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MINUTES OF MOORCROFT SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) BUSINESS MEETING

Non Confidential Minutes for the Business Meeting
Held in the Staff Room at Moorcroft School
on Thursday 12th March 2015 7:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.

Present:

Margaret Bird	MB	Governor	Chair
Andrew Sanders	AS	Governor	Head of School
Alvin Walenn	AW	Governor	Support Staff
Andrew Irving	AI	Governor	Teacher
Toni Moore	TM	Governor	Parent (from 7:10 p.m.)
Collette Stone	CGS	Governor	Moorcroft Representative on Board of Directors (BoD) (from 7:10 p.m.)
Debbie Wiseman	DW	Governor	Moorcroft Representative on Finance Committee and Vice-Chair
Carey Philpott	CP	Clerk	

The meeting was declared quorate.

Item	Discussions and Decisions	Action
37/2014-15	Welcome MB welcomed everyone to the Moorcroft Business meeting.	
38/2014-15	Apologies of Absence Lisa Hatcher (LH), Phil Haigh (PH) and Mike Wisgard (MW) had sent their apologies, which the governors accepted. Kam Parmar (KP) did not attend.	Apologies Accepted for LH, PH, and MW. Non attendance of KP.
39/2014-15	Declaration of Interests None	
40/2014-15	Matters arising from the previous meeting 4th December 2015	

Item	Discussions and Decisions	Action
	Everything is covered elsewhere in the agenda.	
41/2014-15	<p>Items for Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Staff Survey b) Jennifer Bull</p>	
42/2014-15	<p>Premises and Health & Safety (H&S)</p> <p>a) AS distributed a Health and Safety Audit Report, dated October 2014, the last report written by Hazel Ryder before she resigned. The report had been carried out over the Autumn half term week. The report refers to missing documentation. AS told governors that the documents referred to do exist, but staff were not available during half term week to direct the author to them. DW found it strange, H&S is on every business meeting agenda and governors are alerted to health and safety issues. AS is pleased that the school is now working with John Faley, the Academy Health and Safety Officer.</p> <p>CS and TM arrived 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>AS said there are no high risk issues at the school. In addition, Ofsted is happy and talked to AS for 3 hours about H&S. Following a H&S meeting with John Faley, the Moorcroft office now records training logs on H&S and when they need to be renewed. Vanessa Hoch is working on an Academy handbook and induction for new staff.</p> <p>CS was pleased to hear that the records are being kept. AS added the meeting last week was minuted and logged.</p> <p>b) Over the holidays, the soft playroom will be converted into a learning lodge using pupil premium funding.</p> <p>c) Lamps in the car park have been replaced to make it brighter when it is dark. It had been discussed whether to illuminate the playground too, but was decided to tell people to avoid the playground when dark.</p>	
43/2014-15	<p>Moorcroft Risk Register</p> <p>AS reported there have been no changes since the last business meeting and financial risk is reducing.</p>	
44/2014-15	<p>HR</p> <p>a) Sickness absence target</p>	

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	<p>AS reminded governors that there had been an epidemic in December 2014 and sickness absence that month was very high. In January and February 2015, 138 days have been lost, which is 5% of the workforce. This was mainly due to long term sickness. All staff members except for one have now returned. MB enquired how this compares with last year. AS said he has not done the comparison yet, but it is better than December.</p> <p>b) Update on working party to look at Contract Review Process</p> <p>At the last business meeting, CS had invited everyone to send her their views of the sickness absence process. The purpose was to look at how the process could add value to the school. Only CP had responded, and CS found it a useful base. All staff on the payroll are paid for a certain number of hours. If they are ill, the school has a duty of care to look after them. A tiny percent who are absent could have come to work, and these are the people the policy should address.</p> <p>CS would like to have sight of benchmarking data on staff absences at other secondary special schools. Due to the nature of the conditions of students, staff working in a special school are more likely to be off work due to sickness compared with other mainstream secondary schools. However the sickness triggers are the same, creating a need for regular panels. The hearings need to be held in the daytime, which is an extra burden for retired or part-time workers, who are repeatedly called upon. CS questioned whether this is fair and sustainable. The expectation is that the employee comes first at the detriment of panel members. Is that fair and reasonable? The number of people called to a panel is 3. Is this always necessary?</p> <p>CS does would like to see the ratio of hearings to dismissal compared with hearings to no further action. AS said that the risk of dismissal is higher than in the past.</p> <p>AS has discussed with a member of the nursing team the class that was closed due to illness in December. Due to the nature of the children, there are more bugs for staff to catch. The nurse's view was that the pupils were not to blame, the staff should follow procedures properly to avoid epidemics. TM asked if staff wore gloves. AW replied they do, but cannot wear them all day.</p> <p>CS said that governors had never discussed to what extent Contract Review Hearings can be avoided. What do the school</p>	

