

# Minutes of Meeting of New College Leicester Governing Body held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5.00 pm.

## **Present**

Sue Billington – Chair of Governors  
Jane Brown – Principal  
Councillor George Cole – Governor  
Angus Fraser - Governor  
Simon Groschl – Observer  
Trevor Low – Governor  
Deborah Rose – Governor  
Ellen Rudge-Tezcan – Governor  
Kate Walewska - Governor  
Lynn Dawson – Clerk

## **In attendance**

Wayne Allsopp – Business Development Manager

### **1. Health and Safety**

Wayne Allsopp, Business Development Manager, presented the Termly Health and Safety Report for the Autumn Term previously circulated to governors. He noted that a Health & Safety Audit would be carried out by the Local Authority in the Autumn Term and the H&S team were working hard to prepare for this. Wayne Allsopp noted that Sue Billington, Chair of Governors as Health and Safety Link, would be visiting the school in the second half of the Spring Term ahead of the audit and this was to be arranged. Wayne Allsopp reported that there were no major issues with Health & Safety and the college was running smoothly.

The governors thanked Wayne Allsopp for his report and recognised Chris Gowans, Estates Manager, for the excellent work that he is doing.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Ian Chakravorty – Governor  
Dipak Patel – Governor  
Sue Thistlethwaite – Governor  
Paul Wilson – Governor

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024,, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, noted and signed as a true record. Jane Brown, Principal, noted that from page 4 of the 1<sup>st</sup> February minutes, the parent voice feedback paperwork had now been circulated to governors and apologised for the delay in circulating this. Jane Brown noted that 187 parents had responded to the questionnaire and there was a parents evening next Thursday where more would be handed out.

### **4. Matters Arising**

1. Governors to offer dates to sit on Student Disciplinary Panels – ongoing.
2. Governors to explore sponsorship opportunities with their contacts – ongoing.
3. Sue Thistlethwaite to carry out a walkthrough of the college to review behaviour and attitudes to learning – on agenda.
4. Jane Brown to complete a high level spend plan for the college – ongoing
5. Sue Thistlethwaite to look at, and report back on SEN students – June.
6. A 10 minute Child Protection slot on each GB agenda in terms of briefing in accordance with the current procedure – on agenda.
7. DOLs to be invited to governor meetings – ongoing.

8. To prepare a business case for the future of Post 16 provision at New College Leicester – on hold.
9. Jane Brown to speak to Wayne Allsopp re ventilation in small hall - in conjunction with the condition survey.
10. Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, to carry out a H&S visit on the canteen areas – this will be carried out at the end of the academic year
11. Governors to write to Vi Dempster regarding their concerns around safeguarding support – ongoing
12. Sue Billington, H&S link governor to carry out a H&S visit – April 2024
13. Jane Brown to send out the parent voice feedback to governors - closed

## 5. Declaration of Interests

Sue Billington declared that she was a director for Propraxis, Trustee of Anstey Jubilee Hall and Grounds Charity, Anstey Parish Councillor, Trustee of Anstey Town Charity and Chair/Trustee of Action Homeless Leicester. Trevor Low declared that he was Chairman of Hinckley Gymnastics Club which holds the operating license for the New College Gymnastics Centre and Director of Clarendon Sports Ltd. Deborah Rose declared that she was a consultant for Edwards and Edwards. Paul Wilson declared that he is the Principal of Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I and Regent College. Ian Chakravorty declared that he is Director of Subio Services Ltd. Dipak Patel declared that he is Director of Alchemmy Consulting Ltd, Sonikk Ltd, Redimeer Ltd, Double 6 Ltd and Dasad Ltd. Kate Walewska declared that she is Deputy Director for Global Recruitment for University of Leicester and Board Director for the Holy Spirit Multi Catholic Academy. Angus Fraser declared that he is Director of BID Leicester Limited and Dynamic Restaurants Limited. Councillor George Cole declared he is a local City Councillor. Simon Groschl declared that he works for the Leicester City Council.

## 6. Trust

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, noted there had been a Trust Board meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024 at which Tony Ford had been appointed as a Trustee and Simon Groschl had been appointed as a governor.

