

**Meeting of Full Governing Body**  
**15<sup>th</sup> June 2017**  
**Eco Building**  
**6pm**

**MINUTES**

<b>Governors Present:</b>	Julian Benkel, Oliver Cattermole, Jon Dee (Chair), William Deighan, Di Francombe, Alex Marsh, Rob Reed, Ian Rodgers, Emma Warde-Robinson
<b>Officers:</b>	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
<b>Others:</b>	Hilary Goldsmith, Jo Meloni, Mark Sorrell

	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	<b>Introduction</b> a) <b>Welcome</b> Emma Warde-Robinson was welcomed to her first meeting a recently elected Parent Governor.  b) <b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies for absence received from Judith Ford and Giovanni Franceschi.  c) <b>Declaration of Interests</b> No additional declarations. The declarations register was circulated.	
2	<b>Last Meeting dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017</b> a) <b>Acceptance of Minutes</b> The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved four pages of minutes from the meeting held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2017. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.  b) <b>Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</b> The actions arising schedule was reviewed and updated with the following noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work programme for the Finance Lead Governor would be incorporated into an overall business plan for the Governing Body.</li> <li>• Not all Governors had read the keeping children safe in education document. A further link was sent after the meeting.</li> <li>• An enquiry was raised with the Department of Education regards the requirements for staff members to complete declarations of interest forms as the SFVS guidance gave the impression that it applied to all staff. A policy had been drafted in advance of further guidance from the department.</li> <li>• The school was in the final year of the current uniform supply contract and would be looking at potential alternatives suppliers for the 2018/19 student intake.</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Chair's Update</b> The Chair reported that Governors had been involved in a range of Governing Body activities since the last meeting, these included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Governor election - Well established electronic process with seven candidates this time.</li> <li>• Goat race - Two governors took part in the race as herders for William the goat.</li> <li>• Complaint - The Chair was involved at stage three and a panel of three other governors at stage 4 of the complaints process.</li> <li>• Budgets and Internal Control - Three Governors involved</li> <li>• Deputy Head Interviews with two Governors on the panel.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Audit reviewed by safeguarding lead.</li> <li>• Equalities - Two Governors involved in reviewing of the policy.</li> <li>• Health and Safety - New lead Governor had carried out initial visit.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open House Event attended by several Governors.</li> </ul> <p>Other activities coming up shortly include an artsmark application and a permanent exclusion review.</p>	
4	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report on an assumed read basis highlighting that there had been several sporting successes during the year and a sports evening had been held to celebrate these on 14<sup>th</sup> June. The guest speaker had been an aspiration to the students. Governors were also advised that there had been a fire incident at the School and the response had been good minimising the risk to students and adults on the premises. A full report would be made available to the health and safety lead governor. Governors asked whether there had been any notification to them and the Chair advised that he had been notified immediately following the incident. There was a discussion about circulating information on incidents in future and it was agreed that the current process would remain and left to the Chair to consider what information was appropriate for circulation to the wider body.</p> <p>Governors asked questions and made comment on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths, English and Science GCSE predictions.</li> <li>• The effect of the new Maths specifications on schools across the country.</li> <li>• The raising attainment plan (RAP) was still showing some red areas.</li> <li>• Staffing and leadership of core departments.</li> <li>• Had there been a switch in method of teaching maths during the year.</li> <li>• Governors should be prepared for a dip in outcomes where there had been a change in the testing as had happened in primary previously.</li> <li>• Managing of parental expectations.</li> <li>• Had lessons been learned from the experience with maths, which could be applied to other subjects?</li> <li>• Year 11 attendance being lower than other years and impact of this.</li> <li>• Attendance comparison across the four internal schools.</li> <li>• The understanding of the character of Year 11 as a challenging group all the way through the School though with reasonably high prior attainment.</li> <li>• The provisional -0.5 score for Progress 8 should be accepted cautiously due to uncertainties on final national measures.</li> </ul> <p>The leadership team provided the following information in response to questions and comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths GCSE was on the new specification and grading system for 2017 and some elements of it were more difficult at a level that would have been expected at AS. The predictions from the department were low following the first round of testing so actions were taken in response that focussed on student progress within each lesson. Changes were made to the number of students being entered for the foundation examination with a final 55% taking foundation and 45% taking the higher paper. The Head of Department was confident that this had been the right approach having seen one of the GCSE papers. Predictions were currently about 3% below 2016 outcomes.</li> <li>• Shadow data had been obtained in March, which showed that there had been a drop in Maths nationally mirroring what Varndean had experienced. Citywide comparisons showed the School was coming out nearer the top position. It was difficult to assess what final outcomes would be but it was thought that the best approach had been taken and there had been huge progress seen.</li> <li>• English was on track and there was less difficulty with gradings.</li> <li>• There was still work to be done in some departments and following the departure of the Deputy Head with RAP responsibility workloads of other leaders had to be reallocated to free up time for monitoring of departments. Coaching support had been put in place for teachers where needed.</li> <li>• Three science teachers and two English teachers were on maternity.</li> <li>• The content of Maths GCSE was the same but more difficult than previously, sharing of practices with other school had taken place.</li> <li>• Other subjects might dip the following year as further changes to the GCSE specifications were introduced.</li> <li>• Parents were aware of the changes and there had been some resistance from some regards</li> </ul>	

