

Full Governing Board Meeting 2023/24

Meeting Minutes			
Date	Wednesday 27 September 2023	Time and Location	4.00 p.m. PPA Room
Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Di Hunt (Chair)	DH	Sam Kashmiri	SK
Linda Anderson	LA	Mark Longley	ML
Matt Ashdown (Item 6)	MA	Diana Marsland	DM
Colin Brace	CB	Kimberley Nelson	KN
Richard Donovan	RD	Mark Wignall	MW
Eva Field	EF	Chris Karley (Clerk)	CK
Sophia Hunnisett	SHu		

Apologies	Initials
Clare Brittain	CB
John Godley	JG
Sue Hatton	SHa
Lydia Paynter	LP

	Agenda	Led by
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Chair
2	Declaration of Interest	Chair
3	Minutes of Last Meetings – 5 July 2023 & 29 August 2023	Chair
4	Matters Arising	Chair
5	Urgent Matters	Chair
6	Pupil GCSE results analysis	MA
7	Register of Business Interest & Governors' Code of Conduct	Chair
8	Instrument of Government	Chair
9	Budget Monitoring & Delegation of Financial Powers	MW/Chair
10	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update	Chair
11	School Development Plan agreement	MW
12	Review Governors Development Plan and agree objectives	Chair
13	Headteacher's Report	MW
14	Chair's Report & Policies statement	Chair
15	Associate Member – possible co-option	MW
16	Policy Reviews: - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy - Safeguarding Policy	Chair
17	Chairs of Committee Reports – items arising from Committee minutes	CB/RD/EF
18	Reports: Lead Governor visits	Chair

Diana M. Hunt

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	• Link Governor visits • School website information • Governor training • DSA	
19	AOB	Chair
20	Date of next meeting: • Wednesday 29 November at 15.30	Chair

Item no.	Discussion	Action	Due Date
	The meeting started at 4.05 p.m.		
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence • DH welcomed DM to her first regular FGB meeting as a recently elected co-opted Governor. • Apologies for absence were received from and accepted for CBr, SHa, JG and LP. SK advised that she would have to leave the meeting at 5.00 p.m.		
2.	Declaration of Interest • None		
6.	Pupil GCSE results analysis DH moved this item up the agenda, so that MA could leave the meeting afterwards. MA spoke to the presentation filed with these minutes. • There had been a return to pre-pandemic grading boundaries. This meant a significant shift for some subjects so there had been uncertainty as to the outcome. 2019 was the true benchmark for 2023 results. • For Downlands the results had been very good indeed. The average grade for 2023 was 5.6, compared to 5.3 in 2019 and 5.7 in 2022. The grade differential to schools nationally is still estimated at this stage, but is thought to be 0.42 for 2019, 0.56 for 2022 and 0.44 for 2023. • There was a big increase in EBacc Grades 4+ and 5+ compared to 2019, to 56% and 36% respectively. • 85% of Downlands pupils achieved Grade 4 or above compared to 68% nationally. 33% achieved Grade 7 or above compared to 22% nationally. These were the third best results in West Sussex, and the best for EBacc entries.		

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	- It was particularly gratifying that the grades achieved by disadvantaged pupils at Downlands were in line with those achieved for <u>all</u> pupils nationally. - The results also demonstrated a direct correlation between attendance and results, with good/poor attendance resulting in a +1/-1 difference in grade. - Q – How will the school continue to build on these excellent results? - PACE will be key, as it focusses on individual actions that will make a positive difference. - Q – Is the impact of adaptive teaching analysed? - Yes, this is a school priority, most notably in English/reading. It informs changes to the approach to teaching. - Q – Are targets set to FFT5 (very high progress)? - Yes, the focus is in moving every child up the scale. - Q – Can behaviour be correlated to achievement? - Yes, in the context that behaviour is more often an issue amongst the disadvantaged pupils. The Governors congratulated the school on these excellent results. MA left the meeting.		
3.	Minutes of Last Meetings – 5 July 2023 & 29 August 2023 The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 5 July 2023 (subject to three minor drafting corrections) and the FGB extraordinary meeting held on 29 August 2023 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.		
4.	Matters Arising None		
5.	Urgent Matters - MW advised that an urgent Teams meeting of local heads had been called yesterday by WSCC. They were advised that due to escalating costs the contract for building the new Bedelands Academy was being re-tendered, pushing back the expected completion date to 2026/27. WSCC therefore asked existing secondary schools to take bulge classes in the interim. MW advised WSCC that having accepted two bulge classes already, Downlands could not accommodate any more. - Q – Is Burgess Hill Academy full? - Although they have bigger premises, they are approaching capacity and also have a bulge class already. Other local schools are also full. - Q – Is Downlands at the national average for class size?		

