

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
 5th October 2017
 Eco Building
 6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Julian Benkel, Oliver Cattermole (from 6.14pm), Jon Dee, William Deighan, Giovanni Franceschi, Di Francombe, Alex Marsh (Chair), Ian Rodgers, Emma Warde-Robinson
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Hilary Goldsmith, Jasmine Marshall-Fraser, Jo Meloni, Mark Sorrell

	Agenda item	Action
1	Introduction a) Welcome The Chair welcomed all to the first Full Governing Body meeting of the academic year. b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Judith Ford and Rob Reed. c) Declaration of Interests - Governors to Complete Declaration Forms All Governors had been requested to complete a revised disclosure of interest form as requested by schools audit team. Pending return of the completed the existing declarations record was circulated. There were no declarations made relating to the agenda items.	
2	Last Meeting dated 15th June 2017 a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved six pages of minutes from the meeting held on 15 th June 2017. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy. b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda General data protection regulation (GDPR) - A document summarising the European Union's data protection regulation with advice from the Information Commissioner's Office on steps to take to prepare for the new legislation had been circulated with the meeting's papers. Governors were aware that GDPR was an emerging area for focus during 2017/18.	
3	Chair's Update The Chair of Governors provided a summary of Governor activities since the last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted had inspected the school at the end of the summer term. • Shared meeting with leadership team to work through the School's vision for 2017/2020. • School's Audit Team had carried out a review of the School (copy of report circulated). A finding from the audit had been that a finance committee be established which the finance lead governors disagreed with as the current structure was considered robust and enabled off line detailed challenge to be undertaken. However it had been conceded that the finance governors would meet formally with the Director of Finance and Operations before each Full Governing Body meeting with notes being taken of discussion for presentation to the Full Governing Body. • Meetings and communication had taken place regards the challenge to maintain a balanced budget for the year. A dedicated finance section would be on every agenda with the School Director of Finance and Operations in attendance to present alongside the lead finance governor. Governors commented that irrespective of the school audit team recommendations there was a need for more scrutiny of the finances and that Governors had been aware of this. 	

6.14pm - Oliver Cattermole arrived at the meeting.

- The Local Authority had released a further consultation that affected the School's catchment area and discussions had taken place regards the impact of the changes.

The Chair moved on to various Governance issues for noting and/or agreement proposed.

- A review of the membership of the main Governor groups, panels and committees had been completed following the change of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and that the following changes were proposed:

Pay Panel	Alex Marsh, Julian Benkel and William Deighan
Nominations Committee	Jon Dee, Oliver Cattermole, William Deighan
Headteacher Appraisal	Alex Marsh and Julian Benkel
Finance Group	Julian Benkel, Alex Marsh and Jon Dee

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the membership of the Pay Panel, Nominations committee, Headteacher's Appraisal Group and Finance Group.

- Consideration had been given to providing Governors with job descriptions for their link responsibility role. As the Governance Handbook provided information on responsibilities it was not felt necessary to duplicate this but instead a bullet pointed list would be provided of key areas. The Clerk to Governors would also be available to support Governors with further guidance as required.
- Governors were requested to complete and return a skills audit form for consideration by Nominations Committee Members prior to the determining how to publicise the parent governor vacancy.

4 School Improvement Item - Outcomes for Students

a) 2016/17 Results

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) presented the previously circulated 2017 examination analysis report to the Governing Body highlighting the following points:

- SLT had generally been pleased with the GCSE results and particularly with the maths department.
- Provisional progress 8 scores had been calculated using 4matrix and it looked like Varndean's overall score had dipped to -0.13 (0.07 in 2016)
- Attainment 8 score had also dipped to 47 (50 in 2016 but against a national dip in achievement by 5%.
- 66% of students had achieved a grade 4 or higher in English and Math's with the best score from language or literature being included within the English score. SLT were investigating why literature was not as successful.
- Varndean students had achieved the best maths result in the city at grade 5 - 56% which was considered a good achievement for the department.
- Ebaac good passes dropped slightly to 21% in partly to reduced numbers taking eligible subjects. Individual subjects had shown an improvement.
- A subject analysis report highlighted how SLT had judged attainment to be in each subject.
- Science improved slightly but there was a dip on the higher ability student attainment.
- Geography had an issue around forecasting with outcomes significantly out from predictions leading to a reduction in interventions and final outcomes.
- In modern foreign languages there had been an improvement in Spanish and German had recovered. French however was not where SLT would like it due to a progress issue.
- There were some excellent results in health and social care, dance, music, drama and RS.
- Outliers was a new term being used by Ofsted to describe the group of students at a school that it was difficult to have an influence over and adversely affect overall

