The Court School

Full Governing Body Meeting

Tuesday 13 May 2025

Date:	Tuesday 13 May, 2025
Venue:	The Court School
Present:	Cllr. Garry Hunt (GH) (Chair), LA Governor Jamyn Beesley (JB), Headteacher Amy Griffiths (AG) (Vice Chair), Parent Governor Emma Powell (EP), Parent Governor Ceri Gibbon (CG), Community Governor Denise Sargent (DS), Community Governor Naveed Chaudhry (NC), LA governor Glynis Webb (GW), Staff governor James Perkins (JP), Teacher Governor Pam Cotter (PC), Clerk
Observing	Ross Fitzpatrick (RF), Deputy Headteacher
Apologies	Tanya Griffiths (TG), Parent Governor Chloe McBratney (CM), Community Governor Cllr. Jon Shimmin (JS), LA Governor

Item	Discussion/Actions	Owner
1. 1.1 1.2 1.3	**Welcome and Apologies** GH welcomed governors to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Tanya, Chloe, Caroline, and Cllr. Jon. The meeting was quorate.	
2. 2.1 2.2	**Feedback from psychology students** JB introduced Alesha and Keira who are 3rd year psychology students. JB expressed his thanks to the students who have added value to the teams, and are forming incredible relationships. Alesha gave an overview of the application process and explained that they have a general TA role helping learners with tasks, spending time with Dr Alison Richards adding the psychology into their experiences. Both students expressed that they have found the experience very rewarding.	

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2.3	JB informed governors that Sarah Jenkins has been mentoring the students, meeting with them fortnightly, they have regular sessions with Dr Alison Richards, and the school is trying to provide lots of experiences for the students.	
2.4	**A governor asked the students what is the key thing that they have learnt whilst on work experience at the school.** Alesha and Keira explained that they have gained knowledge and learnt that they can build relationships with some of the most difficult to reach children, breaking through barriers. They have gained a deeper understanding about behaviour, through seeing the behaviours in real life	
2.5	Ross credited Alesha and Keira who have made relationships with the most hard to reach children in the school.	
2.6	JB invited questions.	
2.7	**A governor asked if Alesha and Keira see any areas for improvement?** Alesha would suggest more break out spaces because dysregulation acts as a trigger and felt that in the new schools there will be more breakout spaces.	
2.8	Keira explained that it has been useful to do their placement together, as they have been able to talk to each other about the experiences of the day, including the difficulties.	
2.9	**A governor asked what drew Alesha and Keira to apply to the Court School**. Alesha explained that it was the phrase "hands on experience" further explained that the interaction with the children has been most impactful. Kiera explained that it was the full-time opportunity in the classroom was the draw.	
2.10	**A governor asked whether the students had recognised the increase in their own your confidence?** The students did.	
3. 3.1	**Declaration of Interest on items on the agenda** No interests in items on the agenda were declared.	
4. 4.1	**Approval of Minutes of previous meeting** Accuracy • 1.2 - reflected NC not attending due to being missed off the distribution list	

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4.2	• 7.11 - reflected JBs gratitude to Chris for his expertise and contributions to maintaining premises which has helped with cost saving. Minutes from 25 March 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of that meeting.	
5. 5.1	**Matters arising** • 4.3 - Psychology students - attended today • 4.5 - Educational Visits Policy - JB to work with JP on it • 11.1 -Clarify a date for an open date - 24 June details TBC	
6. 6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5 6.6 6.7 6.8 6.9	**Headteacher Report** Headteacher report had been prepared last week but was not distributed by clerk to governors (apologies were given). JB provided the following overview: LA has agreed to AHT roles to work alongside CJ and Ross, deadline for applying was today and 13 applications had been received. GH, DS and JB will be shortlisting. A strategic plan in terms of the current deficit and how the budget will evolve from a one site budget to a two-site budget and the requirement for more staffing is lacking. British Transport Police have been delivering workshops on safety, railway tracks and lines. Children have been on the train, giving them real life experiences. The school has achieved the Siarter Iaith Gold Award; thanks to Carolann for achieving this. **A governor asked what the award means**. JB explained that it is about how the school celebrates being Welsh and using the Welsh that we know, celebrating Welsh culture, visiting places in the locality. JB further explained that the awarding body visits the school with a checklist and the school has to collect and provide evidence. JB informed governors that this is a Consortium award and a report went out to the CoG. Children are going out on trips, using the area and the facilities. Ross explained that the w/c 5 May was immersion week and the topic was Cardiff and Beyond which is a humanities-based theme. This	

