

**THE GOVERNING BODY FOR FRIERN BARNET SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN SCHOOL AND ON MS TEAMS
MONDAY 25 MARCH 2024**

MEMBERS:

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS

* Ms Ann Woodhall (Chair) (WLA)
§ Councillor Barry Rawlings (RSB)
* Ms Niki Savva (Vice-Chair) (SAN)
Mr Kunal Gautami (GIK)
§ Ms Mavis Osei-Agyapong (OGM)

PARENT GOVERNORS

* Mr Nishad Gudhka (GAN)
Ms Olga Glazer (GRO)
* Mrs Tracy Ward (WDT)
* Ms Helen Bull (BLH)
§ Ms Zeenat Syed (SDZ) (from 7.30 pm)

LA GOVERNOR

* Councillor Anne Hutton (HNA)

STAFF GOVERNORS

* Mr Simon Horne (HT) (HES)

NON-VOTING OBSERVERS PRESENT

* Ms Kathryn Poynting (PGK)
* Ms Jane Mullan (MNJ)
* Ms Paula Donaldson (DNP)
* Mr Jim Robinson (RNJ)
* Mrs Jane Canavan (CNJ)

* Denotes those present

§ accessed via MS Teams

A Woodhall

**Prior to the meeting there was a presentation on behaviour from Sharon Thomas, Assistant Head
A Powerpoint copy of the presentation is available from the clerk.**

24/20 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

WLA welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked governors for attending this meeting as there had been so many meetings recently with Ofsted and Governor Day.

24/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Kunal Gautami, Ms Olga Glazer – accepted.

Ms Zeenat Syed joined the meeting at 7.30 pm

Cllr Barry Rawlings left the meeting at 7.00 pm

24/22 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

24/23 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Subject to two alterations, the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2024 were **APPROVED**.

24/24 MATTERS ARISING

23/98 Site Update/Caretaker

DNP said they have recruited a caretaker, William, to replace Chris McCarthy. He starts working at FBS during the second week of the Easter holidays.

23/99 The Green Agenda

WDT said Recycling bins could be obtained at a cost and were not affordable at the present time.

23/108 AOB – new governors

HES said that no-one had come forward from Woodhouse to be on the governing body but he wasn't too concerned as the school's relationship with Woodhouse is good. **HES** said there have been two members of staff who expressed an interest in becoming a staff governor which he was following up. He said there should be a staff governor at the next meeting.

24/06 SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (SFVS)

DNP said they have found someone to oversee/audit the school's voluntary funds account through Entrust (provides financial services to schools) for approximately £300.

24/06 Energy Costs

DNP said the cost was high because for some reason they paid 14 months' worth of electricity instead of 12 months. Juliana Crawford, the previous Finance Officer, is no longer at the school and it was not possible to find the reason why. **DNP** said next year the figure should be more accurate.

24/08 HT's report – trip to Cern, Switzerland

HES said the Head and Deputy Head of Science took 24 students to Cern, Switzerland, to see the large Hadron Collider. The trip was a great success. **WLA** said there was a good report in the students' magazine 'Trumpet'.

24/15 Transition

Barnet co-ordinates taster days for transition but across other councils these arrangements aren't co-ordinated, making it difficult for some children to attend. **HES** said the first round of offers for FBS were quite low, 75 at the time of the meeting. He said there would be further offers and he would let governors have a more realistic figure at the next meeting.

HES distributed a scatter graph (prepared by **DNP**) to show where FBS children lived. This ranges from Potters Bar, Uxbridge, East Ham, Brent and Islington. **BLH** asked if they were always on time.

HES said a student living in Uxbridge travels to and from school 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening.

24/17 Governor Training

WLA reported that governors attended an excellent safeguarding training session, led by Laura Cofill, safeguarding lead for East Barnet School, on 28th February.

24/11 Safeguarding Update

HNA asked if they looked at young carers within the categories of students being monitored. **RNJ** said this is difficult because students don't always declare they are carers. **HES** said the school has benefitted from the support Barnet Young Carers' schemes where they know a child is a carer. **WLA** said it might be useful to know the numbers of children who have declared they are a carer.

24/25 GREEN AGENDA

DNP said the government is offering schools £2,500 per installation of an electric vehicle point. The actual cost to install two points is £21,000 (less £5,000). This is not affordable, so it will not go ahead.

24/26 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

HES thanked governors who came in for Governors' Day and for the support governors gave during the Ofsted inspection. The draft report has been received and the final report will come through at the beginning of the next term and while the judgement cannot yet be shared, the report will be favourable. He reminded governors that this was an ungraded inspection which would ask "are you still good"? ("not still good" would trigger another inspection.) **HES** said Ofsted is a cliff edge – because if a school is deemed 'requires improvement' or 'not good' this has implications for recruitment of staff and pupils to the school. Ofsted claims the one word judgement explains things clearly to parents **HES** said he had explained to Ofsted that parents can read one side of A4 detailing what the school does well and what the school can improve upon.