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	- It has the mandatory 1:17 teacher:pupil ratio that is required nationally. - MW also advised that WSCC would be undertaking a physical survey of the school for raac concrete rather than rely on historical records. Hopefully this would provide reassurance. - Q – What does raac testing entail? - It is thought that the survey will be visual, but with samples taken if the presence of raac concrete is suspected. CB advised that he would accompany the survey team.		
7.	Register of Business Interest & Governors' Code of Conduct - CK advised that around half of governors had completed the Register of Business Interest form. Hard copies were distributed to facilitate prompt completion. - The Governors approved the adoption of the NGA model Code of Conduct for maintained school governing bodies, as revised in August 2023. DH signed the Code of Conduct accordingly. - DH advised that the Governors' Code of Conduct should now appear on the school's website. CK will arrange this.	CK	18.10.23
8.	Instrument of Government DH advised that this would be taken with Item 15 on the agenda.		
9.	Budget Monitoring & Delegation of Financial Powers - MW advised that overall staffing costs were running to budget. There had been two teaching resignations at the end of last term. There had been an adjustment to the accounting for Casual Supply costs which resulted in the current excess. Applications to fill support staff vacancies had picked up. - Project costs were running a deficit but this would be corrected from funds that are due from WSCC. - The overall financial position is satisfactory. - Q – Why is mentoring showing a £10k deficit? - This is actually income, shown as a negative amount within the costs budget. It represents payment from universities to the school for accepting trainees. - The Governors approved the Delegation of Financial Powers, which DH signed accordingly.		
10.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update - DH had taken over the safeguarding lead role from SHa. She had met with Graham Odlin (GO) in the previous week to run through the Single Central Record (SCR). It was up-to-date with the exception of support staff, whose records should be current by now. - They had also discussed the Safeguarding Policy, which would be considered later in the meeting, and DBS/Criminal Records Bureau		

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	checks. MW had agreed to bring in short term agency staff to help to bring all records up-to-date in accordance with best practice. • The recruitment process would be reviewed annually to ensure that it remained in line with the requirements of KCSIE. • There were no new child protection issues. • The school had signed up for Governors' safeguarding training from The National College. DH would send the link to the online course to all Governors and advised that the certificate produced on the completion of the course should be sent to GO; this was a legal requirement. The course should be completed by half term. Staff governors did not need to complete this course. • Q – Is this in addition to Graham Odlin's training on 6 December, and were both required? • Yes.		
11.	School Development Plan agreement MW spoke to the draft SDP which is filed with these minutes. It will be costed when ratified. • MW reminded Governors that the Challenge & Development Group met at the end of each term to review progress and to ensure accountability to the Governing Board. • Governors congratulated the school on having a SDP that has more focus than most strategic plans, with a laser focus on the pupils. • The Governors approved the draft Plan.		
12.	Review Governors Development Plan and agree objectives • DH advised that there were no changes from last year's Plan apart from re-ordering one item to a more appropriate position within it. • DH also reminded Governors of the importance of completing the skills audit, which would inform the Board of the areas where training was needed or where experience in certain areas might be lacking. • The Governors approved the Plan. SK left the meeting at 5.00 p.m.		
13.	Headteacher's Report MW spoke to the report that is filed with these minutes, and apologised that the reference to appraisals had been included in error. • Attendance is still around 3% down on pre-pandemic levels. Strategies to counter Emotionally Based School Avoidance are being implemented but it is still early days. • A teaching vacancy that arose at the very end of last term is being advertised now. • The school had begun to offer more flexibility, including part time working and extra responsibilities/pay when advertising for support		

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staff. This has attracted more applications, some of which look promising.