	<p>results such as the school refuser group. At Varndean the year 11 outliers group for 2016/17 included 14 students. Governors asked about the significance of this group and how the size compared with other schools. In response they were advised that whilst at least one other local school had the same issue generally other local authorities do not keep outliers on school roll. There was a further question about the definition of outliers in official terms to which the response was that it was around attendance and specifics were yet to be defined. The school would therefore be publishing their data with outliers included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were around 9 students without key stage 2 results that would not be included within official progress measures including one that who had achieved at grade 9. Governors asked whether these students could have sat the end of key stage 2 tests and were advised that the school did their own baseline assessment but these could not be included as a measure of prior attainment in external school performance data. <p>b) Raising Attainment Plan (RAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the analysis of GCSE outcomes a review of those departments subject to a raising attainment plan had been reviewed resulting in a few subjects coming off a plan i.e.. Music, maths, PE, RS, core science and Spanish. Governors queried why science had come off plan being a core subject with less than exciting results. The SLT responded that a lot of work is input into science anyway with regular meetings and an intensity of support. A discussion followed about the various elements of science and a decision to have an overall science RAP. • Governors asked how long SLT would feel comfortable having a subject on a RAP and were advised that there were many variables to consider such as staffing but generally a maximum of three years without any major changes was appropriate. • There was a question about staffing in English and the Headteacher advised that there were some cover staff employed as the department was not up to full strength and that given the position the department had performed quite well. • Governors requested a step up in the Geography RAP, as the department had not responded to previous plans. <p>c) School Improvement Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the strategy meeting with Governor representatives on school improvement the plan for 2017/2020 had been finalised and was being presented. • The Chair commented that a lot of time had been input into a vision which was clear from the document presented and now focus should turn from the statement of intent to some measurable activities. The Headteacher advised that the next Full Governing Body meeting was focussed on teaching and learning and invited Governors to visit in advance of the meeting to see the vision in action. • There was further comment from Governors about the clarity of what success looked like and how as a governor they would know what was good. Some guidance for Governors on what SLT were thinking was suggested. • Further comments were around the length of the plan and how it would not be possible to achieve over a timeframe of a just one year, which would provide a challenge for Governors, regards monitoring. Further to that clarity on purpose of visits and facilitation was requested. <p>ACTION - School Improvement Plan to be refined to include targets and measures to judge success by and actions regards Governor monitoring.</p>	WD/AM
5	<p>Headteacher's Report The Headteacher presented his report to Governors focussing on three main areas as requested by the Governing Body.</p> <p>a) Ofsted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors were thanked for their contribution to a successful Ofsted inspection outcome. • The feedback on leadership and management and behaviour and safety had been outstanding which the School team had been delighted with. 	

- Inspectors gained a sense from the website of a strong community before their visit and picked out from the data that geography and science were weaker performing subjects choosing those lessons to observe.
- The resulting letter from the lead inspector had been found to be accurate and was signed off. Following its release the School had been invited to be part of a parliamentary review looking at areas of good practice highlighted in the letter.
- Staff had felt both excited and relieved at the outcome but it was soon back to business as usual.
- Governors commented that the School had come a long way since the previous Ofsted inspection and were to be congratulated.
- A letter of congratulations had been received from the Local Authority regards attendance and the School invited to bid for funding to support others in this area.
- Governors recognising the effectiveness of the four smaller school model queried how unique it was to which the Headteacher responded that it was not a magical formula but it did provide the basis for good nurture and care and the marketing of this had been effective in increasing first preferences during the admissions process.
- It was rare to see staff named in an Ofsted inspection letter as had been in Varndean's case. A good debate had taken place and the letter had provided SLT with a mandate for change though making that change would not necessarily be easy.
- Governors asked how middle attaining students might be stretched whilst also extending the high achievers. SLT responded that high achievers had done well in maths and would be discussed at a dedicated meeting.

b) Complaints Summary

Governors reviewed the summary of complaints and compliments for 2016/17 noting a slight increase in formal complaints to 8 from 5, which they were not concerned about. It was further noted that 4 of the 8 complaints related to one person.

