

Norton College

11-19 School & Sixth Form Centre



Meeting of the Local Governing Body

Wednesday 23rd September 2020 at 6.30pm

Present:

Mr Peter Whelan (Acting Headteacher)	Mr David Pettit (by video link)
Mrs Karron Young (Chair)	Miss Jan Pettitt
Ms Jill Hodges (by video link)	Mr Craig Shepherdson
Mr Steve Layton	Mrs Catriona Stewart
Mr Sam Moore	

In attendance:

Mr Tim Johnson (Headteacher designate)
Mr Barry Evans (Deputy Headteacher) (<i>until 7pm</i>)
Mr Des MacPhee (SBM) (<i>until 7.15pm</i>)
Mrs Barbara Kybett (Governance Advisor - Clerk)

1.	Welcome, apologies for absence and consents	ACTION
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new academic year, with a particular welcome to Mr Moore, attending his first meeting since being appointed by the Trust as a governor, and to Miss Pettitt, newly elected staff governor. The Chair made introductions for the benefit of new colleagues.</p> <p>As all governors were present, there were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>The Chair advised that Mr David Pettit had decided to step down from the LGB after a long period of service as a governor; this would therefore be his last meeting.</p> <p>Governors agreed to vary to agenda, and take the Behaviour Policy after Item 2.</p>	
2.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair Previously distributed.</p> <p>Nominations for the position of Chair had been previously received by the Clerk.</p> <p><i>Mrs Young left the meeting whilst her nomination was considered.</i></p> <p>Resolved: Governors unanimously elected Mrs Karron Young as Chair of the Local Governing Body until the first meeting of the academic year 2021-22.</p> <p>Mrs Young returned to the meeting and was congratulated on her appointment.</p> <p>Nominations for the position of Vice Chair had been previously received by the Clerk.</p> <p><i>Mr Shepherdson left the meeting whilst his nomination was considered.</i></p>	

	<p>Resolved: Governors unanimously elected Mr Craig Shepherdson as Vice Chair of the Local Governing Body until the first meeting of the academic year 2021-22.</p> <p>Mr Shepherdson returned to the meeting and was congratulated on his appointment.</p>	
*11.	<p>Behaviour Policy Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher explained that the Behaviour Policy had been revised, firstly to incorporate new guidelines for student behaviour relating to COVID-19, and secondly to introduce an approach to behaviour management which recognised that poor behaviour could be an indicator of underlying issues which needed to be addressed.</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher advised that the policy had been reviewed in consultation with the Behaviour Working Group. This newly formed group had met twice before the school closed in March and staff had been involved in a wider consultation. The Deputy Headteacher reported that staff had engaged with the new systems of recording incidents and these would be used to track patterns of behaviour and identify “red flags”.</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher summarised the main changes to the policy. He referred governors to the COVID-19 protocols in the policy, noting that these had been shared with students and parents, and also to the pastoral interventions detailed on page 17. He observed that the use of zones and bubbles in the school to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection had been positive for the pastoral staff working within them, as they were able to intervene more proactively with behaviour issues.</p> <p>A governor noted the emphasis on the identification of patterns of behaviour, the “red flags” but challenged that low level disruption, which was hindering learning, might not be picked up by these systems. In response, the Deputy Headteacher referred to the flowchart on page 15 of the policy, which was designed to address problems of low level disruption. He explained how it worked. Miss Pettitt added that the system was working well in practice and students were actively using it to moderate their behaviour.</p> <p>A governor asked the Acting Headteacher and Mr Johnson, as Headteacher designate, if they approved of the policy. She also suggested that the section in the policy on exclusions should make more specific reference to the Exclusion Policy.</p> <p>Mr Johnson considered that the policy itself was sound, and would be effective if implemented consistently. The Acting Headteacher was pleased that the policy contained significant elements of restorative practice.</p> <p>Governors discussed the advantages and disadvantages of sending texts to parents alerting them to their child’s poor behaviour in a lesson. It was agreed that whilst communicating by text was useful, it was not helpful to alert parents in real time about behaviour incidents without further context. Staff had systems in place to contact parents when certain thresholds were reached.</p> <p>Resolved: Subject to the Exclusion Policy being referenced in the relevant section, governors unanimously approved the Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Deputy Headteacher and he left the meeting at 7pm.</p>	

