



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT BOARD TUESDAY, 11th DECEMBER 2023



The Meeting commenced at 17.58 and was held virtually using Microsoft Teams. In the absence of the Clerk the meeting was recorded.

1.	Those Present		Also Attending	
	Louise Bennett	LB	Rachael Stewart	RS (OM Manager)
	Cassie Brown	CB		
	Emma Irvine	EI		
	Keith Ryder	KR		
	Lisa Taylor	LT		
2.	Apologies for Absence		Also Absent	Action
	Joanne Munyard	JM	Gary Tatnell	GT
	Roger Slater (Clerk)	SL	Deborah Whitfield	DW
	Tammi Wainwright	TW		
3.	Declarations of Interest			
	As a standing declaration, the interests were noted of governors who are also parents of children attending the school.			
4.	Chair's Report			
	EI reported that since the last meeting she had carried out a monitoring visit (see item 12) and advised that tomorrow she will be taking part in the interview and recruitment process for a director of education for CBAT. She explained that this is a new post for someone who will deputise for the CEO whilst holding a brief to secure standards across the MAT.			
5.	Election of Vice Chair			
	It was agreed to defer the election of the vice chair to the next meeting when more governors will be present.			
6.	Approval of Minutes			
	Deferred.			
7.	Matters Arising			
	Deferred.			
8.	Operation Manager's Report			
	<p>Prior to the meeting, governors received the following documents via GovernorHub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ OM Report to Governors Dec 2023 ➤ CWJS Outturn – November 2023 <p>Governors' Questions:</p> <p>(i) EI: Regarding the Outturn, is it a concern that some of the percentages for the year to date are really high?</p> <p>RS: It is a concern to a certain degree. I've put annotations against the budget lines that are particularly high so that governors are</p>			