Sue Billington then talked about the paper, Academy Conversion – phase 2 which had been previously circulated to governors which had been discussed at the Trustee meeting. Sue Billington explained that the Local Authority can no longer support the college as they used to and the school would only join with an academy that puts children first. Sue Billington also explained that with Jane Brown leaving, the school would lose access to the informal local support network that the incumbent has developed and the new Principal would take time to build up an effective informal support. Sue Billington noted that research had already been carried out in 2020 with regard to looking into academy conversion and 3 Multi Academy Trust's (MATs) had been shortlisted for New College Leicester to join.

These MATs were:

- Nova Education Trust
- Archway Learning Trust
- Lionheart Academies Trust

Sue Billington, reported that at the Trustees meeting, all recommendations had been discussed and reviewed and they had agreed, with agreement from governors, that the college would like to explore opportunities with Nova Education Trust as this is the only trust where the governing body stays the same. It was confirmed that the new Principal was happy to work with this trust. The Trustees had also agreed that Nova was the least centralised in telling the school's what to do. The recommendations were now for governors to agree this decision to start the process of due diligence in partnership with the identified preferred Multi-Academy Trust.

Angus Fraser, Governor, agreed that the Trust Board had had a robust conversation and there had been lots of challenge and recommendations that all the values instilled through the school would stay and confirmed that Nova Education Trust has the same values.

Jane Brown, Principal, stated that the school needed to be protected especially with the spending problems and current climate. She noted the school is exposed and Elly Cutkelvin, LA Trustee, had confirmed that the school would get limited support from the LA Education Services.

Sue Billington, noted that the other two trusts that had been shortlisted had been seen as heavily centralised models and the Trust Board had felt that some staff would not fit into their models. On the other hand, Nova Academy Trust brings capacity where needed into the school to make decisions and best practice was shared across the MAT schools. Nova also have a school improvement service where they come out to look at the school and work in collaboration with the school. She also noted the CEO of Nova has good links with the DfE which is an advantage.

Trevor Low, Governor, asked if joining a MAT would affect the Ofsted process. Sue Billington replied that it would not. Obviously there would be changes but these would be managed correctly. The support staff middle manager roles would disappear as this would go into the centralised services.

Kate Walewska, Governor, stated that all schools including Universities were now going down the route of academisation. The school would be efficient in a MAT and there would be more buying power. Kate Walewska agreed that Lionheart and Archway Trusts were very corporate and she agreed that the Trustees had made the right decision in their choice.

Jane Brown, Principal, noted that academisation would be a long process and would run well into 2025. If the governors agreed this decision, the school would register their interest and due diligence would be pulled together to start the process.

The governors voted unanimously in favour of exploring the academisation with Nova Academy Trust.

## **7. Teaching and Learning**

Jane Brown, Principal, presented the appraisal system and CPD overview report previously circulated to governors and noted that the work done by Sheree Curtis, Assistant Principal, was the best she had ever seen. The system links teachers strengths and weaknesses to their appraisal targets which then incorporates the CPD side and runs very smoothly. Sheree had also set up her own ECT programme which is bespoke to the school and the local teaching school had been in to quality assure the system and had noted it as outstanding.

The governors asked Jane Brown to pass their thanks on to Sheree Curtis, Assistant Principal, for the work that she is doing.

## **8. Behaviour/Attendance**

### Attendance

Ellen Rudge-Tezcan, Assistant Principal, presented the attendance figures which were tracking at 90.2% which was no change from the Autumn Term at 90.2% but this is currently the national average. Ellen Rudge-Tezcan noted that there had been a lot of illnesses including scabies, diarrhoea and sickness bugs and flu circulating the school. Ellen Rudge-Tezcan reported that Pupil premium student attendance was tracking at 86.9% and SEN student attendance at 84.7% which had slightly improved due to 1 SEN student being taken off role.

Ellen Rudge-Tezcan reported that there had been an increased number of attendance calls made by the attendance team and other interventions had included 174 TASMs (Telephone Attendance Support Meetings) taking place, 51 holiday fines being issued and a huge amount of paperwork to be able to refer to the EWS for attendance fines.

