Board of Governors report 21st September 2023

The meeting began with a walk around school to see all the changes and developments that have been completed and are now in use. They are most impressive and a great enhancement to the facilities available to the children. There are still snagging issues to be resolved and it is very clear that without a huge amount of work from staff, in particular Mrs Coker and Mrs Farraday throughout the summer break, school would not have been ready to open at the start of term. Parents have already been invited to look around the building and there is to be a Grand Opening for members of the village community later in the autumn. It was agreed that this really is a significant achievement for all involved and a much improved school environment.

There followed the formal meeting of the board at which the Chair and Vice chair were reappointed to their positions.

One parent, Rachel Newbury, had volunteered for the vacant position of parent governor and so was duly elected.

The terms of office of two further governors will come to an end in December. John Wood as co-opted governor was coopted once more but the other position will need to be balloted on at the time.

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed and seconded as a true reflection of and approved unanimously. Matters arising from the minutes were discussed – performance management cycle, governor skills audit, link governor report update below.

The committee terms of reference were accepted unanimously.

The skills audit completed for the last board meeting was discussed and it was agreed that governors should identify two areas most appropriate to them for training and development. It was also agreed that it would be valuable for all to undertake training in equality, diversity and inclusion. Other important areas are online security and finance training.

Governor responsibilities for monitoring will be looked at again next meeting due, however governors responsible for RE and Collective Worship to remain the same.

The policy for financial delegation was accepted.

New professional support is being sought to enable the Headteacher appraisal review due to the retirement of the person previously involved. Staff appraisal arrangements are covered in the headteacher’s report.

Eileen Mason was appointed to review the Emergency Plan with thanks for the very thorough job she has done in the past.

All governors accepted the NGA and Diocesan code of conduct for governors and agreed to abide by the them.

The problems with the lease with Levens Hall continue. This is now in the hands of solicitors from the county and all questions are being directed through her. Some members of the governing body may be asked to sign the lease and Mrs Coker will enquire as to the liability of those signing.

The new council arrangements have led to difficulties in the preparation of budget reports, however Levens school budget has been officially approved and as is the norm at Levens school there will be a budget review meeting in early October to which governors are invited. There will be increased costs due to the Teachers pay review recommendation but unfortunately the grant from the government will not meet the full amount needed.

The discussion about the cap on levels of the Headteachers’ salary scale was deferred until the final budget report is available.

There were no current updates on the SEF or SIAMS standing agenda items and for now Ofsted has been removed as a standing agenda item.

The board received a very thorough and comprehensive Headteachers’ report.

It was great to hear that the staff enjoyed a much-deserved Wellbeing sailing day on Ullswater earlier this term and wellbeing will be focussed on during appraisal meetings later this term with consideration for the extra workload at the end of the summer holidays. The new staff room and dedicated workspace have been designed to support wellbeing also.

Looking at attendance using the government audit tool will be part of the next safeguarding visit to school but good to hear no issues at present. All governors have been updated on their responsibilities regarding the regulations in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’.

All the governors agreed that it would be a good idea to complete a diversity indicators form presented to them. It was also agreed to be a good idea to have a separate email address each for governor business.

Mrs Coker is looking into the installation of a camera at ‘the green gate’ as it is impossible for her to see who is waiting there.

The policies presented to the board were all accepted unanimously and the link governors report provided a resume of all training undertaken.