	<p>fully aware of them. It is going to be a very tight year. LB and I speak about it frequently and she is fully aware of the constraints. Some of the figures are skewed because expenditure was high at the beginning of the year and there will therefore be less expenditure as the year moves on. E.g, there are upfront costs for educational resources because we've bought all the books etc required for the entire year. In addition, there are obviously financial implications of not being able to recruit staff and we are therefore 'haemorrhaging' money to ensure that the children are receiving the support they need. This also supports the mental wellbeing of the staff who work with these children. I have supported LB 100% over her decisions about when we bring in supply. I am in open conversation with the Trust about this so the trustees are fully aware it's an HR issue about recruitment rather than us throwing money away.</p> <p>(ii) EI: And the utility costs which is at 50% even though we have only completed the first term? RS: Yes. We use a utilities broker called Zenergie which shops around for the best prices and we have just changed provider so our costs won't be as high as they have been during this term moving forward, but at this stage I can't promise that the budget will not be overspent at the year end, because we can't cut our usage any further. Staff are very good at only having lights on when they are needed. I don't know what else we can do to be honest.</p> <p>(iii) EI: Thank you. It's good for us to have an awareness that we are 'haemorrhaging' money. I can't see how we can make savings when you are being so careful. RS: Everything has to be thought though and I do push back and ask why we are doing something and LB makes a strong case to justify expenditure. Everything is well thought out and considered. We can't continue in the same vein year on year. We will have to look at what we do for next year, but really it's about how we can get more income more than anything else because it will be very hard to cut costs.</p> <p>(iv) EI: In the budget we've got just over £6K from total Capital income and a forecast but no actuals. Is that because that capital money only comes in at a certain time of year? LB: That money is ring fenced so you can only do certain things with that pot of money. RS: Yes that's the devolved formula capital income. Regarding income that is non government funded, we estimated £8.5K from Lettings, mostly from Taekwondo and Archery, but they are historical lets which the Trust inherited. It would be good to be able to go back to them and renegotiate the hire charges, but it may put them off. We've had enquires from potential hirers but they always seem to want the same days as Taekwondo and Archery. EI: When did we last review what they are charged? LB: We did it last year when we were coming out of Covid but there is also a consideration of goodwill. We want to increase our income but we also want to make sure we are providing a resource for the</p>	
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	<p>Community. It's two pronged because you've got people coming to those events who see our school which supports our marketing with prospective parents, but I agree that we should look at the charges again and work out a percentage increase.</p> <p>RS: IROX are hiring the school for a week in the Summer holidays, so that's an additional revenue stream. We do accommodate holiday clubs but we don't charge them because it gives added value to us as a school as part of wrap around care. However we do get free places for children we may wish to keep in contact with during the holiday periods. TW liaises with the project organiser over this.</p> <p>EI: That sounds like a really smart thing to do. Thank you.</p> <p>(v) LT: Is there a strategy to increase the number of Lettings that we have? Is there capacity for more?</p> <p>RS: We did have an enquiry from Slimming World, but one of the issues we have with such potential hirers is they would want us to store their stuff on site or have it got out for them. We have only limited storage space. There's a second taekwondo teacher looking for a space but it would clash with the one we already have. We don't physically advertise anywhere, but we'd have to be careful about where we advertise and what we advertise. We could hire out the hall for children's parties but for health and safety reasons we couldn't allow inflatables inside the building. If someone has a suggestion about where we can advertise please let me know.</p> <p>(vi) EI: We didn't get the funding for a new boundary fence, is it worth a shout out to local builders to see if they would donate towards the costs?</p> <p>RS: Yes, it's fully possible. It is a safeguarding concern, but perhaps less of a concern than it was?</p> <p>LB: Yes we've made quite a few adaptations internally for those children at risk of trying to abscond. It's always going to be a potential risk when they go outside at break and lunch time, but unless we have turrets and a really high fence it will always be a risk. As long as we understand that and make sure that if any gaps in the fencing or hedge occur they are flagged up immediately, so that barriers can be put in place. We haven't had any child trying to abscond since that last incident. We have a risk assessment in place and at the moment that is as much as we can do.</p>	
9.	Risk Register Review	
	<p>LB identified the following risks for governors to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff Recruitment – as discussed by RS under item 8. <p>LB: A PPA teacher has now been appointed from January onwards, to cover every class in the school, with the other postholder already in post covering other things such as Pupil Progress Meetings, Subject Leader release time, and SEND Review time. But it does mean that for sickness cover if we can't bring in a supply we have to ask teachers to cover and owe them that time later. I know how difficult that can be but all credit to the teachers for agreeing to just go with it. They've been real troopers because they accept that it's out of our hands. Haven't they, Cassie?</p>	

	<p>CB: Yes. It's been hard this term, but there is lot of good will. When PPA gets cancelled last minute, we just get on with it because we know we'll get it back. We are just being flexible because we understand why.</p> <p>LB: Recruitment is a real risk but hopefully it will be better in January. The other aspect is the recruitment of TPs for one-to-one SEND support. We had two enquiries today for pupils to join the school and one of those would have quite a large EHCP package coming with them. The funding will always appear retrospectively in our budget, but being able to recruit suitable TPs is a big issue. We can't refuse an EHCP child unless we can't physically meet the need.</p> <p>➤ Damage to property – LB reported that there has been some damage to the toilets but this has been discussed in assembly and staff have recapped the behaviour policy and have reinforced the importance of respecting school property. LB said that damage to property has become a risk mainly at lunchtimes but added that it is hard to pinpoint exactly when damage has occurred. Some preventative measures are being put in place to mitigate the risk.</p> <p>➤ Buildings – LB reported that there had been a flood last Monday caused by a faulty water cooler in the staff room. LB explained that the fault had not resulted from any omission on the part of the school, but went on to comment that it is important to ensure that everything around the school is functioning properly and won't cause any unwarranted expense or impact on the operation of the school. The flood affected the staff room and partly the adjacent corridor, the Access room and kitchen. Three dehumidifiers had to be hired in.</p> <p>EI: Were the carpets ok?</p> <p>RS: Yes they are fine. The cleaning crew did an excellent job of mopping up the water. I have complained strongly to the water people and they won't be charging for a replacement unit. I am seeking compensation to cover e.g. the cost of the dehumidifiers.</p> <p>➤ Weather – LB observed that weather conditions will be changing soon with associated risks.</p>	LB to update Risk Register. (17)
10.	Executive Headteacher's Verbal Report	
	<p>Prior to the meeting, governors received via GovernorHub the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Suspensions and PEX Overview – Autumn 2023 ➤ Hyper link to the school's latest IDSR <p>LB explained that she will give a verbal report. The following matters were discussed:</p> <p>Suspensions and PE Overview – Autumn Term 2023.</p> <p>(i) LB referred governors to the overview of Suspensions and PEX for the Autumn term and commented that she felt that the number of suspensions she had issued during the Autumn term (a total of 37 days relating to 10 incidents) is unprecedented, adding that in her entire career before this term she had only ever dealt with 3 suspensions. The children involved had all met the threshold for being suspended. A couple of the children involved have additional needs and are on part-time timetables.</p>	