	<p>their children being entered for foundation maths with two insisting that their children stay on the higher paper. It had not been helpful that initially a grade 5 had been advised by the Department of education as a good pass and this had since been set lower at level 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be more time to implement changes in GCSE specifications but some had not been released yet. In science there would be a shift in those doing triple science.</li> <li>• The current year 11 had been lower attenders during previous years and the current pattern was not out of line.</li> <li>• The cohorts of each school had been equally split but not by attendance at the beginning. Overall the school's attendance was the strongest in the city and was not a concern.</li> <li>• The current year 11 was the first cohort to go through the four school model for all their time at Varndean. The prior attainment levels had started to change more recently.</li> <li>• It was difficult to make comparisons with national progress.</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b>School Improvement Item - Leadership &amp; Management</b></p> <p>In addition to the reporting on progress against the leadership and management school improvement objectives within the Headteacher's report an end of year school evaluation summary had been included within the meeting papers. The school leaders gave a presentation to Governors on the impact of leadership and management through the self evaluation and introduced a proposed future Varndean vision. The following is summarises the discussions:</p> <p><b>Impact of Leadership and Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership team had a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the School.</li> <li>• The curriculum offer was well balanced and innovative.</li> <li>• Targeted professional development was facilitated by Varndean staff.</li> <li>• Safeguarding was strong and the introduction of CPOMs had provided further structure to recording and sharing of information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress of disadvantaged students had improved from -0.8 to -0.2 (national average -0.3)</li> <li>• Progress in both English and Maths had improved over time through stronger leadership.</li> <li>• The pastoral system had been embedded and attendance had improved as a direct result.</li> <li>• Fixed term exclusions had decreased through the use of alternative in house intervention (A2A)</li> <li>• Progress for students with English as an additional language had improved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Development Areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science attainment and progress.</li> <li>• EBaac attainment and progress.</li> <li>• Middle ability disadvantaged students' progress.</li> </ul> <p><b>Varndean Vision - World class students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established strap line of "challenge ad pride".</li> <li>• Four schools within a school established.</li> <li>• Leadership had time out with a facilitator to look further into what they wanted the School to look and feel like from a student's perspective.</li> <li>• All staff had been invited to participate in a session to develop the idea of what a world class student looked like and it was due to be rolled out to students later in the week.</li> <li>• Governors were invited to meet with the Leadership and be involved in the further development of the vision.</li> <li>• The overarching vision statement was proposed as "to provide students with the world class opportunities and experiences needed for them to lead successful lives in the global community. Our world class students will develop essential qualities for success, resilience, driven work ethic and with kindness as their moral compass"</li> <li>• The vision would be achieved through world class teaching, personal development.</li> <li>• Stakeholder commitment split into 4 areas with short statements for each to support the vision.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over a five year period the School had moved from a position of being the second choice and the intake was now different following the strategy of creating something that was unique. Varndean would need to keep growing the vision to be different particularly with the threat on numbers of a new School opening in the area.</li> <li>Some students were already world class and the driver was to have no ceilings on aspirations and achievement and to not be held back by Ofsted requirements. The mechanisms needed to be right to support the vision within teaching and learning.</li> </ul> <p>Governors' questions and comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the timeframe for establishing the vision?</li> <li>It was right to have a vision not constrained by Ofsted but was there a conflict between the two?</li> <li>Governors would need to ensure that usual housekeeping was being followed.</li> <li>What would world class look like in practice?</li> <li>The School would need to identify what differentiates Varndean teachers.</li> <li>Evidence demonstrated that systems of collaboration were the most successful. The teaching school would help with this.</li> </ul> <p>Responses to Governors' questions and comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Something to be in place for the start of the new school year.</li> <li>The processes for Ofsted were already in place and would continue to be reported through the Headteacher's report.</li> <li>If the School had aspirations outcomes would follow.</li> <li>Identifying what world class looked like would be the next step in the planning process. Student aspirations from surveys would be built upon.</li> <li>A to do list would be easy to fall into but what was required was a quick purposeful series of activities. Arts mark a quality external evaluation would be a tangible example of what was on offer.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION - Planning session to be arranged with Governors to work with the School Leaders on development of the School's outlined vision.</b></p>	TD
6	<p><b>Other Recommendations &amp; Reports From School</b></p> <p>a) <b>Supporting Children with Medical Needs - Updated Policy for Approval</b></p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the supporting children with medical needs policy subject to some updating of contacts and department names. Emma Warde-Robinson to email the updates required.</b></p> <p>There was a discussion about personal data and its security with the introduction of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and compliance requirements to be in place by 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018.</p> <p><b>ACTION - Director of Finance and Operations to make contact with the Local Authority to request guidance on implementation of GDPR requirements and provide assurance of compliance to Governing Body.</b></p>	EWR  HG
7	<p><b>Reports and Recommendations from Governors</b></p> <p>a) <b>Nominations Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Governing Body Self Evaluation</b> Item to be carried over to when new Chair of Governors in place.</li> <li><b>Terms of Reference/ Membership</b></li> </ul> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Finance Report</b> The Finance Lead Governor presented his report to the Governing Body with recommendations to note the financial outcomes for 2016/17, approve the budget for</p>	