Angus Fraser, Governor, asked if the fines usually get paid and Ellen Rudge-Tezcan replied that some do but if they do not, the fine increases from £60 to £80 but the money does go to the LA if paid.

There was a discussion around attendance and the governors thanked Ellen Rudge-Tezcan for her report.

### Suspensions

Ellen Rudge-Tezcan, Assistant Principal, reported on suspensions in half term 3 where there had been 10 suspensions which had resulted in a total of 31 days lost and no permanent exclusions. There had been 8 students in total suspended with the highest number being from Year 7. The 8 students consisted of 6 male and 2 female students.

The governors thanked Ellen Rudge-Tezcan for her report on suspensions.

## **9. Governors Feedback**

In the absence of Sue Thistlethwaite, Governor, Jane Brown took the governors through Sue's two feedback reports previously circulated as her role in link governor of safeguarding and inclusion.

### Safeguarding feedback

Jane Brown, Principal, reported that the college had been involved in a serious case review involving a past student from New College where an incident had occurred in the gap between school and post 16 provision. Ellen Rudge-Tezcan had submitted a 72 page timeline for this review and attended the review and it was found that the external child protection plan had been closed too quickly and the three Strat agencies had not worked in partnership and put the student at harm. The removal of the School Liaison Officer and having Education Welfare time cut has also not helped the case. The lesson learnt for the school was that there could have been an increased number of home visits, to use independent translators instead of family members and to try to obtain a more thorough picture of the home situation.

Jane Brown, Principal, noted from the report that what is concerning is that there had been 614 referrals made last term. There had also been 10 students (currently 12) and their families made homeless since the start of the academic year which causes attendance difficulties and trauma for these young people.

### Inclusion

Jane Brown, Principal, reported that the college is trying to avoid off site provision because of the heavy costs, i.e. circa £30,000 per child as the college is £33,000 over budget for AP spending but Karen Simpson, Director of Learning for Inclusion is trying to claim top up funding for this.

The governors acknowledged and thanked Sue Thistlethwaite, Governor for her reports and Jane Brown for presenting them.

## **10. Safeguarding Training**

Ellen Rudge-Tezcan, Assistant Principal, presented "The dangers of sharing nudes and semi-nudes" safeguarding training. There was a discussion at the end of the training and the governors noted they had found the training very informative.

The governors thanked Ellen Rudge-Tezcan for her presentation.

## **11. Finance**

### SFVS

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, explained that she had gone through the school's SFVS (school finance value standards) she had received from Nicola Horsfield, Finance Manager, before the meeting and asked governors if they agreed to it. The governors unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign the SFVS.

### Disposals

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, informed the governors that due to the school now being 10 years on from BSF, there were items that needed disposing i.e. computer equipment. The list of disposals she had approved were as follows:

- 3 VGA visualisers
- 25 Dell desktop PC
- 5 black Dell latitude 5590 laptops with broken screen, motherboard and keyboard touch pad
- 31 Smart boards
- 41 NEC projectors
- 32 2014 Gen 5 iPads

Jane Brown, Principal, noted these were being disposed of by a specialist company.

### Debtors

Jane Brown, Principal, informed governors that there were 6 aged debtors over 30 days that are currently being chased by Nicola Horsfield, Finance Manager.

### Budget

Jane Brown, Principal, reported that the budget figures arrived last week for 2024-25 and the school would be in financial difficulty. Last year the school had operated with an in-year deficit of £371,786 and it would increase next year. There was a high overspend last year on support staff and offsite provision and pay awards for support staff for 2024-25 are being requested for 10% or £3,000 for each staff member by Unions. Unions are also asking for double digits for teachers and if this happens salaries would increase by £934,000 with only £572,000 of this being funded. Although the teaching staff would get part funding for their pay increase, the support staff increase would not be funded. In light of this and to try and mitigate a budget deficit, Jane Brown was recommending a staffing reduction in the admin staff sector. She noted her rationale to unions and was using the LA procedures.