	<p>(ii) LB: Looking at the table of Suspensions there is an increasing level of threatening behaviour towards other pupils and staff which is worrying because there is a really solid staff team at the school who are highly skilled and have received really thorough training to ensure that everyone is prepared to deal with certain needs or behaviour. However, this year there has been a wave of Year 3 children coming across from the Infant school with very challenging and extreme behaviours which we knew about because that is what the Infant school were experiencing at the time when we were talking with them about the transition. We wanted to give the children a fresh start and we had a honeymoon period but then there has been a catalogue of suspension for various reasons. I have used different highlight colours for different children so you can see that some children were suspended on more than one occasion. The impact, not only on the teaching staff who are having to deal with these children in lessons or even sometimes out of lessons because it is that extreme, but also the impact on the leadership team trying to get things done, trying to be strategic, when we end up having to supervise children whose behaviour is placing them and others at risk of injury. There have been incidents when SLT have approached certain children who swear at us uncontrollably and throw e.g. books at us. That's what we are dealing with at the moment. We have got processes in place and are dealing with external professionals. Social Care are involved with some of these children. Most of the children involved have an EHCP and the 2 who don't can access the Inclusion team and support from them. The ATS and EP have been involved with them. So not only do we have a third of our children on the SEND register but we have these children as well (some who are on the register) but are causing quite a lot of 'unsettledness' in our environment. It's been a difficult term and a real strain on our resources. I've been asked whether it's because I am being stretched across two schools and I don't think it is. It's because of a wave that has come through this year that has been really challenging. Is that fair to say, Cassie?</p> <p>CB: I think generally everyone is just very fatigued by the whole thing. I know that a number of the TPs involved with these children have reached a point when they are thinking they didn't come into this career to be yelled at and hit at. The teachers are finding that frustration as well. It affects everyone including all the other children. It's a very different place to work this year and I know some of the teachers are really struggling.</p> <p>LB: It's really changed the dynamics of the school. There are a couple of the children who should not be in mainstream education. External professionals are doing what they can to support us, but there are limited resources out there. I spoke to someone from the LA last week who said they have 100 children they need to locate in special schools. That was last week. I'm sure this week there will be another 5 or more added onto that number. The whole system is stretched. We are currently supporting a child to go to alternative</p>	
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	<p>provision which is costing the school £500 per week. Some of it is offset against EHCP funding but that won't last for ever. This is why our budget is so stretched. When do we say no? Last year I had to stop funding an alternative provision because we just could not afford to keep it going. It is exhausting our resources.</p> <p>(iii) EI: Isn't there a threshold when a child has been excluded for a certain number of days? What is the threshold? LB: 45 across the year and 15 per term. EI: And what happens if a child reaches that threshold? LB: It's a PEX.</p> <p>(iv) EI: I'm really concerned to hear about the fatigue of staff. That's not why they joined the profession. It's really worrying because we really value the team we've got.</p> <p>(v) LT: Is there enough support in place for staff to ensure that they feel safe when they are at work? I am sure that dealing with that level of challenging behaviour all the time must be 'hideous,' I can't think of another word, but staff should feel safe. LB: I think you are absolutely right. We do have supervision so if we have an incident where it requires a suspension or PEX then I or TW will go round and talk to the staff and make sure that they know we are here to support them using the behaviour policy. Thankfully, although there has been threatening behaviour towards staff – one child did lash out at a member of staff although did not cause any pain or injury - but we will not tolerate any child putting their hands on anybody, a member of staff or a pupil. It's about trying to weigh things up. You have to take all the factors into consideration. It's very difficult dealing with the emotions of staff and of other pupils who may be involved. A professional judgement has to be made about the risk that child presents. There are some children who have got SEND needs and some who have not and there is a different kind of approach and consideration that need to be made. I have been led to question the entire system because staff have a right to feel safe at work and I try to make the environment as safe as I possibly can with the resources I have and with the policies behind me.</p> <p>(vi) CB: Just to add, I think we have the kind of environment where if you didn't feel safe you would be able to talk to somebody about it and they would listen to those concerns, and adjustments would be made, e.g. moving children to another class. LB: Following every suspension there is a risk assessment which will look at what needs to be put in place to support everyone who deals with that particular child and ensuring the child involved is safe as well. But sometimes it's clear that our environment is not right for a child.</p> <p>(vii) EI: Is there anything we can do as governors, as an SDB to support you and the staff in a way that we are not doing at the moment? LB: It's very hard. It's the system and it's not just GCC it's a National problem because of the lack of funding. Other schools are having very similar problems. Thresholds have changed. What may have been regarded as behaviour requiring a PEX years ago is now</p>	