Safeguarding is the first thing Ofsted looks at when they go into a school and they confirmed that FBS's arrangements are very effective. The Central Single Record, detailing all the checks on adults connected to the school (working, visiting specialists and governors) was very good and the way that staff can report safeguarding issues (through My Concern) is handled very well.

Ofsted also looked at the curriculum, saying it was 'ambitious for all, it is well sequenced and provides a strong foundation'. Kathy Newey has done a huge amount of work on this with heads of faculties and faculties.

HES said that the inspection would have been harder if they had not achieved their results last summer. Ofsted look also at the work the school has done on behaviour and attendance and assessment. They noted oracy is a real strength in key areas, as is the work the school does with children with special educational needs. The inspectors made short visits, with SLT, to some lessons and reported that behaviour in lessons was good and it is rare to have low level disruption. The inspector said Friern Barnet is a very welcoming and friendly school with a lot of support given by the Hub and by the Bungalow. They talked about the collaborative approach in school and how staff are very supportive of each other.

HES said there were two areas for development:

1. to have a more consistent approach to adapting the curriculum (for those who might not understand – differentiation – **HES** said this will always be a priority, given the nature of the school);

2. students should regulate their behaviour in unstructured times, when not in the classroom.

WLA thanked SLT for all the hard work they have done and the areas they have been managing over the years. She added it was a joy that the inspector had found so many positives. **WLA** also congratulated RNJ for his ongoing good work on safeguarding. **HNA** said the inspector had recommended adding a column to confirm staff had undergone safeguarding training and another to show that members of SLT and relevant staff had been trained in safer recruitment.

HES said that the inspector noted the school does a lot of work with disadvantaged and SEND children and the differentiation aspect relates to these students.

GAN asked if the narrative would be in the report for people to use? **HES** said that the report when published can be quoted and it will be put up on the school's website.

24/27 ATTENDANCE & SUSPENSION DATA

HES said attendance had gone down from autumn to spring and although it might look low at 91.57%, it is slightly above the national figure of 91.3%.

Suspension figures have also risen compared to last year. 16 of these were for physical assault of a student. This is not full-scale fighting and events are not all in school, but generally where students get into an argument and they may hit someone or put them in a headlock. **HES** acknowledged this happens where students have not been able to manage relationships. 6 of the suspensions were for persistent defiance and two were for social media bullying online. The school is consistent in not accepting children fighting in school, on the way to school, or on the way home.

24/28 SCHOOL RISK ASSESSMENT (RA) REVIEW

DNP said there are a lot of risk assessments that, generally, she reviews when significant changes arise. She would be looking at if there were any improvements that need to be made or if staff and students had identified any health and safety issues or if anything has been learnt from a previous review.

In addition to statutory RA's (COSHH, DSE, Fire, First Aid, Manual Handling and Working at heights, the school has a number of others: Break and lunchtime playground activities, buildings, Legionella, lone working, slips and trips, snow and ice, stress, violence and trips and visits.

Maternity risk assessments are carried out, as are individual workplace assessments for staff returning to work following long-term sick leave. **DNP** added that faculties carry out their own risk assessments, such as PE, Design Technology and so on. **WLA** asked if she checked they are undertaken. **DNP** said she had copies of them and they are reviewed if there are new appointments. All the RAs are written taking into account Barnet health and safety and local codes of practice. **WLA** asked if anyone came in to check on the school's risk assessments. **DNP** said that the local authority no longer comes in to check on RAs.

GAN asked what the responsibility was for those people who rent the school's facilities. **DNP** said they would need to have their own insurance unless they want to buy the school's insurance. She said that there are risk assessments in place for various areas in the school, but they would need to have their own individual RAs dependent upon the activity.

24/29 DEEP DIVE PE

HES said that NYK was unable to attend the meeting. He said he would give a brief overview of the report. Daniel Nilsson an assistant head from Christ's College took part in the inspection. Positives: are the Head of PE, Peter Soave, children enjoy PE and there is a wide range of extra curricular sport for students to get involved in. There is always a good uptake of PE at GCSE. Areas for development were largely centred on teachers being consistent – for example in KS4, at GCSE, teachers need to make sure consistency in marking books and how they use various strategies in their teaching. At KS3 making sure that skills are developed that are used at KS4 GCSE. **HES** said that Ofsted also did a deep dive into PE and their findings were the same.

WLA asked where the next deep dive would be. **PGK** said probably art and **HES** added because of Ofsted it would probably be in the summer term. **MNJ** said that art would have a moderator in in the summer term also so it may be postponed.

GAN asked what the girl/boy take-up was for PE GCSE. **HES** said he would need to look this up. PE is popular in the school and there are three groups in both Y10 and Y11 and it is quite balanced.

24/30 LITERACY/NUMERACY REPORT

Literacy

PGK said Reading interventions: decoding and reading comprehension - most students haven't finished. Nine children have finished and of those seven have increased their reading age, one of which has gone up three years and four months. Of the others there is a range between 10 months and 1 year 8 months, so it is having an impact on those children. **PGK** said there are a further 20 children who will finish just after Easter. When they have finished the intervention, a report is produced and sent home to the child's parents with strategies that they should continue. Also to try and get more parental engagement of those children is there anything that they feel they would like support with. She added the response has been limited and they are going to put together a Firefly page after Easter detailing lots of reading strategies which will be shared with children and parents.