Jane Brown, Principal, listed other areas that the school had already reduced costs and this included an IT provider, the PR company, using Whole Education, changing printer providers, LA Health & Safety support and carrying out energy savings. Jane Brown noted she had already taken her recommendation to the middle leaders of the school and they had recognised that the school needs to move forward with a staffing reduction. Jane Brown stated that the proposed reduction was 8.5 posts saving a total of £257,000 per annum and noted that voluntary redundancies would initially be requested.

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, noted that the school would not be in a good position if it applied for academisation without a balanced budget.

Jane Brown, Principal, presented the timeline for the redundancy consultation and noted that not all voluntary redundancies may be granted. Staff would also be nominated on a skills audit criteria, attendance and redundancy cost.

Trevor Low, Governor, asked if this would have an impact on teaching staff and Jane Brown, Principal, replied that although it would have an effect, she believed this would be manageable as teaching staff had always been overstaffed and with the lettings supporting funding, the impact would be less than what it would have been.

George Cole, Governor, asked what the impact on students would be and to what extent had the school considered this and what plans would be put into place.

Jane Brown, Principal, noted that the admin roles would be much more focused than what they were. There would also be more resources put into the focused areas i.e. attendance which would create a much more fluid workforce. The impact on the students would be better as the staff would be working across the school instead of one area and although it would be a change for teachers, they would still get some admin support. Jane Brown also noted that there were more support staff than teaching staff.

Jane Brown, Principal, noted that the first consultation had taken place and all staff had been informed and staff would be kept up to date on the process in staff briefings.

There was a discussion around the redundancy consultation and Sue Billington proposed to agree the 7 bullet points of the rationale paperwork. The governors unanimously agreed all 7 points.

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, asked Jane Brown to ensure the college has a communication plan for the redundancy consultation and the academisation progress and suggested an issues board in the staff room.

## **12. Policies for Approval**

The governors agreed the following policies:

- Active Monitoring
- First Aid
- Governors' Allowances
- Health and Safety
- Leave of Absence
- No Smoking
- Probation Procedure for Support Staff
- Provider Access
- Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education
- Violence at Work

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, asked for an index to be put at the beginning of the Health and Safety Policy.

## **13. Any Other Business**

### Chair of Governors role going forward

Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, reported that after 17 years of serving as Chair to Governors, she would be stepping down in the Summer. Sue Billington explained that the college would need a new chair and ideally this would be an existing governor on the board who could step forward. Sue went through the role which had been circulated previously and noted the approximate time commitment of a Chair of Governors for the school is 65 hours per year i.e. 6 hours per month. Sue Billington also noted that if a governor stepped up then the school would have to recruit one new governor and maybe 2 more associate governors. Sue Billington asked if anyone wishes to apply for this role, that they call or email her.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

**Next meeting: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 at 5.00 pm**

## Matters Arising

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	DEADLINE
1	Governors to offer dates to sit on Student Disciplinary Panels	All	Ongoing
2	Governors to explore sponsorship opportunities with their contacts	All	Ongoing
3	Sue Thistlethwaite to carry out a walkthrough of the college to review behaviour and attitudes to learning.	Sue Thistlethwaite/ Jane Brown	June 2024
4	Jane Brown to complete a high level spend plan for the college.	Jane Brown	Ongoing
5	Sue Thistlethwaite to look at, and report back on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impact of student disciplinary panels with a success rate.</li> <li>• looked after children</li> <li>• students who do not access the full curriculum</li> <li>• spending of pupil premium and the students' exclusion/attendance rates.</li> </ul>	Sue Thistlethwaite	June 2024
6	A 10-minute Child Protection slot on each GB agenda in terms of briefing in accordance with the current procedure.	Ellen Rudge- Tezcan	Ongoing
7	DOLs to be invited to governor meetings.	Jane Brown	Ongoing
8	The Governors requested a Business Case for the future of Post 16 provision at New College Leicester	Jane Brown	On hold
9	Jane Brown to speak to Wayne Allsopp re ventilation in small hall.	Jane Brown	See item 4
10	Sue Billington, Chair of Governors, to carry out a H&S visit on the canteen areas.	Sue Billington	End of academic year
11	Governors to write to Vi Dempster regarding their concerns around safeguarding support	Sue Billington	Ongoing
12	Sue Billington, H&S link governor to carry out a H&S visit.	Sue Billington	April 2024