconded by Sara Anstee and agreed by all present.

b) **Budget 2018/19** – Governors had received a commentary about the changes (filed with minutes). It was noted that Post 16 funding had fallen. New staffing appointments had now been made and were included. A 2% cost was included for teacher pay rises but it was not known if this was realistic or funded. This included an Assistant Pastoral Manager employed due to the additional 15 students who gained admission to Year 7 on appeal. A new lettings supervisor was included although not yet appointed. Under Admin Support a new finance assistant was included because Allan was funded for the work he was doing at Avon Valley. A post for Duke of Edinburgh support had been advertised. Learning resources were significantly reduced. The ESFA had been asked for funding up-front for the extra 15 students and this was still under consideration. SM asked if the number dropped, as they were doing, could the curriculum be returned to the original plan and CM said this would not be possible because of the rules around Food Technology numbers in the carousel. AP asked if there were any efficiency savings that could be made. CM said that most of the cost was for staffing and this had been tweaked already with larger teaching groups. AK said costs had been driven out of the system already eg a smaller leadership team and no librarian.

### ***Peter Reaney joined the meeting***

It was explained to the new governors that the school didn’t receive much deprivation funding as many schools did. AP asked if it was the same for LSS and was informed that it was not, because it received a large grant from Rugby School.

***The budget was agreed by all present.***

### ***Peter Reaney took the Chair.***

**QAC** – This meeting had been cancelled as it was not quorate. Peter Reaney had approved a trip to France on behalf of governors which he had done on other occasions.

**Personnel** – It was noted that the minutes distributed were the abridged, public minutes. The detailed version contained individual staff information and was for members of the personnel committee only. There were no questions from governors.

## 17.35 GOVERNORS’ MATTERS

a) **Meetings Schedule** – This had been sent to all governors.

**Action: SAH would send them as calendar requests.**

**b) Term Dates** – Rachel Street pointed out that 22 July was a County training date and although it had not been the practice to include the training day that had occurred on the last day of August in recent years, it was agreed it would be added to the term dates document on this occasion. SM asked if governors were expected to attend any of the dates and it was noted they were invited to the planning and development day. RS raised the issue that parents had expressed concerns about the increase in the number of non-teaching days and that it had previously been agreed by governors as an exception and there was concern that it didn't become the norm. EP said that most schools had 5 and that the difference between 10 and 5 was considerable. CM believed strongly that staff were being asked to do a lot more marking as papers had increased and they were under a lot of pressure. RA appreciated the extra commitment and that this was a way of giving back time but the concern was about it becoming normal practice without prior governor agreement. MG pointed out that results were at the top in area. JG was informed that LSS had 7. The school had only received one or two complaints. SA pointed out that the number of working hours differed between schools eg the Free School opened later in the day and some had shorter lunch breaks. She said that training days could be inconvenient for parents but were necessary for good results. GW said that although he was not a teacher he had observed that the volume of work was high. RS had received number of parental complaints and needed to represent that but she also saw the need for staff to have adequate marking and planning time. She felt that it was necessary to have the conversation now to avoid conflict and protracted conversation in the future. AP asked if the extra work applied to all teachers and students. CM said although they would not all have the same all teachers would have a lot of marking. Some of the days were used flexibly eg on 21 December teachers didn't have to do the marking on that day so long as the marks were ready after the holiday. CM said that some departments had a very high load but it wasn't possible to organise it around individuals. JG queried why three were close together and was informed this was when exams were scheduled. ACP saw no reason why 22 July shouldn't be included. CM said it might confuse because the August one was always left out and this had been disaggregated in the past into twilight sessions for training. ACP said it should be referenced to be open. He said if the school was getting good outcomes governors shouldn't be worried about counting training days. RS said she understood why but she had to raise it on behalf of parents who had complained to her. She suggested that it be accepted that it would always be 9 or 10 as the norm going forward.

#### ***Lee Williams joined the meeting***

PR agreed that rather than having the discussion every year it be agreed now. MG proposed that governors should agree up to 10 in order for the school to continue to function at the same level. The proposal was put to have up to 10 training and performance management days to be agreed by the school leadership. It was noted that governors would still have to agree term dates. ***Sara Anstee proposed the motion and Adrian Canale-Parola seconded it. Two were against and eleven were in favour so the proposal was carried.***

**c) Year 7 Curriculum** – CM explained that the school had lost 15 appeals for the new Year 7 which made the year group bigger than the school could accommodate. An additional form group would need 30 more periods of teaching which equated to more than one member of staff so it was decided to plan for three groups of 34 and one of 33. Some classrooms were not big enough for this number. AK and CM had looked at which rooms could accommodate 34. Food and Textiles can only have 20 for safety. Any more than 120 meant the curriculum couldn't work as the school couldn't afford to run the carousel. By taking out Food and Textiles the offer could be reconfigured for Year 7. This could be built back in Years 8 and 9. The situation regarding Maths was explained by AA to LW. It had been necessary to go ahead with the model due to fulfilling the staffing requirements. Governors needed to formally approve the plan. As numbers were

reducing as students had dropped out recently, it was agreed to take out references to Years 8 and 9 excepting the principle that the subjects would be built back in without being specific. JG asked if the school was obliged to teach Latin and was informed that this was not so but governors chose to include it and it was still popular. Students could still take two MFLs or choose Latin. The curriculum was proposed by Rachel Street, seconded by Lee Williams and all were in favour.