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	<p>regarded as a reason for a suspension and there seems to be an acceptance that this behaviour happens now in Primary schools.</p> <p>(viii) EI: It's reassuring, bizarrely, that it's happening in other schools but it is very sad indeed that it's happening at all.</p> <p>LB: It's a National issue. We need more specialist places and support for families.</p> <p>(KR left the meeting at this point: 18.40)</p> <p>Bromcom – Attendance</p> <p>(ix) RS advised that she had emailed everyone some screen shots from the school's MIS for attendance monitoring. She explained that the first image is showing absence, the second and third images are continuations of that report, and the last image is showing persistent absence.</p> <p>(x) LB commented that attendance is a National problem at the moment. She said that she hoped that at the next meeting she will be able to share a live version of Bromcom so that governors can see the new system in use.</p> <p>(xi) Referring to image one, LB explained that the report breaks down the percentages at the top of the page for attendance, absence, persistent absence, authorised absence etc, and then shows the trend over the preceding period. Attendance is currently shown to be 93.7% with a target of 97%. LB commented that 93.7% is quite healthy, but the trend shows it has gone down by 0.4% over the last 4 weeks.</p> <p>(xii) LB explained that when reviewing the data it is possible to adjust the filters, e.g. there are two children included in the figures who have not yet started at the school and they can be included or excluded from the data. Another example involved a traveller child who has to remain on the school's roll even though the child is not attending, but Bromcom enables filters to exclude the child from the attendance figures.</p> <p>(xiii) Following on from the attendance figure of 93.7%, LB explained that the absence is 6.4%, persistent absence is 17.5% and that has gone down in the last 4 weeks; Authorised absence is 4.9%, Unauthorised is 1.5% and Lates 1.6%. LB went on to say that it is the lates that she is focusing on, trying to reduce persistent lateness by encouraging the children to come to the breakfast club every morning – the cohort are also PP.</p> <p>(xiv) It was noted that the first screen shot also includes a RAG-rated bar chart which breaks the data down into year groups showing clearly where there is a concern. Year 3 is a concern and is therefore flagged orange showing it needs investigating. It is then possible to click on the graph and see which children are of particular concern and the reasons for their absences. It may be a reason that cannot be helped, e.g. medical reasons. It is also possible to identify the days when absence is more often unauthorised. The report shows that absence is more often unauthorised on a Friday.</p>	<p>Bromcom to be shared live at the next SDB meeting. (18)</p>
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	<p>(xv) EI: At the bottom of the page there is line with a plot. What happened when it went down to 89%?</p> <p>(xvi) LB: That was half term. You can plot where things are. Bromcom is a really good tool for drilling down into the absence data and provides evidence to challenge parents. Most classes are blue or green except Juniper. That's where we have a number of children with mitigating circumstances, e.g. medical conditions. I am always cautious about issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence because there are families who are genuinely struggling. We have good relationships with most of our families and I feel we need to think about early help before moving to penalties.</p> <p>(xvii) EI: It's a really useful tool. It's a brilliant piece of software.</p> <p>(xviii) RS: It will also do a comparison with other Gloucestershire schools and Nationally.</p> <p>(KR rejoined the meeting at this point: 18.52)</p> <p>ISDR</p> <p>(xix) Governors used the hyper link provided to access the latest IDSR (Inspection data Summary Report). LB explained that the IDSR is used by Ofsted when they inspect a school and contains a variety of information about the school's context, characteristics and performance in comparison with National data. Performance data includes attainment, progress and other factors such as attendance and number of suspensions and highlights significant differences against National data, e.g. where the school is below or above, and where there is value added. LB said that the IDSR does not contain any surprises but is a useful broad picture of where the school is at and helps crystalise improvement priorities.</p> <p>School Development Plan</p> <p>(xx) Governors reviewed a live version of the Plan on SharePoint using a link provided by CB. LB explained that data drops are being completed and that in January governors will receive a data report for the Autumn term which will be used to evidence SDP progress and whether the RAG-rating can be updated.</p> <p>(xxi) LB reiterated that governors should cite their monitoring reports as part of the SDP evidence record. EI showed governors examples of how she and JM had linked their recent monitoring reports on the SDP.</p> <p>(xxii) LB referred to the School IP. She suggested that once governors are used to this way of working she will then share the School IP for governors to access.</p>	
11.	Staff Wellbeing	
	<p>(i) It was noted that CB had discussed staff wellbeing during previous items on the agenda. CB added that the Autumn term is always a long term and inevitably impacts on the energy levels of staff who are feeling tired and ready for a break. Everyone is putting on a brave face, sticking together and supporting each other.</p>	

