

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
29th January 2015
Eco Building
6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present: Maggie Barradell, Oliver Cattermole, Athena Corbin, Jon Dee (Chair), William Deighan, Giovanni Franceschi, Frances Franklin, Richard Lumley, Jess Morris

Officers Present: Teresa Carter (Clerk)

In Attendance: Ed Owen

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p>1 Introduction</p> <p>a) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Julian Benkel and Robbie Mitchell.</p> <p>b) Declaration of Interests None</p>	
<p>2 Appointment of Co-opted Governor - Athena Corbin</p> <p>AGREEMENT - Following a proposal from both the Chair and the Nominations Committee the Full Governing Body approved the appointment of Athena Corbin as Co-opted Governor for four years.</p> <p>Athena Corbin arrived at the meeting and was welcomed by the Chair followed by introductions,</p>	
<p>3 Last Meeting dated 2nd December 2014</p> <p>a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved 6 pages of minutes from the meeting held on 2nd December 2014. The Chair signed them as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Autumn one data collection had revealed no narrowing of the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers which led to a re examination of the closing the gap strategy and a stronger emphasis on all teachers getting to know students learning needs and on targeted interventions. As a result the gap had narrowed from 34% to 28% within the Autumn 2 data collection though it was noted this was still just above national averages. • As agreed at the last meeting, the IGCSE course had been introduced for the 3 lower sets in English with specialist curriculum support and training. The inclusion of a speech and language component within the English IGCSE suited lower ability students learning needs better. The leadership team were aware that the IGCSE might only be available for a two years due to changes planned by the department of education. • Governors whilst not wishing to have a results driven strategy leading to too many curriculum changes were very aware of the need for improved end year outcomes for students. The Headteacher emphasised that the overall strategy of good progress for all students had not changed and that following a leadership visit to look at different strategies for closing the gap through the Challenge Partners initiative it was clear that the school had adopted many of the key strategies for improvement and would not be buying into the associated Challenge the Gap scheme and instead would be working locally with two other city schools. 	

- Governors commented that the closing the gap strategy was a good starting point and wished to have further reporting and analysis of its effectiveness throughout all school years as much of the reporting had understandably been focussed on year 11 in this year to date.

WD

ACTION - Closing the gap reporting to Full Governing Body to be expanded to all school years and received after each data collection.

- The Clerk reported that the NSPCC had launched an online training module on safer recruitment in education that would take governors four hours to complete at £30 per person. Governors commented on the cost and the Headteacher suggested that the schools in house programme through Hays might be a more cost effective alternative.

AE

ACTION - Safeguarding Lead in School to review training available through Hays for cost and suitability for Governors.

FF

ACTION - The action item for a Governor to visit the school to review the student progress data collection and checking processes was carried forward

4 Chair's Update

The Chair provided an update on activities and actions taken since the last Governing Body meeting:

- At a further meeting with the Local Authority as part of the support being provided to the school the Chair and Headteacher had been able to provide reassurances of the actions being taken to drive school improvement.
- The school improvement partner had only been able to visit the school twice since the school was categorised as high support but the school felt that the in house challenge was sufficient for school improvement. The Chair advised that the 6 HM Inspector days and challenge partners visits were providing the majority of school improvement support.
- The Chair had met with the HM Inspector with a view to developing the governing body's skills strategy further. It had been concluded that the current governance process was well established but there were some areas for improvement around interrogation of key sources of educational data.

ACTION - Framework for up skilling of Governing Body, possibly including a joint workshop on data to be put in place.

JD

- One complaint had been dealt with at stage three data and another was with the Headteacher at stage 2.

5 Headteacher's Report

Strategic Item - Quality of Teaching

The Headteacher had provided a report to Governors covering all areas within the school improvement plan. Before having a "deep dive" discussion on the key strategic item for the meeting the Headteacher highlighted some key points and answered Governors' questions:

- The HMI having visited the school for six days had positively commented on the ethos and behaviour at the school. She had further noted that monitoring of student progress and feedback had improved substantially.
- 66 part lessons had been observed with detail feedback provided to individuals.
- The key issues for the school were expectation of work rates, driving forward of planning, ensuring sufficient challenge and clarity of success criteria for students.
- Based on last year's GCSE outcomes the school had self classified as a requiring improvement school in Ofsted terms but were intent on seeking a good through the positive actions taken.