3.	<p>Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>Governors were reminded to return their business interest forms to the Clerk.</p>																			
4.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th July Previously distributed.</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020 were considered and approved by the LGB as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chair was duly authorised to sign them.</p>																			
5.	<p>Action plan and matters arising Previously distributed.</p> <p>Action Plan from the meeting held 9th July 2020:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="188 745 1385 1167"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="188 745 264 790">Action</th> <th data-bbox="264 745 1118 790"></th> <th data-bbox="1118 745 1385 790">Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 790 264 913">1.</td> <td data-bbox="264 790 1118 913">Meet with Julie Barber at the earliest opportunity to assess the need for more capacity in the safeguarding team, and report back to governors</td> <td data-bbox="1118 790 1385 913">Completed - a meeting had been arranged</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 913 264 999">2.</td> <td data-bbox="264 913 1118 999">Check Norton College emails regularly to ensure prompt consideration of the revised risk assessment</td> <td data-bbox="1118 913 1385 999">Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 999 264 1084">3.</td> <td data-bbox="264 999 1118 1084">Initiate parent and staff governor elections</td> <td data-bbox="1118 999 1385 1084">Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1084 264 1126">4.</td> <td data-bbox="264 1084 1118 1126">Share the skills audit with Mr Johnson</td> <td data-bbox="1118 1084 1385 1126">Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1126 264 1167">5.</td> <td data-bbox="264 1126 1118 1167">Circulate CYC governor training offer</td> <td data-bbox="1118 1126 1385 1167">Completed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>With reference to Action Point 3, the Chair agreed to email the potential parent governors who had contacted the school with a view to putting them in contact with Mr Pettit.</p> <p>Action: Chair to email the potential parent governors who had contacted the school with a view to putting them in contact with Mr Pettit.</p> <p>Matters Arising It was noted that governors had requested that Ms Waines attend the next Education Committee meeting to report on NQT induction and support.</p>	Action		Status	1.	Meet with Julie Barber at the earliest opportunity to assess the need for more capacity in the safeguarding team, and report back to governors	Completed - a meeting had been arranged	2.	Check Norton College emails regularly to ensure prompt consideration of the revised risk assessment	Completed	3.	Initiate parent and staff governor elections	Completed	4.	Share the skills audit with Mr Johnson	Completed	5.	Circulate CYC governor training offer	Completed	Chair
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6.	<p>Draft Start budget for 2020/21 Previously distributed</p> <p>The SBM advised that the Start budget had been presented to the Budget Monitoring Working Party on 16th September, at which meeting there had been discussion around extra expenditure on measures to address a number of issues which had been identified by the Acting Headteacher and Mr Johnson. These extra costs would have resulted in an-year deficit. However, at the recent meeting of the Trust Board, trustees had asked the SBM not to set a deficit budget. The SBM clarified that he had therefore reverted to the original Start budget which did not include the extra expenditure for measures discussed by the Budget Monitoring Working Party. The SBM explained that the budget for 2020/21 alone needed to be recommended to the Trust Board as future years' budgets were not yet finalised.</p>																			

	<p>The Acting Headteacher noted that as trustees had not sanctioned the spending which he felt was vital to the school, they would need to be fully cognisant of the consequences of this decision.</p> <p>For the benefit of governors who had not attended the Budget Monitoring Working Party meeting, the Chair explained that the proposal for extra spending would have resulted in a predicted in-year deficit of £35k on a budget of £4 million. She commented that the LGB had not set a deficit budget for three years and governors were prepared to tolerate a budgeted deficit in order to address the issues raised by the Acting Headteacher. There was further discussion on the importance of setting an accurate budget.</p> <p>A governor asked if potentially the school was overstaffed, in which case a deficit budget could not be justified. The SBM responded that the pupil to teacher ratio was already high and support staff numbers were not generous. In his view, there were unlikely to be further savings in staff costs. He reported that he had informed the ESFA that future years' budgets would improve, particularly given that pupil number predictions were conservative. In his view, the variance between a predicted £15k surplus and £35k deficit was tolerable. A governor commented that the Trust Board should have some credibility with the ESFA given the financial improvements made in recent years.</p> <p>Resolved: Governors unanimously approved the Start budget for 2020/21.</p> <p>Governors thanked the SBM for his work on the budget and he left the meeting at 7.15pm.</p>	
7.	<p>Headteacher's Report Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Acting Headteacher for producing a report after such a short time in post. The Acting Headteacher invited questions and comments on his report. Governors agreed that the format was helpful and the information included was comprehensive.</p> <p>A governor commented on the destinations of the Year 13 students, noting that almost all had opted to stay local. The Acting Headteacher responded that he had also raised this point and had been informed by the Head of Sixth Form that students tended to remain in the area. The Acting Headteacher perceived that this was the result of a culture of low aspiration, further evidenced by the fact that a much smaller percentage of students applied to study at university than would normally be expected. Governors discussed this further and it was noted that the low number moving to university this year might be cohort specific, or related to financial reasons or the COVID-19 situation.</p> <p>The Acting Headteacher offered some further observations on the school. He prefaced them by emphasising that the school was a safe and secure place for students with a long-serving, contented body of staff. Students were friendly and liked to engage; staff were motivated by goodwill. However, he had identified a number of areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school lacked leadership capacity: only two members of the leadership team were currently on permanent contracts, and they were not teaching staff, which had led to a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities • this lack of capacity in the leadership team had resulted in a lack of capacity in other areas which potentially made the school vulnerable; the Acting Headteacher provided examples 	

of incidents which had occurred due to this lack of capacity and which would have been serious had they not been identified and addressed