2017/18 and the scheme of delegation. The following points were highlighted/discussed:

- Savings in staff costs offset a shortfall in income during 2016/17.
- In agreement with the Local Authority reserves had been run down over several years and now there was a need to balance the budget bringing a challenge to the 2017/18 financial year and subsequent years.
- 2016/17 financial year closed with £7k carried forward.
- A budget had been prepared for 2017/18 that anticipated a significant reduction from the staffing budget and removal of contingency. Governors asked what the contingency was used for last year and were advised that £30k was used to correct a transfer in that should have gone to the development trust.
- Staffing costs would need to be reduced significantly. Reductions were hoped to come from natural turnover of staff. It was noted that there was a risk to this strategy and that the natural reductions would be have to take place by the end of autumn term to avoid the need for cost reductions to be sought from elsewhere within the budget.
- The curriculum had some space and with careful timetabling any gaps could be covered.
- Governors planned to have closer monitoring and support of the budget with variance analysis and updates through the regular meetings.
- Governors were also aware that there were some areas of opportunity for reductions if required. These would continue to be explored over the coming months.
- There was a question about savings in ICT reduction and the potential risks and the response was that savings were coming from hardware and alternative delivery such as chrome books instead of PC's. Cloud storage instead of using a server was also being considered.
- Within the Local Authority context the School's position was not dissimilar and the Authority were facing an overall deficit situation.
- Financial control over correct coding had been an issue with a high value miscoding error. This means that the financial position is considerably less positive that was reported at the last meeting. This had been corrected and action was required to be taken to avoid a similar situation. Governors will be undertaking a quarterly check of journals and miscellaneous income from now on.
- The Business Manager proposed a change to second level signatory limit in the scheme of delegation from £2.5k to £5k or £10k to avoid the requirement for the Headteacher to authorise. In view of the tighter monitoring required and budgetary pressures going forward Governors did not feel that an increase in authorisation limits was appropriate.

**AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the School's budget for 2017/18 as presented and the scheme of delegation without amendment to that approved for 2016/17.**

**c) Premises Management - PFI Contract Update**

The Chair reported that the PFI contract would to be picked up through the closer budget monitoring planned for 2017/18. The contract had been under control and stable for a number of years.

**d) Health & Safety**

The Health and Safety Lead Governor presented his report following an initial fact finding visit to the School. Future visits would contain an element of sampling. There was a discussion about reportable incidents and Governors were advised that there had been one incident relating to a broken bone not due to negligence.

**ACTION - Reportable health and safety incidents to be advised to Chair of Governors as they occur.**

Governors asked what assessment of risk had been undertaken for the on site goats and the advise was that a separate risk assessment had been completed when the goats arrived.

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	<p>There was a further question regards the Semperian review report and whether Governors should have sight of it. The Health and Safety Lead Governor at a future meeting would provide further assurance.</p> <p><b>e) Stakeholder Engagement Activities</b> The contents of the stakeholder engagement report were noted.</p> <p><b>f) Equalities</b> The Equalities Lead Governor reported that she had undertaken a first visit in the role advising of her initial observations as a newcomer to a secondary school. The updated equality policy was presented for approval.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Equality Policy as presented.</b></p> <p><b>g) Safeguarding Audit</b> The Safeguarding Lead Governor advised that the annual safeguarding audit had been completed by the School and reviewed by her. Ratings were green throughout reflecting strong systems in place. The Lead Governor advised that what she had observed of safeguarding processes so far had been good and commended the audit for sign off by Governors.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the safeguarding audit as presented.</b></p> <p><b>h) School Website Compliance</b> The Clerk reported that an annual website compliance check had been completed with one area relating to pupil premium requiring expansion. All other areas fully compliant.</p>	
8	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> The Chair of Governors and Headteacher thanked Governors for their contributions throughout the year.</p>	
9	<p><b>Election of Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of Governors for 2017/18 &amp; 2018/19</b> The Clerk chaired the meeting for this item. There had been one nomination for Alex Marsh to be elected as Chair of Governors. Alex Marsh left the room whilst Governors voted by a show of hands.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body unanimously agreed to the election of Alex Marsh as Chair of Governors with immediate effect until the final meeting of academic year 2018/19.</b></p> <p>There was a nomination for Julian Benkel to be elected Vice Chair of Governors. Julian Benkel left the meeting whilst Governors voted by a show of hands.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body unanimously agreed to the election of Julian Benkel as Vice Chair of Governors with immediate effect until the final meeting of academic year 2018/19.</b></p> <p>Meeting ended at 8.03pm Date of next meeting to be advised.</p>	