**e) SEF and Development Plan** – CM clarified that the SEF reviewed the school’s situation and the Development Plan linked into the strengths and weaknesses.

**SEF** - At this stage this was reporting on progress made. The SEF would be written again after the summer results. PR was informed that the SEF was no longer a requirement but if the school was inspected it would have to have something to show an inspector. RS mentioned about outstanding schools being in the news as having not been inspected for a long time and CM confirmed that Rugby High was one of those schools so she was expecting one soon. MG said that parental and student questionnaires, as well as externally validated data, had been used to prepare the document. He said that the data gaps were known but were deemed as not statistically significant so long as they were not widening. Work had been done with the departments who had not performed well last year. SISRA was suggesting a positive Progress 8 score. The school had the highest score in Rugby this year and in most Warwickshire schools. As a result of the questionnaires students appeared mainly happy and felt safe. Parents of Year 7 were overwhelmingly happy with their first year experience. It was noted that on page 5 of the SEF not all SLT have a teaching commitment, particularly AK and not CM this year. **This would be changed to three. ACP said governors’ responsibility for safeguarding should be mentioned.** CM said a new Keeping Safe 2018 document was coming out and she proposed to do training with governors on this. **SAH would send out possible dates.** Governors’ responsibilities were slightly different in this regard.

**Development Plan** – It was noted that students were feeling the pressure of the target driven education system and the school was trying to keep a balance. Anxiety had increased recently. The aim was to maintain the quality of the teaching and aim for all students make at least “good progress” over time.

Each point on the plan was subdivided into specific measures and the following comments were made:

- The Mindset initiative in Year 7 had gone very well.
- Attainment checks had been reviewed in the light of what parents want.
- Good practice had been shared. Robust conversations had taken place with staff.
- SISRA had been updated.
- There was now tighter control on VA in the Sixth Form.
- Training had taken place for staff and governors in Progress 8.
- Review of the new specifications would happen with the results in August.
- AP asked if the mocks’ experience was close to the public exams’ experience and it was confirmed that this was as close as possible from Year 10 onwards, including the space used and desks set up.
- There had been a lot of problems with ICT earlier in the year but this was now secure and stable but some changes were still needed.

The thread for the next year was to reinforce good practice because there had been three years of change. MG said the aim was to set heights in our hearts safely, rigorously and happily. Peter Reaney was informed that the new plan would be produced for the governors’ meeting in September. PR and ACP would discuss how to look at it from the governors’ point of view. ACP pointed out that in point 3.9 it should state that it is embedded with all staff and governors.

f) **Classics Trip** - Tim Paterson would like to take a trip to Pompeii which he had run successfully for a few years. It would be proposed to put it into the summer activities week slot. The provider had been used before. It would be open to Year 10 and above. The cost would be between £500 and £600 and it would be for the next academic year. **Governors approved the trip.**

## 17.36 REPORTS

a) **Child Protection** – The data shown was accurate from the date the document was produced. MyConcern was a new on-line system to address and record issues around safeguarding and data protection. The school was effective at dealing with concerns but less good about student on student issues and sometimes the patterns were not apparent. This system would make recording of those issues simpler and would be better at identifying patterns for individual students. ACP had seen the new system and confirmed that it would be easier to identify trends and to be aware of the whole arena of concerns. He said it was also important that staff were protected and informed. The system had more detail and analytical software.

CM was asked about the two concerns about forced marriage and she responded that one was from a piece of work a student did and the other an overheard conversation about arranged marriage. Both were reported by staff and CM had had a conversation with the students which had been written up and recorded. Her conclusion was that she didn't consider either to be at risk. JG said the school was good at spotting issues alerted in writing and CM said that this was particularly true from their writing in English lessons.

b) **Exclusions Report** – There had not been any exclusions but CM had been to a training session on this topic.