	(ii) EI: Please give everyone our best wishes and our thanks. I'm shocked at how late this term finishes. It gives the staff very little time to prepare for Christmas. We do appreciate everything you and the team are doing.	
12.	Governor Monitoring	
	<p>Prior to the meeting governors received via GovernorHub the following monitoring visit reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reading and Phonics – JM – 17.11.23 ➤ Writing – EI – 24.11.23 <p>(i) Governors noted receipt of the monitoring reports provided. EI said that she is planning to make a safeguarding monitoring visit in early January. EI reported that the Trustees have requested that a specific monitoring is undertaken around checking the extent to which the safeguarding policy is fully implemented.</p> <p>(ii) EI reviewed the governor monitoring schedule. KR said he will meet with LM in the third or fourth week of January to look at the impact of sports premium and PE. He will also do a Health & safety visit on the same day.</p> <p>(iii) LT will meet with TW during the last two weeks of January to review SEND. This could be done via Teams.</p>	
13.	Policies	
	On this occasion there were no policies to review.	
14.	Governors' Training	
	No training had been completed since the last meeting.	
15.	Questions to Leadership	
	No questions had been received.	
16.	A.O.B.	
	<p>(i) EI wished everyone a happy Christmas.</p> <p>(ii) It was agreed that if possible the next meeting should be f2f.</p>	
17.	Dates of Next and Future Meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tue, 30th Jan 2024 – Teams/f2f • Tue, 19th Mar 2024 f2f • Mon, 13th May 2024 Teams • Tue, 25th Jun 2024 – f2f 	

The meeting closed at 19.28

Signed as a true record: _____ Date: _____
Chair