

Balfour Primary School
28.11.2024, 5:30pm

Present: Kirstin Baker (KB), Alan Gunn (AG) - Head, Ray Leeke (RL), Katie Wood (KW), Thomas Holman (TH), Shelley Baker (SB), Marcus O'Dair (MO), Alun Price (AP) Michaela Francis-Hicks (MFH),

Apologies: Jordan Kaleta (JK)

In Attendance: Jessica Sullivan-Wrenn (JSW) – Clerk to Governors

Quorum: 9 out of 10 governors were present so the meeting was quorate (at least 50% of governors present)

Acronyms: SLT = senior leadership team. SIP = School Improvement Plan. SEF= School Evaluation Plan. SVFS =Schools Financial Value Standard. FGB = Full Governing Board. EYFS= early years foundation stage. CPD = Continuous Professional development. DHT = deputy Head Teacher. OPAL = outdoor play and learning. SEN = special educational need. LA= Local Authority. AOB = any other business

Governor **Questions and comment to the SLT are highlighted bold.**
Decisions and approvals, in bold **CAPITALS.**

1. Welcome, Apologies

KB welcomed all governors to the meeting. Introductions were made for new staff Governor. Apologies are noted above. TH informed Governors he was delayed and arrived at 18:12

2. Declaration of business interests

No additional business interests on the meeting agenda were raised.

4. Nomination of LA governor. JK

Jordan Kaleta was not present at the meeting but her nomination was confirmed and Governors **AGREED** to appoint her.

6. Head Teacher report - Autumn 2024

- AG informed Governors of the recent bereavement of a student. The family have another child at Balfour and it is of upmost importance to Balfour, that everyone is supported through this difficult time and will ensure the life of the student is marked respectfully and in a healing way. The school are in close contact with the family and have organised quiet spaces and church services for pupils and staff.

Q: can Governors help to support staff, SLT and AG? We are liaising with Winston Wish charities to help guide, training and support all staff.

Q: Staff need to utilise their bereavement training, the resources available and have designated spaces to process their grief.

The staff Governor reported that pupils have shown a wide range of responses to this loss and has subsequently affected their behaviours. These changes to behaviour need to be dealt with sensitively. SLT are being led by the family in how to progress.

Q: Governors suggested to utilise Suzanne Silvey, who is the school educational psychologist. Governors suggested reaching out to Donna Lamb. BHISS (Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service) are offering sad event support. Governors were thanked for their concern and the school will utilise these suggestions.

AG added, how pleased he is that all of the school, its stakeholders and local community have pulled together to support each other and this pupil's family in grieving this loss.

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- Admissions. The school currently has 673 children on role (of 718) – 94% capacity. Reception and Year 2 have reached full capacity. There are 7 prospective in-year admissions to Balfour, some pupils attending from St Joseph's, due to closure. The open mornings and school tours have continued to receive a positive response from parents. Intake figures look to be optimum for next year.

Q: Governors were pleased with improvements in interest at Balfour and that strategies are increasing pupil intake.

- Attendance. Currently Pupil Premium 93.5% and SEND 92.3% groups have low attendance but the overall average is still above National statistics. A few isolated cases are affecting the figures; reasons for persistent absences include, illness/medical, holidays, bereavement. Pupil Premium leads were given a report on attendance and are meeting are arranged with those families.
- Finance. The budget is being reviewed every month by AG, LC, KB. Current projections show spending to be under the licensed deficit. Spending projected to be £189,000 in-year deficit; this is a reduction of £4,000. The school are implementing methods to reduce costs and it has been decided that, building maintenance, other than urgent H&S, will be stopped.

Pupil numbers have had a big impact on the projected budget; during the next couple of years, the extra numbers in census will mean there will be a small in-year surplus, previously projected was a £160,000 deficit. Year 3 now looks much more positive and will reduce the need for staff lay-off. A 5% increase in admissions will add £100,000 and the school would be at full capacity.

Q: Governors were pleased with these positive changes and an increase in demand for Balfour. The school is in a better position than previously predicted but there is still financial challenges and no funds to increase spending eg: hiring staff required.

Q: The budget does make assumptions on projections and these increases in income do help to balance the schools' finances and reduce drastic action needed.

AG attended a deficit budget meeting with Brighton-Hove council and due to the school is not predicted to be over their deficit, no further action will be taken at this time. Balfour is working within their licensed spending.

