

RANGE HIGH SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES - ONLINE ZOOM MEETING

6th July 2023 – 3.30pm

PRESENT

Steph Donbavand	Sue Donnelly	Clare Gaskell (left 4.00p.m.)
Mike McGarry (MM) (Head)	Harriet Michael-Phillips	Catherine Morris
Karen Owens (left 4.00 p.m.)	Paul Povey	Jim Rimmer (Chair)
Richard Snowdon (RS)		

APOLOGIES

Collette Simms

ALSO PRESENT

Tom Dolly (TD) (SDHT)	Julie McGugan (JMU)(AHT)	Chris Tees (CTE) (AHT)
Andy Pritchard (AP) (Resources Dir.)	Judith Gordon (JG) (Finance Manager)	
Pauline Neilson (Clerk)		

23/48 WELCOME

ACTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

23/49 DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests in relation to the agenda.

23/50 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 18th May 2023

The minutes of the last meeting had been previously distributed and were agreed as a true and accurate record.

23/51 MATTERS ARISING

Update - pupil numbers September – currently 157 with a possible 2 more.

A query was raised regarding not reaching the PAN of 168 – it was explained that school was allocated 168 pupils but a number of pupils had since been accepted to the local private schools.

Trustees briefly discussed whether or not to advertise the vacancies. It was noted that Sacred Heart High School and St Michaels High School are currently operating below their PAN, so school is being cautious in its approach, but It had put details in the Formby/Crosby Bubble.

There have been a number of in- year transfers, with 13 applications across other year groups. These had mostly been from families moving into the area.

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School Ski trip - There had been numerous difficulties with the insurance claim culminating in AXA refusing to accept the claim.

Parents had appreciated the zoom meeting earlier this week when the Head had explained the situation.

School had since contacted the RPA (Risk Protection Arrangements), a government scheme, and they have confirmed they would pick up the claim and cover the cost of the trip. Trustees thanked the Resources Director for all his hard work in getting a positive result; refunds will be given to parents as soon as the funds are received into the bank account.

23/52 TRUSTEES BOARD INFORMATION

Cathy Morris (Community Trustee) had tendered her resignation to the Chair – with effect from 31 August 2023. Trustees and the Head thanked her for all her past support and hard work for the school; she will be greatly missed.

23/53 HEADTEACHER REPORT

This had been previously circulated and the following matters were now highlighted:

The Head apologised that this meeting had changed from a face-to-face meeting to a Zoom meeting but the Y11 prom was taking place and a number of trustees (who had children in Y11) could not make a meeting at the school. It was thought better to switch to a Zoom meeting.

External Exams have now finished. There were 83 children with special arrangements. The children's behaviour had been good and the Head thanked all the staff especially the Exams team and CTE for their hard work. RS raised a comment that Access arrangements had not always worked as well as they should, as this was a personal matter he said he would raise the issue outside of this meeting.

The end of term is a very busy time for the school. There is a great atmosphere and staff are involved in arranging a number of events such as:

- Yr. 6 Summer school
- Yr. 6 cohort visits last week (including parents)
- 6th form taster days - 28/6/23. There had been 10 external pupils.
- Y11 Prom – tonight
- Sports Day- next week
- Rewards trips (taking place on 17 July for Years 7-10)

The newly introduced '**lates' detentions** seem to be having an impact, but there is still more work to be done. There has been no real negative feedback from parents about the detentions and any problems that have arisen have been quickly resolved. This new system will continue to be trialled, with the aim that it becomes fully embedded by September.

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Behaviour and Attendance continued to be an ongoing issue; school is continuing with all processes and Policies.

Capitol Bids – two bids were successful:

1. Upgrade of the WiFi system - £250k
2. Fire Prevention work including fitting firewalls in the roof space - £1.8 million

Asbestos removal from the roof space has to be removed before any of the other work can start, although this may cause some delay to the other works but it is thought that all the work will be completed by Christmas. **AP** is in contact with the contractors and more information will be available after a meeting takes place next week.

Deep Dives – focus on behaviour and attendance. Notes from the meeting had been included in Trustees papers.

Staffing

Not much had changed since the last report except a TA was leaving. There will be fewer pupils with LA funding in September. The total support required is not known at this time.

SD - Question: Is it likely that school will have the same difficulties as last year getting TA support when needed?

Answer: The LA funding methodology is changing so funding is currently in limbo. If no LA funding is granted then TAs could not be employed to support those pupils.

Strikes- The Headteacher sent out a letter outlining details for both of the strike days. School was open to years 10 and 12 both days

All the unions, including NAHT and ASCL, are currently balloting members and the result on the ballots are expected at the end of July. It is very likely that the threshold will be reached, so there is the possibility of more strike days in the Autumn Term.

MAT

The Headteacher and Resources Director are meeting with I Raikes and others next Tuesday. The Trust has unanimously approved the Request for Range to join; notes from the meeting will be sent to Trustees once they are available.

The Headteacher has sent out documents briefing everyone on the process and a possible timeline.

The application to the board has to be made late October/ November. If this deadline is met then Range would join the Trust in September 24. Finance and the top slice are still to be agreed and will be discussed in more detail at the meeting next week.

23/54 MINUTES FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 20th June 2023

These had been included for Trustee information. There was one recommendation from the Committee:

To approve the budget for 2023-23 as presented.

23/55 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Trustees thanked JMU for the report showing previous data. It was useful to observe the trends in the reports.

Early Help Assessments have reduced this quarter, and the LA, due to a lack of resources, has taken a number of cases off social care; school has queried this.