- The new modular classrooms are due to be handed over by the contractors on 29 September, against an original planned date of 21 August. WSCC had not agreed to pay for the temporary classrooms which would have made the delay much easier to cope with. Use of the canteen as a temporary classroom had been abandoned as it proved to be unsatisfactory. They had been able to use the STEM suite and the library. They would move into the new classrooms on the next Monday morning.
- The refurbishment of Maths and Science rooms had been very successful, and the car parking area had been improved.
- Work on the roof of the library and Science room, which is a WSCC project, and the new toilets, should be finished over half term.
 - Q – Are the new toilets still to be all unisex?
 - Yes, and parents have been happy with this once it had been explained how this will work.
- The gym ceiling replacement, also a WSCC project, should take place around half term.
- CB noted that the old and new tarmac on the paths to the new classrooms has been dovetailed which could result in unevenness over time. Otherwise, the classrooms look good.
 - Q – Was there any possibility of raac concrete in the old gym?
 - This would be surveyed before any work was done.
- Pupil numbers were at the maximum in every year group apart from Year 7, as two pupils who were due to join did not. These places will be filled.
- The Federation now had a part time administrator, working 8 hours per week.
- 30 parents are due to attend the Forum to discuss uniform. MW will present on the guiding principles, which are based on the school's values. The outcome will be fed back to Governors. The cost of uniforms is roughly in parity with other schools.
- Much is going on in Character Development to addition to striving for academic success. The Character Passport was launched for Year 7 this term. The school will cover 75% of the costs for the Pupil Premium (PP) cohort. Activities include theatre visits, camping, volunteering, museums, university visits, work experience and a trip abroad for Year 9.
 - Q – Would the school help with the cost of passports for PP?
 - Yes.
- The PGL Adventure trip had been very successful with 206 students attending.
- The new school timings are working out well.
- The 'Find your Path' event for Year 11 had gone well and was well attended.
- More use is being made of twilight sessions to deliver staff training.

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	• Q – Do these all involve shutting the school early? • Yes, therefore they take place on different days of the week to avoid repeated disruption to the same lessons. There are six session p.a.		
14.	Chair's Report & Policies statement • Three Stage 2 Complaints Panels had been held already this school year, all of which had been rolled over from late in the Summer term. None had been upheld. • DH reminded new Governors that they need to read the whole of the 2023 KCSIE document. Governors who had previously read the 2022 version were required to read only the 2023 updates. • As policies came up for review, DH suggested that practice should be for the Chairs of the appropriate Committee to read the policy before the meeting and to liaise with the relevant member of staff to discuss any changes. Staff would remain responsible for writing the policy. This was agreed. • Q – Should Committee Chairs reach out to staff a month before the review fell due to discuss the policy? • Yes, this would be good practice. • DH requested that Governors check their emails at least twice a week. • DH invited other Governors to attend the school open evening on 5 October. DH expressed her thanks to CB for the significant support that he had provided during the building of the new modular classrooms, which had been essential to the completion of the project. His involvement had gone well beyond what could be reasonably expected of a Governor. These thanks were strongly endorsed by the whole Governing Body.		
8. / 15.	Instrument of Government / Associate Member – possible co-option • Before agreeing the Instrument of Government DH invited Governors to consider revisiting the possible reconstitution of the Board to add more members, given the heavy workload. An alternative would be to appoint an Associate Governor. • DH and CBr had met a potential candidate with strong finance experience, who was keen to give back to the local community. If appointed he would join both the FGB and the Finance & Buildings Committee, but without voting rights. • Q – Could he be co-opted as an Associate for a while, and then the Board could be reconstituted if it was decided that he was needed as a full member? • Yes		

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	• Q – Would recruitment of new members to a bigger Board lead to more work in some respects? Would additional members always be co-opted? • It would possibly add to the workload, and additional members would be co-opted. • The Board agreed to proceed with the appointment of an Associate Member. • The Board agreed to re-adopt the Instrument of Government as it stands.	DH	29.11.23
16.	Policy reviews • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy ◦ Simon Adams had asked that this redrafted policy be considered by the SLL Committee before being brought to the FGB. ◦ The Governors agreed that this would be sensible, and that the policy should be presented to FGB for ratification at the next meeting. • Safeguarding Policy ◦ DH advised that this was a WSCC Policy, so no changes from the WSCC model were proposed. ◦ Q – Paragraph 6.2.1 states that the school will ask the children what they want from a child protection system. How is this done? ◦ It was agreed that this should be raised at the POW Committee. DH would ask GO to look into this. ◦ The Board approved the updated Policy.	CK	29.11.23
		DH/CK	18.10.23
17.	Chairs of Committee reports – items arising from Committee minutes • No Committee meetings had yet taken place in this school year.		
18.	Reports: Lead & Link Governor visits, School Website, Governor Training & DSA Visits • The safeguarding visit was discussed under Item 10. • No other visits had yet taken place. Website • DM will check the website at the end of the Autumn term and report back to the next FGB meeting after that. Training		

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	- DH reminded the new Governors to sign up for all induction training courses, and to advise JG both when the training was booked and completed. DSA - KN advised that the DSA had re-grouped following three resignations, including the treasurer. 20 parents had attended the recruitment evening. - The Governors agreed to field a team for the DSA Quiz Evening.		
17. 19	Any Other Business None		
18. 20	Date of Next Meetings The next FGB meeting will be on Wednesday 29 November 2023 at 3.30 p.m. in the PPA Room. The meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.		

Agutt