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	involved emerging the children in the cultures in Cardiff. JB noted that these experiences are shared on the school's social media platforms to improve visibility.	
6.10	JB thanked all staff who work so hard.	
6.11	JB referred to the Staffing section of the Headteacher Report: • Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – The advert for the Assistant Headteacher role is live on Eteach and there is a lot of interest from both internal and external candidates. The deadline date is Tuesday 13th May and interviews will be on Tuesday 20th May. Denise and Garry will be supporting me with this. • Extended Leadership Team (ELT) – Our Extended Leadership Team (ELT) has now changed following Neil's departure and Carolann McIver's move to undertaking the Outreach Teacher role. Carolann McIver and Sarah Jenkins are still members of the school's ELT. Sarah has a specific responsibility for Trauma Informed practice and wellbeing. Sian Fowler and James Perkins have now joined the school's ELT. Sian will be supporting Ross with the development of the curriculum and James will be supporting Caroline with the development of assessment (a key Estyn recommendation). Teachers – John Seaward (PPA teacher) is still out of school after a car-bike collision. We are maintaining close communication with him and his family and are providing ongoing support where we can. Claire Mullett is now the class teacher in Dosbarth Gwdihw following Carolann's move to the outreach role. • Teaching Assistants (TAs) – For details regarding TA responsibilities and grades, see appendix B. Sarah Taylor is having an operation this week and will be out of school until next academic year. She will be covered via supply. Mark Walsh is out of school at present. We are covering his role via supply as well.	

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	There are 4 roles that are vacant and interviews for these roles are taking place on Monday. There are 3 x grade 3 and 1 x grade 4 roles available. Amy supported JB with this process.	
6.12	**AG noted that they interviewed 6 candidates. AG informed governors that there appears to be a perception that all children attending the school are experiencing home-based trauma/abuse, suggesting that it is something that needs addressing. EP agreed that there is a message to be shared that there are many types of trauma.** JB agreed that work needs to be done to address this perception.	
6.13	Discussion followed.	
6.14	**A governor asked how many supply staff are the school now employing through an agency?** JB informed governors that there are 8/9 agency staff currently including the 4 they have recruited who will become centrally employed from September. JB further informed governors that there is an emphasis on moving away from using supply staff, but realistically, they will always need some.	
6.15	**A governor asked whether children attending the school transition from the Court school to mainstream school.** JB explained that some do, and it may happen when children transition from year 6 to year 7.	
6.16	**The governor asked whether the school recognises this as an achievement?** JB advised that they do and those case studies would have been shared with Estyn and there are testimonials on the website. JB stressed that the key is that they transition onto a provision that is right for them. • Students – At present, we have 2 x fantastic Psychology students (Alesha and Keira) who are nearing the end of their placement with us. In addition, we have 2 x other students who are just about to start their placements with us next week. Janaki is a Psychology (Masters) student from Cardiff University and she will be doing a 12-week placement with us. Grace is a Primary Education student from Cardiff Met and she will be doing a 3-week enrichment placement. It is mutually beneficial having these students working with us at the Court School. They have the opportunity to experience	

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working with our wonderful (but challenging) pupils and learn from experienced colleagues and we benefit from additional staffing who are usually dynamic, responsive and popular with our pupils.

JB advised that there are three psychology students who will join the school for 30 weeks next year.

6.17 Exclusions

JB advised governors that the exclusions statistics for last year are the lowest ever, this year 19.5 days:

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22 COVID-19	2020-21 COVID-19	2019-20 COVID-19	2018-19	2017-18 (change to 42 pupils)	2016-17 (36 pupils)
Fixed term exclusion	19.5 days (08/05)	23 days Lowest ever!	25 days	36.5 days	40.5 days	25.5 days	75 days	77.5 days	181 days

6.18 Attendance

JB informed governors that attendance is increasing and currently at 75%; JB asked governors to bear in mind that there are 13 children on PSPs.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22 COVID-19	2020-21 COVID-19	2019-20 COVID-19	2018-19	2017-18 (change to 42 pupils)	2016-17 (36 pupils)
Attendance	75.23% (08/05)	77.69%	74.19%	74.36%	74.2%	84.63%	87.69%	90.29%	90.19%