- back office operations were entirely dependent on the SBM who had responsibility for finance, HR and health and safety; it was vital that support was put in place to ease his workload
- there were issues around HR processes which had been uncovered by safeguarding checks; support would be given to the SBM to rectify these as soon as possible
- the Staff Absence Management Policy had not been followed rigorously which had allowed staff absence to increase to a level which was significant compared with similar schools
- risk assessments were not rigorously completed
- there were issues with the catering team which were hindering effective working
- the provision for students with SEND and EAL was in urgent need of review
- services for students, such as access to medical professionals and counsellors, were limited which was unusual in a secondary school
- areas of curriculum were of concern: there was no provision of Design and Technology so the National Curriculum could not be covered in full
- the school had no data manager, which was unusual for a secondary school.

The Acting Headteacher noted that all the areas of concern could be addressed in the short term with targeted funding. He advised that the school would receive around £70k in catch up funding which must be used within the year. He concluded by reiterating that both students and staff enjoyed their time at the school.

A governor asked if there was any immediate action which needed to be taken, for example to address health and safety concerns. The Acting Headteacher responded that he had already addressed immediate concerns. In terms of health and safety, he advised that an audit should be completed: support for this could be bought in. **The Chair noted that the Budget Monitoring Working Party has already discussed diverting funds for short term support from the LA for health and safety and similar services.** She thanked the Acting Headteacher for his honest assessment of the school's position, and agreed that staff were very loyal and had been willing to take a "make do and mend" approach.

Mr Johnson reported that he had already drafted an action plan with a focus on the school's infrastructure, and was preparing a new School Development Plan to address issues which he and the Acting Headteacher had identified.

A governor commented that it had been helpful for the LGB to hear from the Acting Headteacher and Mr Johnson; governors would appreciate any further insights from them to ensure that the LGB was fully aware of all the issues facing the school. It was clear that some concerns could be addressed immediately whereas others, for example, provision for students with SEND were longer term issues. The Acting Headteacher agreed, noting that governors were now much better informed of the issues.

A governor queried the lack of provision of Design and Technology. An explanation was provided regarding the reasons for the decision some years ago to remove the subject from the curriculum. Mr Johnson explained that, with the new Ofsted focus on the curriculum, it was imperative that the school should reinstate Design and Technology as soon as possible.

Governors thanked the Acting Headteacher for his report.

8.	<p>Snapshot of data/results: Key stages 4 & 5 Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Acting Headteacher noted that the summer outcomes were based on teacher assessment, as public exams had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and were in line with previous outcomes. The data would be considered by the Education Committee but the key concern was that students had progressed to their chosen destination.</p> <p>Agenda – Education Committee: KS4 & 5 outcomes and destinations</p>	Education - agenda
9.	<p>Raising Achievement Plan – overarching priorities 2019-2020</p> <p>Mr Johnson tabled a paper detailing the overarching priorities for the year, which he agreed to send to the Clerk for onward circulation to governors.</p> <p>Action: Mr Johnson to send the RAP to the Clerk for onward circulation to governors.</p> <p>Mr Johnson advised that the plan was divided into areas reflecting those of the Ofsted framework and summarised the content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and Management: clearer systems of accountability were key to improving leadership and management • Quality of Education: there was a significant amount of work to be completed around cohesion and sequencing of the curriculum, and to implement the full scope of national curriculum, including the offer of triple Science • Behaviour and Attitudes: attendance was an area for improvement and this could be achieved with more robust systems in place; • Personal Development: the teaching of British values and Careers Education were areas for development • Sixth form: although growing in numbers the Sixth Form was still not financially viable and the potential for shared provision should be explored. <p>Mr Johnson advised that he already shared the key drivers with staff as these would underpin their performance management this year.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Acting Headteacher and Mr Johnson on behalf of governors for their significant contribution to the school improvement process despite the brief time they had both spent in school. She asked the staff governors how staff members had reacted to the refreshed approach. Miss Pettitt and Mr Layton reported that staff had been impressed with the new positivity and drive which had engendered a calm and purposeful start to the academic year.</p>	TJ
10.	<p>Chair’s Business</p> <p><u>Agree Headteacher’s Appraisal Committee and Pay Committee membership</u></p> <p>Resolved: Governors appointed Mr Sam Moore, Mr Craig Shepherdson and Mrs Karron Young to the Headteacher’s Appraisal Committee.</p>	