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	<p>do if staff do not follow hand hygiene procedures? AW disagreed that this is common, as staff are very conscious of keeping their hands clean. Parents send in children that are not well, and they cough over staff. TM added that in addition to germs in a mainstream school, staff at Moorcroft come into contact with body fluids. AS said he does the more serious back to work meetings. It would be good to discuss there. Sometimes medical conditions are discussed, and then he would refer the staff member to Occupational Health (OH). In some cases, triggers are extended due to OH recommendations. MB questioned whether that is enough. Should the number of days be increased for all? AS said some staff have genuine reasons, but others play the system with the different short and long term policies. He has discussed it with the HR Advisor who says that he should stick with the process.</p> <p>CS said it is heavy handed to give a member of staff who is more likely to catch something additional stress of sitting in front of panel members. Sickness absence is a manager's function. Energy should be directed to those playing the system. Concern should follow the system.</p> <p>Governors questioned how experienced is HR Co-Operative in giving special academies advice, as they have no benchmark. DW suggested that now the Academy is expanding, there may be a need for a part time advisor within, creating Eden guidelines. Serious matters need governors, but the process may not need to be so formal.</p> <p>CS stated it had been a good discussion, but no decision had been made. She questioned whether it is an issue for staff. If it is, she will move it forwards. AI said that staff are terrified of the process. AS stated that staff have varied views. People do not consider it fair for those who have been genuinely ill. AS said he will discuss it with John Ayres. CS asked if they could discuss unhelpful practice that they would like to eliminate.</p> <p>d) Leavers and joiners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Teachers who have left : Siobhain Canney and Olga Toulkeridou who moved to Pentland Field School, Marta Zapico Muniz and Carol Sparks. ii. TAs who have left: Chloe Whitfield who will teach abroad and wishes to become a Speech Therapist. iii. Teachers who have joined: Sarah Wilson, Mala Vasudev and Zenobia Anderson. 	<p>AS to discuss sickness process with JA.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. TAs who have joined: Jo Mortimer, Wesam Shaban and Kahkashan Ahmed. v. A new nurse was appointed last week. vi. There is still one teacher vacancy. vii. Another advert will go out for a Speech and Learning therapist. <p>e) Confidential HR items</p> <p>Please see confidential minutes.</p>	
45/2014-15	<p>Finance</p> <p>SP had prepared a written report which had been distributed.</p> <p>a) School Budget 2014-15 and Moorcroft representative on Finance Committee:</p> <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. AS said that the budget is now in surplus. There have been many negotiations with the Local Authority about Top Up funding. Now there is a new structure where some students attract more money than other young people, based on their needs. Overall it will place Moorcroft in a better financial position. Funding 1:1 will not be available anymore, but will be incorporated in the Top Up funding formula. ii. There are some anomalies, such as educational support staff in surplus and supply staff in deficit. This is because there were 3 vacancies last term covered by agency staff. iii. MB enquired about the overall current position for expenditure budgets against actuals at December 2014 being £41.8k. AS explained this is mainly due to a vacancy for a Speech and Learning therapist plus some other vacancies. iv. MB wanted to hear more about the revised 2014-15 budgets due to the 2.2% increase for non-teaching staff, when a 1% increase had been budgeted. AS replied, that it was a worrying expense and part of the reasons why an increase in Top Up funding was negotiated. DW explained, the increases could not be foreseen. v. AS has discussed the impact of the London Living Wage with SP, who thinks the impact on the Academy would be 	<p>DW will ask FC if a special needs allowance is</p>

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	<p>quite small. A governor asked if a special needs allowance is included in the living wage. DW will ask at the next Finance Committee meeting.</p> <p>vi. The results of the capital bids are expected any day in March.</p> <p>c) Service Level Agreements: It would cost £1,140 including VAT to purchase the Governor Support Service Level Agreement (SLA) in 2015-16. It is possible to pay as you go on training courses. AS asked if governors felt it was value for money for Moorcroft. Grangewood governors had decided on 'pay as you go' at their meeting on Monday. Governors AGREED not to purchase the SLA.</p>	<p>included in the living wage.</p> <p>Moorcroft will not purchase GSS SLA for 2015-16.</p>
46/2014-15	<p>Urgent Items from Full GB Meeting and Board of Directors</p> <p>a) CS said that Directors had looked at the mid-year assessment figures where Moorcroft is outstanding. Directors had commented that Moorcroft is 'flying now'.</p> <p>b) AS told governors that Directors have agreed the role of Associate Head of School (HoS) in principle. Hilary McDermott will become the new Associate HoS and the role of HoS at Grangewood will be advertised. AS is excited about being given time for projects such as an away day for the leadership team.</p>	
47/2014-15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) AS reported that a staff survey had been carried out, on advice from John Ayres. Moorcroft staff scored 3.26 out of 5. The average for special schools is 3.5. The survey identifies what is going well eg the ethos, people who are happy in their job and do not want to leave. It will also mention a more negative side, such as communication and involvement in decision making. CS asked if the survey had included talking to staff. AS said yes and the provider helps in how to tell staff. CS questioned if there is a plan for scoring 4. AS said a plan is in place and then another survey will be carried out.</p> <p>b) MB reported that Jennifer Bull has decided not to join the LGB.</p>	
48/2014-15	<p>Dates of meetings starting 7 p.m. at Moorcroft School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 23rd April 2015 FGB (Teaching and Learning and brainstorming LGB skills and what is missing). • Thursday 18th June 2015 Business 	
Ratification Section	Ratification Section	Ratification Section

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Item	Discussions and Decisions	Action
	None	

Meeting closed at 8:20 p.m.

There are confidential minutes for this meeting.