6.19 JB drew governors attention to the new school logo on the report.

6.20 JB invited questions. There were no questions.

7. **SERSIP and update on school**

7.1 JB shared a presentation with the GB, talking through the SER/SIP update:

7.2 IA1 - strengthen assessment processes to take full account of pupil's progress in all areas of their learning.

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	• Carolann has changed roles and was driving forward writing, which has now been handed over to Sian Fowler. Sian will be attending a Talk for Writing meeting later this week. • JP has taken over Neil's role to take assessment forward. JP's key work will be to work with CJ and develop the strategic plan regarding education and wellbeing measures.	
7.3	IA2 - reduce instances of positive handling and strengthen tracing of key self regulatory and reflective skills • JB drew governors attention to a glitch in the Behaviour Watch system and the recording of incidents. JB will follow this up with Behaviour Watch	
7.4	Lengthy discussion followed around Team Teach and Positive Handling.	
7.5	**A governor asked how the school deals with complaints of physical intervention?** JB explained that they would talk through with parents, the types of physical intervention that they would use right from the start. JB highlighted that lots of parents will have experienced the aggression from children at home too so are grateful that the staff use safe methods of positive handling. JB further explained that they would demonstrate and show on parents the types of physical intervention that they use. JB advised that where physical intervention has been used, they would call and inform parents, before the child gets home,	
7.6	**The governor asked what protection there is for school and staff of allegations from parents who may complain about the misuse of physical interventions.** JB explained that there is protection for the school through the use of cameras and witnesses. The Positive Handling intervention is approved by the LA and by law, the school is allowed to use it. JB noted that the emphasis is to hold and release as soon as possible. JB advised that Dave Williams from the LA will speak to parents too, if required.	
7.7	IA3 - reshape and strengthen extended leadership team (ELT) Assessment leads - James and Caroline Curriculum leads - Sian and Ross Wellbeing Leads - Sarah and Jamyn Outreach - Carolann who is also working part time with the Emotional and Wellbeing Team.	
7.8	Ysgol Cynefin update JB shared a presentation noting key dates:	

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	• Sept '25 - the school will be rebranded as Ysgol Cynefin • Feb 26 - projected date for movement to new sites with 24 children on each site, 4 classes of 6, 48 in total. • Sept 26 - each site will have an additional class, 30 children on each site, 60 in total. • Sept 27 - Each site will have an additional class, 36 children on each site, 72 in total.	
7.9	**A governor asked if there would be equal numbers of children geographically on each site?** JB advised that the dividing line across the city will be North Road (approx.).	
7.10	JB advised that there would be a chance for children to sign some internal structures, so they can visit the site, and staff will have the opportunity to visit the site.	
7.11	JB advised that there was a session with pupils last week with pupil engagement discussing colours etc.	
7.12	GH noted that there has been no discussion on the governance of the new schools, noting that it was agreed in principle for one governing body across two sites.	
7.13	Brief discussion followed	
7.14	**ACTION: GH to make enquiries with Ruth Lock, Governor Services about the governance of the new schools and potential to revisit the Instrument of Governance.**	GH
8. 8.1	**Ysgol Cynefin Update** See Item 7.8 - 7.14	
9. 9.1	**Safeguarding and CLA updates** JB provided a verbal CLA update.	
9.2	Discussion followed around the lack of enhanced transition that had been identified in the Estyn report. JB advised he is in discussions with LA on an ongoing basis.	
9.3	**ACTION: GH to explore enhanced transition arrangements with the LA.**	GH
10. 10.1	**Committee Reports** Finance	

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10.2 10.3 10.4 10.5 10.6 10.7 10.8	GH advised that there had been a finance committee meeting that afternoon and that a budget for financial year 2025 - 26 had been agreed and signed. JB informed governors that last year there had been around £150k deficit and that this year the deficit is £300k which makes it clear that the LA has not funded the school enough by around £150k each year. GH advised that the LA does not appear to have much of an issue with it and have not raised any concerns. JB explained to governors that he has made savings and also chased some promised funding. JB drew governor attention to the following: - four TAs were recruited this week and would be centrally employed from September, saving on agency costs - there had been a £10k clawback by the LA for MSF - there is the complication of two budgets, one for the current site and another for the new sites. JB is raising this continually with the LA. JB is concerned about transport and transporting children between sites and the associated costs; the LA have given the school a free electric taxi. JB thanked the school community for their flexibility and commitment as he is not as operational as he was due to meetings for the new school site that require his presence. Health & Safety No walk around (not scheduled) had taken place and there was nothing to report.	
11. 11.1 11.2	**Policies** GH recommended that the GB deferred approval of the following policies to the next meeting as there had been a delay in circulating these: • Complaints Policy • Healthcare Needs Policy **Governors accepted and approved the Performance Management Policy**	

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12. 12.1	**Governor training and development including compliance with mandatory training** Clerk confirmed that the GB is compliant.	
13. 13.1	**Correspondence** None.	
14. 14.1	**AOB** None	
15. 15.1	**Date and time of next meeting** • Summer 2 – Tuesday 24th June 2025 (same day as Governor open day).	
16. 16.1 16.2	**Determination of matters to be regarded as confidential** Staff governors left the meeting. Item discussed under confidential.	

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