## 17.37 POLICIES

a) **Attendance** – The school had been asked to update this by the Attendance Compliance Enforcement (ACE) at Warwick. Their recommendations had been included. SM asked if attendance was a big problem and was informed that operating the process correctly was challenging as it was becoming very rigid and the correct language was important. **The policy was proposed by Adrian Canale-Parola, seconded by Sandy Marley and were in agreement.**

b) **Sixth Form Dress Code** – This had been revisited because of the admittance of boys. The proposal was for the new Year 12. Dresses were omitted as the type of dress available was too varied. RS commented that the FAQs were repeated in other sections except for shoes. CM thought that repetition would mean they were more likely to take it on board. ACP asked about boys and skirts and CM said the school could not ban boys from wearing skirts due to equality issues. GW asked that see-through tops be banned and it was agreed that sheer tops and lace would be prohibited. **The code was proposed by Sandy Marley and seconded by Colin Goodier. There was one member against the proposal with everyone else in favour so the code was carried.**

c) **Curriculum** – This was the policy that would apply for the next academic year and had been staffed. LW was informed that there were not any new subjects, adding that these would usually be introduced at QAC.

d) **Ethos and Values** – This needed to be on the website and the current version didn't properly

address British values as required.

***Sara Anstee proposed acceptance of the Curriculum and Ethos and Values policies, Elizabeth Pyne seconded and were in favour.***

**d) Complaints** – This had had substantial revision due to updated government guidance. Michael Moran had requested some changes writing. He suggested that the word “normally” be changed to “ideally” and this was agreed throughout the document. He asked if there was any further appeal beyond that stated and CM said everyone had the right to report to Ofsted but she would check the original procedure on this matter. ACP felt it was necessary to clarify what all the stages meant and suggested adding the phrase “as illustrated in the flow chart”. GW asked if the timescales could be added to the flowchart. There was discussion about this and it was agreed not to put them in more than one place. The top of page 5 would not be changed as requested by Michael Moran as this was direct advice from the DfE. ***Following CM’s clarification changes would be made and the policy would be brought back to governors in September***

## **17.38 MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

Michael Moran had expressed concern (in writing) about engaging in a memorandum at this stage. PR asked if it was possible to defer the process but CM said it was necessary to know what the agreed direction of travel was so that the day to day work could be done. The following comments were made:

- PR’s view was that the potential of forming a MAT with Avon Valley was still unchanged and would just be delayed until the financial situation was dealt with.
- SM was concerned about forming a MAT with a school who didn’t know that they had financial problem.
- PR said that they did not have an independent audit as an academy did but SM said Rugby High’s financial situation was good before it became an academy.
- LW said that any organisation had to keep accurate financial records.
- CM said that there were more checks on an academy which could sign off money more freely.
- RS was also concerned that Avon Valley didn’t have the right level of financial responsibility.
- PR pointed out that if governors knew more about the circumstances they would have a different view.
- LW thought it was difficult to make decisions based on this document.
- PR said there was a meeting on 5 July when more information might be divulged.
- AA said a decision should be made, depending on the circumstances as known, as prompt action might be needed regarding the Cawston school.
- GW felt that option one could only be pursued once the information was known from the investigation.
- It was asked if Avon Valley was able to get out of deficit , would that help and LW used the phrase, “satisfactorily resolved”.
- PR said it was a deficit a MAT couldn’t absorb but Option One covered that. LW queried whether it did and CM confirmed it wouldn’t signed until there was enough information.
- LW asked if there would be a timescale but was informed this wasn’t possible until the full nature of the problem was known.
- LW said the school needed to engage with Cawston and suggested the options were not exclusive.
- It was suggested that all options 1- 3 should be equally possible and that forming a MAT was critical.

- AP asked if the size of the deficit was known and was informed that this would not be known until the County had carried out the audit.
- RS asked that if the school was clear that it wanted to form a MAT and was interested in Cawston, did they have deadlines.
- CM said she needed to speak with the DfE, the LA and the Schools Commissioner. It was important to have an alliance with a non-selective school as Rugby High had no expertise in that area.
- ACP suggested keeping options 1 – 3 on the table. It would be helpful if governors were given information after 5 July that they could state.
- CM would find out more about option one and different models by the beginning of next term. PR said the school was still doing work with AV and CM added that Rugby High needed their expertise.
- JG conferred with PR and CM outside of the meeting and returned to say that as Vice Chair of the governing body at Avon Valley , Janet Gilbert could say that it was a much wider problem than the leadership at Avon Valley. There had been a recent meeting which had put someone in place who would be carrying out a separate investigation and it was hoped this would be done without delay.
- SM asked what the normal requirement was to come out of deficit. AA suggested that if it was a problem with the governance, the governing body would have been replaced and likewise with the Headteacher, so the suggestion was that the problem was elsewhere.

***PR summed up by confirming that governors wanted to keep the first three options open and CM would do as much as possible to gather more information by the beginning of September.***

### 17.39 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Governors' Committees - It was acknowledged that new members would be allocated to committees in due course

### 17.40 NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 26 September 2018

***This meeting closed at 8.35 pm***

Signature of Chair of Governors \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*P. S. Reavey*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_