c) School Admissions

- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors had received a letter at the end of September from the Assistant Director of Families, Children and Learning advising of a proposed light touch temporary change to secondary school catchment areas along with the reduction of pupil numbers in five primary schools.
- The Headteacher alerted Governors to the impact on the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment area of the proposed changes and likelihood of the Schools being under numbers in the future, which would have a significant affect on finances as funding per student, was around £4500.
- There would also be an impact on the community with more children required to travel longer distances to school. Governors were urged to take part in the consultation.
- There was further comment that losing 30% on a catchment area could not be considered light touch.
- Governors commented that some time back classes of 25 students were an attraction for families, which was now not the case.

6 Finance Report

a) 2017/18 Outturn Report

Schools audit team had recommended that all Governors see a regular full financial outturn report with supporting printout from the financial management system (FMS), Both had been provided and the Director of Finance and Operations highlighted the following:

- The budget for 2017/18 had been set in April based on some assumptions regarding staffing and the non-replacement of various posts. Some of the expected changes to staffing had not happened and associated savings had not been achieved.
- Salary costs for teaching as at September's outturn forecast were in variance with original budget by £94k and supply cost were forecast to be in excess of budget by £50k. In addition to this there were some recruitment challenges and associated costs were expected to be higher than budget by £26k. Overall forecast staffing costs were in variance with budget by £126k.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some significant cost savings had been made in non staffing areas of the budget but these had been offset by a reduction in income including that received from lettings. • The outturn position overall was currently adrift by £83k. The Local Authority had therefore been approached with a view to extending the deficit into 2018/19. <p>Governors noted the forecast deficit position with disappointment and considered the implications of carrying forward the deficit into 2018/19. There was a preference towards making savings in the current year and looking at ways of increasing income. The Director of Finance and Operations advised that consideration was being given to increasing lettings income but the school was limited in what facilities could be offered due to its own use of for extra curricular activities.</p> <p>The Headteacher advised that the Government had announced that School's could provide 2% increments to teachers pay for grades M1-M6 (usually 1%) and that local agreement on this was currently being negotiated. The additional 1% had not been included with the budget.</p> <p>ACTION - Finance working group to meet to work through the budget in more detail with a view to identifying savings within the budget.</p> <p>a) Internal Audit Findings and Actions The financial audit had been completed on 27th and 28th June and the findings had been circulated to Governors with the proposed action plan some of which had already been completed. Governors were advised that the auditors had difficulties appreciating the level of financial scrutiny that was undertaken without a traditional committee structure. The Chair advised that there had been an opportunity to challenge the findings but there were limits on what changes could be made to the report. Also having gone through the report it had indicated strong control despite the partial assurance rating. Governors commented that spending time on challenging the outcome would be a distraction from the more pressing issue regarding the need to meet the challenging budget.</p>	Finance Group
7	<p>Other Reports & Recommendations</p> <p>a) Health & Safety The Governor with lead responsibility for Health and Safety reported on a follow up visit on 27th September during which he sought reassurance of standards by verification of documentation. This included a sampling of facilities related and departmental risk assessments and the medical centres incident log. The School had also requested a Health and Safety audit with a focus on the PE department and this had been completed, report to follow. There had also been a discussion with the School regards the relationship with the PFI contractor, which was one of close co-operation with monthly meetings about facilities.</p> <p>ACTION - Update Governors on Health and Safety once the audit report had been received and reviewed.</p> <p>b) Governors Conference There was verbal feedback from the Governor who had attended the conference earlier in the year.</p> <p>c) Governors Code of Conduct The Clerk had updated the Governors code of conduct following the issue of a new version from the National Governors Association.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Code of Conduct for the Governing Body of Varndean School as presented.</p>	IR
8	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the following policies and documents as presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy • Equalities Action Plan 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Procedures • Supporting Children with Medical Needs • Freedom of Information • Child Protection Policy • Whistleblowing Policy <p>ACTION - Teachers pay policy and appraisal policy to be approved by the pay panel once the model pay policy had been received from the Local Authority.</p>	Pay panel
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Vote of Thanks Governors thanked the Headteacher and his team for the strong progress over the past few years as confirmed in the latest Ofsted report.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 8.01pm Date of next meeting - 11th January 2018</p>	