The SBM has been liaising with, Utility matters, and their report shows a significant overspend on energy. They predict a saving of £3000 year by changing provider. Varndean works with Energy Sparks to actively involve pupils in reducing energy usage by showing them the schools energy reports and eliciting changes in behaviour around the school. Varndean offered to collaborate with Balfour.

Q: Governors asked for an update on the school funding project. It will be used to re-formulate the front entrance area. Widening the area, moving gates, to improve safety, ease of access and flow into the school. LC is compiling a term of reference document and this project can be agreed by Governors at the next FGB.

Q: H&S Governor inquired about the safety concerns of the front entrance area and asked what will be done to ensure safety before these changes are made. The road lines have been re-drawn on the floor and gates are used strategically. Adaptions to the road have made the crossing into Balfour narrower and creates a bottleneck, of cars and people.

SLT and FAB (Balfour's parent group) have been discussing plans for using fundraised money for long term plans on making positive environmental changes to the school.

- Staffing. 2 staff returning from maternity, one staff member leaving for maternity and cover required for a short period. EM will be returning part-time. One staff member on long term sick likely coming back, spring 2, earliest – there is long term supply and the school is pleased.

There is a newly appointed Forest school teacher and they are currently self-funded training for the role.

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- Staff absence. Not enough staff and resources INAs are disproportionately more absent but they are dealing with difficult situations and don't have the ability to. then the school is impacted by not having the support of the send pupils and staff have to step in and other things are forfeited. Does impact on staff wellbeing

Q: are you confident in absence management procedures. Yes, we are relatively robust and we follow the procedures in policies. Staff are more aware of the systems and financial impact on school.

- SIP /SEF

Q: Governor will be visiting DHT tomorrow to monitor, SIP regarding Belonging.

Questioned, how will the school be different in 2/3 years? What is the aim. In SIP it talks of values, ethos and there is a need to clarify what is the direction, therefore determining the actions required. There have been a few pupils have reported feeling lonely and isolated, without solid friendships, and do not like coming into school. The goal is for no child to feel this way and have good support groups. We are also working toward better communication and more involvement with parents and the wider community.

Q: achievement is easy to measure, but belonging is harder to quantify. The LA has scales to measure belonging or the school could create their own margins and monitor relationships, attendance and achievements increase. DHT meeting is likely to provide further information. We have done a survey this summer term and will remeasure and review.

Q: SIP is strategic so have to address the current status, and what needs to be done to be outstanding.

Q: what themes are you seeing and test and pilot to achieve your aims. Having parents highlighting.

7. Safeguarding

Covered in Head Teacher report, not discussed in meeting.

9. Federations

The LA are now referring to this scheme as, Collaborations.

AG attended a meeting with other Brighton school Head Teachers, covering topics about vocal and language for disadvantaged pupils.

January INSET day will include information from lecturers at Brighton University and will include talks on belonging and how to encourage pupils participation. Governors were invited to attend this event.

Head Teacher and chair have been to TTSA group meetings. These meetings enable schools and Governors to meet one another, share best practice and resources, encouraging strategic progression and CPD, support each other therefore raising enthusiasm across the city.

A Collaboration group has been arranged by LA for Head Teacher and Governors.
Second meeting Monday 11.02.25

Q: These meetings will be very impactful for schools and the sense of belonging across the city.

Q: Conversations and projects need to be ambitious and not just focus on the financial deficits to give pupils the best opportunities.

Balfour is remaining positive and strengthening outcomes by working together with other schools.

8. FGB presentations discussion.

Governors discussed the remaining meetings in the year and which staff members to provide topical updates and presentations at future FGB meetings.

Governors **AGREED** the following:

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Staff member	Role	Topic of presentation	Meeting to attend
Lisa Collington	SBM	Budget	January 2025
XX	XX	Oracy/spoken language/ vocab – disadvantaged focus.	Summer 1 (May)
Sandra Mulholland	DHT	Belonging	Summer 2 (July)
Izzy Harris	KS1 lead	EYFS	XX
Dawn Loader	DHT	OPAL / KS1 OCOW	XX
Alex Whitt	Nature school lead	Governors to do a site visit at Nature school	Summer 2 (July)