Incidents- bullying – 70-80% were due to social media and mobile phone incidents. School contacted Merseyside Police Unit and they have agreed to come into school for a whole day to talk to each year group about a number of issues and, especially, cyber bullying.

Racism – there was been a worrying trend earlier in the year and a number of issues had been investigated. The Anthony Walker Foundation had been in to school and spoke at each year group assembly. Pupils had been very engaged and feedback from pupils was that they felt very supported.

Question (HMP) there had been a huge drop in bullying allegations, or was this a dip in the reporting of cases?

Answer: This had been checked and staff reminded of the criteria. There had probably been many cases in the past where there was not actually bullying.

Trustees thanked JMU for all her work and for providing such a detailed report.

23/56 FINANCE – A PRITCHARD

It had been difficult to set budgets with so much uncertainty over pays awards etc., so school had concentrated on 2023/24, with estimates for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Briefing notes had been circulated for Trustees.

The budget details had been discussed at length at the Audit Committee meeting held on 20 June 2023 and concerns were expressed regarding the estimated deficit in 2024/25. This makes the cash flow very tight, but the Audit Committee was still recommending the budget to the Full Board in spite of all the issues.

Trustees approved the budget for 2023/24 put forward by the Audit Committee.

Internal Scrutiny Report – Income – school had a clean bill of health.

23/57 KS3 ASSESSMENT

A summary of the report had been provided for Trustees. KS3 Assessment had been one of the improvement points in the last OFSTED inspection. A working party had been formed and has met regularly over the past year. The group has looked at the interim data cards and discussed the usefulness to parents. Following discussions, the data cards have now been simplified and colour coded in order to help parents focus on certain issues.

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Work has also been done to review the whole school Assessment Policy. Research has been undertaken, a sub group formed and an updated Assessment policy developed.

The Heads of Faculty and subject leads are reviewing at this now and will feedback in due course.

The Policy will be launched with the whole staff in September and presented to Trustees at the first meeting in the Autumn Term.

Question: If OFSTED inspectors are not looking at assessment in such depth, how will they make their judgements?

Answer: In a number of ways. By book scrutiny, talks to students, Deep Dives etc. They will be looking for a responsive style of teaching. More formative assessment is still expected to be done.

The topic has been relaunched with Heads of Faculty and a report will be presented to trustees next academic year.

Question – RS: It is good to see the Access arrangements on the key chart, but what work is being done to ensure students receive training earlier in the process? Tests could be difficult to legislate for, but what allowances are made?

Answer: Departments are encouraged to look at how extra time and other strategies could be used. The vision is defined and Heads of Department should examine access arrangements and make all necessary adjustments; the need should be clearly identified and appropriate strategies put in place.

RS commented it was important that staff were aware of the strategies and should be gathering evidence. It would be interesting to know what input the SENCO had into the process.

CTE said he was happy to relook at this section and report back to Trustees next year. TD said the policy sat alongside the Teaching & Learning Policy and there were more details concerning access arrangements in there. Testing could also be done in different ways.

Question – RS: Had there been any change in Flight Paths for Year 7, maybe taking a more flexible approach?

Answer: These are based on Year 6 assessments so it is difficult to change them.

Trustees went on to discuss these issues in some detail.

MM commented that there was a problem with flight paths in that they could be flawed as they were set early on, and there was a danger of locking them in. There is no allowance for personality changes etc. over time. Schools are trying to take the development of pupil over a number of years into consideration.

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RS thanked CTE and the team for all their hard work and said it was reassuring to hear about the principles and how allowances for more flexibility could be built in.

23/58 NOTES OF STRATEGIC GROUP MEETING - 12/6/23

The notes from this meeting had been circulated for information.

It was reported that Parental Workshops regarding safe internet use were being organised through Merseyside Police for Year 7 parents.

23/59 LINK REPORTS

Link reports for Maths and Business & IT were circulated to Trustees. The meeting with the IT department had been particularly useful. Changes in software had been discussed. The changes to BTEC and the move to T-levels had also been discussed briefly.

Trustees were asked to send in any outstanding reports to JG, they would be forwarded to all trustees as soon as they were received.

23/59 POLICIES

Copies of Policies had been made available; Trustees ratified the following Policies:

- Accounting Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education - some of the curriculum areas had been updated in terms of content – this policy will be reviewed every 12 months.

Policies delegated to the Headteacher:

- Assessment & Feedback
- Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school
- Behaviour and Discipline
- IT, Filtering and Monitoring - **RS** raised concerns that he was listed as having authority to deal with some aspects - he suggested he should only have a strategic overview and be responsible for raising Trustees' awareness. **MM** clarified that the intention was that there was assurance that the appropriate standards were being met and he agreed that the wording should be changed.

Trustees briefly discussed the way changes could be noted in Policies. Colour-coding will be reintroduced for Trustee Board responsibility policies.

23/60 AOB

Question: Where was school up to with data training?

Answer: School had enquired about trustee interest and 2 Trustees had asked for training. A date and method were still to be agreed.

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It was agreed this would be best before the 21 September meeting and **MM** said he would find one or 2 dates before the next Trustee meeting in September.

MAT – action is clearly dependant on resolving the top slice issue. Trustees discussed this briefly and it was agreed that there had already been some savings identified from central services. More details will be available after the meeting next week.

It may be necessary to set up a special meeting once more information was available.

23/61 MEETING DATES NEXT YEAR

21st September – clerk already committed – will try to arrange cover.

23/62 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Signed Chair Karen Owens

Date 21 September 2023