- A project to develop a community garden had attracted funding from the Well being and Mental Health Innovation Fund.
- Students had chose four charities to fundraise for and students who were free to spend their achievement points on a number of things had been happy to donate them to their school charity.
- Governors challenged a comment under 1.2.1 on the report regards forensic analysis of progress and were advised that this was a challenge aim for the school.
- Governors asked whether changes in the curriculum (15 on report) had led to reduction in choice of options available for year 9 students as compared with Y8 In response Governors were advised that four options including were available in line with previous years. Following further discussion of year 9 options process it was concluded that communication with teaching staff, students and parents could be improved, as there had been some misunderstanding and confusion and that senior leadership team would consider improvements to the way any changes to curriculum were presented to Full Governing Body in the future.
- It was noted that a parents options evening was due to take place the following week following which feedback on the process could be provided to Governors.
- There was comment that many of the “I am currently reading” signs around the school were blank which did not create a positive impression of the drive for a improvement in whole school literacy
- A trend of reducing number of students eligible for pupil premium was noted which would have financial implications in future years.
- GSCE predictions following the second data trawl was 66% A*-C including maths and English slightly off the Fischer Family Trust Level D target. The checking and moderation was rigorous to ensure reliability of predictions particularly as around 70 children are within a C/D borderline group and are vulnerable to unknown changes in grade boundaries. As the strategies for improvement of student outcomes were around staff knowing each individual student Governors were interested in the number of classes being covered by supply.

ACTION - Summary report to be provided to Governors on the number of hours a week teaching covered by either a supply or newly qualified teacher compared to the hours covered by experienced permanent teachers. Further details are also to be provided on the C/D borderline group at the next FGB and specific actions being taken to address the progress of these students.

WD

- Behaviour trend indicators were improving and would be reported on within a “deep dive” at the next meeting. Also at that meeting Governors would receive a report on the effectiveness of the Aspire to Achieve centre and the safe at school survey. The Governors statement of behaviour principles would also be considered further at the next meeting.

Ed Owen took over the presenting to Governors with an in depth review of the four strategic targets within the quality of teaching section on the school improvement plan.

a) Varndean Language of Learning

A huge amount of work had been undertaken in development of a common language for learning emphasis through the Growth Mindset initiative including focussed feedback on effort and resilience.

b) Feedback on Student Work

Reflection time had been embedded into classes through the use of questioning in work books tailored for the individual to create a dialogue with the teacher. This enabled understanding could be checked before moving on. A policy on marking had reinforced to teachers the expected minimum amount of marking and the school improvement partner (HM Inspector) who had commented positively on the consistency seen had checked this.

c) Improving Teaching Practice

Judgements of individual’s quality of teaching assessed by a mix of formal observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, drop ins and progress data analysis. Professional judgements

verified by HM Inspector and Challenge Partners. Work scrutiny carried out three times a term, one within the department, one with a linked department and the final one by the senior leadership team. Governors asked about the professional development opportunities for teachers and the support in place for new heads of departments. A range of training derived from the appraisals was in place and summarised within the written report to Governors. The Outstanding Teacher Programme for good teachers to develop outstanding skills would be run in summer term.

d) Raising Aspirations

The Brilliant Club had been introduced to widen access to top universities by raising student expectations. Focus was initially on a group of 24 students in year 8 and involved university type tutorials and the requirement the submission of 1000+ word essays. Year 9 and 10 students would be included in summer term. Governors queried whether the right students had been targeted, as the more able were likely to have higher aspirations anyway. The school advised that this was not always the case and some of the selected students were within the pupil premium group that tended to have lower aspirations. Furthermore what the students brought back into class and through assemblies and blogs had a positive whole school effect.

In addition to the agenda items Governors received the updated raising attainment plans for the underperforming departments plus maths as requested. Each plan was scrutinised in turn and the effectiveness of the plan as highlighted by colour coding noted. Governors asked a number of questions to clarify their understanding of the reasons behind progress being on or not on track in terms of actual achievement to date and professional predictions for year end.

8.38 - Jess Morris left the meeting

6 Reports and Recommendations

a) Finance Report

- Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the submission of the SFVS return as presented and proposed by the Chair.

b) Homework Processes

Frances Franklin reported on her visit to the school to review homework processes. A written report had been circulated for noting. There were a number of interesting areas that the school was working on to develop the consistency and effectiveness of approach to homework. The paper would be shared with SLT to feed into their considerations as to how to take matters forward.

7 Other Policies and Documents for Approval

a) Home School Agreement

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the home school agreement as presented subject to a change in order of the various sections and consistency on the use of "student" throughout.

8 Any Other Business

a) Staff Governor

Robbie Mitchell's term of office would shortly expire and his positive contribution to the work of the Governing Body was noted. An election process for his successor had commenced.

b) Equality Group

Equal opportunity monitoring was underway within the authority to include staff and in due course Governors.

Meeting ended at 9.07pm

Signature.....Date.....

Date of next meeting - 26th March 2015

Actions Arising from Full Governing Body Meeting 29th January 2015

Actions Agreed	By Who	By When
Closing the gap reporting to Full Governing Body to be expanded to all school years and received after each data collection.	WD	Next meeting
Safeguarding Lead in School to review training available through Hays for cost and suitability for Governors.	AE	By email before next meeting
The action item for a Governor to visit the school to review the student progress processes was carried forward	FF	Next meeting
Framework for up skilling of Governing Body, possibly including a joint workshop on data to be put in place.	JD	Next meeting
Summary report to be provided to Governors on the number of hours a week teaching covered by either a supply or newly qualified teacher compared to the hours covered by experienced permanent teachers. Further details are also to be provided on the C/D borderline group at the next FGB and specific actions being taken to address the progress of these students.	WD	Next meeting