5. Previous Actions Still to be done listed in **BOLD**

ACTION	PERSON	TIMEFRAME
Assign link roles to new Governors; Looked after children and Personal Development /Equalities and Diversity /Training & Development /OCOW / OPAL. Subjects: Science Humanities / PE. (Pupil premium)	JK / MFH	Ongoing
Start to action Governor ‘vision’ next steps. collect voice / ideas for branding development, engage community stakeholders.		
Governors to attend KCSiE INSET. 09.25	ALL	
Monitoring: Governors to arrange monitoring visits with link staff for the second half of this term. Review impact of staffing restructure on the leadership team. Focus on areas of SIP, A and B	ALL	Second half of Autumn term
7:1 Governors need to seek information and develop knowledge on Academies and federations.	ALL	All FGB meetings
Arrange meeting with SM on belonging	RL/AG	COMPLETED. RL meets once a term to do monitoring. (29.11.24)
11.1 Add confirmed dates to Teams calendar. FGB/ monitoring	JSW	COMPLETED
11.2 KW to take on disadvantaged and SEN role and sign up to training	KW	COMPLETED
11.3 Attend pay panel / Head Teacher review training and give feedback of the panels to Governors at FGB	RL/KB	COMPLETED see item 11.

10. Governor activities

Activity	ACTION	Attendance	Date	Comments
FGB MEMBERSHIP	none			
VACANCY	2 co-opted, 1 parent	10 applicants for parent Governor.	Voting time ends 29.11.2024	Proceed with parent vote on Weduc. Applicants to be offered co-opted roles with skills required. An update letter will be sent out thanking parents

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				for their interest and celebrating the school.
MONITORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend budget update meeting Add monitoring dates to shared outlook calendar 	KB ALL	Xx This term	All governors must fill In a monitoring report and return to clerk to file.
MONITORING FEEDBACK	Governors discussed monitoring focuses and questions to staff. Governors DECIDED to not make any changes to the monitoring report template but AGREED to each compile a short document of feedback from their monitoring, including: summary of topics covered, monitoring data collected, 2 highlights for Governors and any questions to raise at FGB to SLT.			
SKIILS AUDIT	New governors to complete skills audit.	MFH	22.10.24	
TRAINING	Pay committee and Head Teacher appraisal	RL		
GOVERNOR VISITS:	Governors need to add visit dates to shared calendar and hand in visit reports.	ALL		
	H&S	AP		The latest H&S report showed 10 racial issues. Have these incidents been assessed? Not this year. DL has assessed last years prejudice based incidents. SEND have higher incident rates.
	Head Teacher appraisal	RL/KB	20.09.24	No feedback was provided for these visits.
	Pay panel committee	RL/KB	20.09.24	
	Dave Cole	AG		
	Writing	RL	27.11.24	
POLICIES reviewed on SchoolBus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Special educational needs and disability SEN information report Child protection and safeguarding Appraisal model policy 	Governors are quorate	28.11.24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> APPROVED APPROVED APPROVED Document requires editing. Policy moved to JAN FGB.
Behaviour principles written statement	Update from Dawn Loader: The Behaviour Policy will be undergoing a full review in the coming months, with the aim of implementing a new policy from September 2025. It makes sense to write the Behaviour Principles as part of this review process. Balfour currently has a page on the website explaining our approach to behaviour, which is in line with our current policy so we will continue to use that until the launch of the new behaviour policy.			

3. Approval of last minutes

The minutes from 12.09.2024 were circulated prior to the meeting. **APPROVED**
Matters arising – None

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11. **AOB** – Governors spoke briefly about belonging: Focus on disadvantaged groups. Looking across the city secondary schools to see how we can impact pupils further through their lives. It is not just the outcomes of key subjects, but community belonging. Improving Oracy will improve belonging.

Q: This can be so beneficial for new starters and in year admissions.

ACTIONS	PERSON	TIMEFRAME
4:1 Inform LA of nomination	JSW	Within 1 week of FGB
6:1 Include checking on entrance to school, issues in Monitoring	AP	Second half of term
6:3 Share information on belonging	RL	December 2024
9:1 Governors to attend INSET	ALL	06.01.25
8:1 arrange visit with miss Harris EYFS.	TH	Second half of term

Date of next meeting:	FGB –16.01.2025. 5:30pm
To include:	Presentation on Budget/SVFS, from LC
Time closed:	18:50pm

Agreed as a true record and approved for circulation:

Signed: _____
Governors)



____ (Chair of

Date: _____ 12.12.24 _____