	<p>Resolved: Governors appointed Mr Craig Shepherdson, Mrs Catriona Stewart and Mrs Karron Young to the Pay Committee. The meeting of the Pay Committee would take place on 11th November 2020.</p> <p><u>Link governor roles</u> Governors spent some time discussing the most effective way for governors to fulfil their monitoring remit. It was agreed that governors should be assigned to areas of the Ofsted framework.</p> <p>Resolved: The following link governor roles were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding – Mrs Catriona Stewart • SEND – Mrs Karron Young • Pupil Premium – Mr Craig Shepherdson • Quality of Education – Mrs Karron Young • Leadership and Management – Ms Jill Hodges • Behaviour and Attitudes – Miss Jan Pettitt • Personal Development – Mr Sam Moore • Sixth Form – Mrs Catriona Stewart <p><u>Evolution Schools Learning Trust update</u> The Chair reported that the Trust was not pursuing any further association with Ormiston Academies Trust. The Trust Board had heard presentations from two other trusts but had decided to defer any further progress on joining a multi academy trust until January 2021, when the focus would be on progressing a relationship with a local trust.</p> <p><u>Skills Audit</u> <u>Governor vacancies</u> It was noted that the skills audit had been updated and would be used to inform governor training and recruitment.</p> <p><u>Governor training - CYC offer</u> It was noted that governors had been sent the CYC training offer.</p> <p><u>HR business</u> <i>The following discussion is recorded as a confidential minute.</i></p>	
11.	<p>Policy Review Previously distributed.</p> <p><u>Child Protection Policy</u> The Chair reminded governors that it was essential that this policy was updated each year to reflect changes in the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. The Acting Headteacher confirmed that the policy had been updated, based on the template NYCC policy.</p> <p>Resolved: Governors unanimously approved the Child Protection Policy.</p>	

	<p><u>Behaviour Policy</u> Covered above.</p> <p><u>Appraisal Policy</u> The Acting Headteacher explained that the policy had been updated to reflect the current performance management process used by the school. He confirmed that, as the policy was based on an NYCC template, it had been approved by the professional associations and trade unions.</p> <p>Resolved: Governors unanimously approved the Appraisal Policy.</p> <p>In response to a governor’s question, the Chair confirmed that a policy tracker was in place to ensure that no statutory policies were missed.</p>	
12.	<p>Link Visit Reports Previously distributed.</p> <p><u>Sport and Health</u> Governors received the link visit report for Sport and Health. In addition, Mr Shepherdson provided a brief verbal report of the visit, noting that the most concerning aspect was the state of the AstroTurf, which was such that the facility could now not be used. It was agreed that the Business Committee should discuss this further, along with consideration of a process to capture issues arising with the school’s facilities.</p> <p>Agenda – Business: discussion on state of AstroTurf.</p> <p>There was further discussion on an incident witnessed by governors in which staffing capacity had been an issue.</p> <p>Governors thanked Mr Shepherdson and Mr Layton for the report.</p> <p>Action: the Chair and Mr Johnson to discuss the format and reporting of link governor visits.</p>	<p><i>Business – agenda</i></p> <p><i>Chair/TJ</i></p>
13.	<p>Determination of matters to be regarded as confidential</p> <p>The HR business discussed under Item 10 was recorded as a confidential minute.</p>	
14.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Governors thanked David Pettit for his long standing contribution to the school as a governor. Mr Pettit wished governors all the best for the future.</p>	
15.	<p>Dates of future meetings – all at 6.30pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 9th December 2020 • Wednesday 24th March 2021 • Thursday 15th July 2021 	

The meeting ended at 8.35pm

ACTION PLAN FROM THE LGB MEETING held on 23rd September 2020
To be added to the rolling action plan

Action	Item	Person(s)	Timescale
1. Email potential parent governors who had contacted the school with a view to putting them in contact with Mr Pettit	5	Chair	ASAP
2. Send the RAP to the Clerk for onward circulation to governors	9	Mr Johnson	ASAP
3. Discuss the format and reporting of link governor visits	12	Chair/Mr Johnson	Autumn term

Items for future agendas:

- NQT Induction and Support - Ms Waines (Education)
- Governor training - commitment to attend courses (LGB)
- KS4 & 5 outcomes and destinations (Education)
- State of AstroTurf (Business)