PGK said in trying to boost reading for pleasure they are having a Y7 book swap shortly and children can just take a book without necessarily having a book to swap. **PGK** said they would be taking some EAL students to Waterstones with £1 book tokens. Students can buy a small book for £1.

Numeracy

MNJ said Kamalidin Colad was appointed to focus on small-group intervention in numeracy for year 7 students who have SATs scores of less than 19 (more than half the year group). He worked with a group of 24 students, nine of whom have continued and the rest have graduated. Some of the

national tutoring funding has been used to source this intervention. There is also a year 7 intervention group that Marios Spyrou runs. These two teachers work in parallel with each other to improve the skills of these students by the time they get to Year 8.

24/31 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

RNJ said the number of children needing support has increased: two more on Child in Need plans and two more on child protection. There are still 8 looked after children, 5 of whom will leave at the end of this academic year, but there are 2 who have been identified for next year's Y7. The number of children under assessment has also increased and currently no children are being supported in the targeted youth service.

RNJ said there are 25 students receiving counselling, with some 6 on the waiting list. He said they were possibly picking up more students now because it is near the end of term. He said they could never be sure how many students were accessing CAHMS, so the figures are estimated. There are a few students working with Terapia.

RNJ said there are some trainee counsellors working at a 'lower' level on issues, such as anxiety. One is leaving and they will try to increase capacity. Two students are accessing BICS (Barnet Integrated Counselling Service). He added that BICS are offering some capacity and the school is looking at accessing some of that.

WLA said the safeguarding trainer told the governors that the safeguarding lead should be able to tell governors what was going on in Barnet and what the issues were for our school.

RNJ said that he attends the Barnet DSL online briefings which cover local concerns; they have been very useful. The school is not dissimilar to a number of schools. We have families struggling with the cost of living crisis. There are general issues across the borough with grooming of kids – children being asked to sell things as part of child criminal exploitation. Jim is working with Chris Kelly, Barnet's strategic lead for tackling violence and exploitation, on the impact this has for FBS.

SAN asked if there was a gang culture in the school. **RNJ** said they don't notice a gang culture in the school. The strategic lead for tackling violence, said that things were not territorial, what tends to happen is that someone owes somebody else some money, or takes someone else's girlfriend and then it escalates online and they then go to sort out. It's not gangs going up against each other. He said there were a few students they were concerned about what they were getting up to outside school but it's more individuals fighting individuals not joining gangs.

SAN asked if students receive the agreed number of sessions with a counsellor, does the school assume that everything is sorted and they won't have any more sessions? **RNJ** said counselling is judged on a case by case basis, whether the student needs six, eight or, in some cases, twelve sessions. When students have had the agreed number of sessions, it is often good for them to have a break and sometimes they may need to go back to counselling - sometimes they don't need any further sessions.

24/32 GOVERNOR DAY REVIEW

WLA thanked governors for attending the day.

It was a well organised day and governors spent the majority of their time talking to students.

HNA asked if, following the Ofsted student survey, a student says they don't feel safe in school how would they take the matter forward? **HES** said that there had been no issues in the parental survey but there were one or two students who said they don't feel safe. At break the inspector went out into the playground and found groups of students to ask them that question. She then looked at a boy group and a girl group, both from Y11 and at random asked children to meet with her. Following this, the inspector said she was not seeing this as a problem. The school will continue to be vigilant and do student surveys to establish if and where there are issues.

WLA suggested that if they did a survey perhaps it should not be done anonymously so that they could find out which children are having issues. **HES** said there is an online system (Whisper) where children can report an issue and the school can respond to this through email to try and find out more.

24/33 RATIFICATION OF POLICIES

First Aid Policy – no change. The policy was duly **RATIFIED**

Sex Education and Relationships Policy

A few amendments were made to the policy. The policy was duly **RATIFIED**.

24/34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

WLA provided a note on some training on SEND and she passed a check list on to **SAN**, governor link with SEND. **WLA** noted that SEND information should be reported back to governors on a regular basis. This will be added to future agenda.

GAN's daughter went to 10 Downing Street this week as part of Downs Syndrome Day. **GAN** said it was a special day. His daughter is part of the Downs Syndrome advisory group and they give their points of view to some MPs, and these principles of inclusivity and fairness of opportunity inform government policy. He said there were several MPs there and **GAN** said it gave a different perspective on things from the general media, that there are people in government who really do care.

WDT said that it was the Dance Festival that week, on Wednesday, and she encouraged governors to come along.

BLH said on governor day she spoke with various people and noted there were lots of things where funding was required, such as the caretaker's house, and she suggested crowd funding. There are specific crowd funding sites for education. She suggested that the school contact crowdfunding.co.uk (for education) where they might be able to raise some funds.

24/35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 13 May 2024 at 6.30 pm – BUDGET RATIFICATION MEETING

Preceded by a presentation from Jen Herlihy, Lead Practitioner for Reading