



**Meeting of Full Governing Body
30th January 2014
Training Room at Varndean School
6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present: Maggie Barradell, Julian Benkel, Oliver Cattermole, Jon Dee (Chair), William Deighan, Richard Lumley, Robbie Mitchell, Jess Morris

Officers Present: Teresa Carter (Clerk)

In Attendance: Krissi Carter

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1 Introduction Maggie Barradell and Oliver Cattermole were welcomed to their first meeting as Governors. a) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Anne Cox and Robin Marlin. b) Declaration of Interests None declared	
2 Last Meeting dated 10th October 2013 a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed an approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 10 th October 2013. The Chair signed them as confirmation of their accuracy. b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay Progression and allowances recommendations had been reviewed by two Governors and reported to the Full Governing Body.• Governors asked whether electronic cigarettes were banned in school under the anti smoking policy. It was advised that whilst nicotine was a banned substance the policy would be amended to include electronic cigarettes specifically.	
3 Governance and Other Regular Items a) Chair's Update The Chair of Governors provided an update on his activities as Chair since the last Full Governing Body meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair and Clerk had attended a planning day with Blatchington Mill School governors to present on the constitution of and organisation of work of the Governing Body at Varndean.• Governors considered the proposed complaints policy and felt that it fully met statutory requirements and in addition reflected the principles recently stated by the Department of Education. A further amendment to extend the time limit for stage 4 was suggested for practical purposes.	

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the complaints policy as presented subject to the extension of the stage 4 time limit to 20 days.

The Headteacher's performance review had been completed and objectives set for 2013/14 based on the school improvement priority areas.

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

4 Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher presented his report to governors with the following areas noted and discussed.

- Varndean students had been successful in winning a Eurocities award through the BEACH project and Year 7 girls won the Brighton area soccer finals. In addition 96 Varndean students had completed the bronze or silver Duke of Edinburgh programme and had received their awards on 26th January.
- The school had been awarded the status of a school in the Networks of Excellence for Computer Science.
- The schools performance at GCSE on the current measure of five GCSE's including maths and English at grades A* to C had been 5% above national average but based on proposed changes to the measure of success to the best 8 GCSE's this would have caused some difficulties for the school.
- The Local Authority had approached the school to request an increase in the year 7 intake by one form (30) but due to lack of space for teachers in class this initial request was declined. A further request on reduced numbers was expected and governors agreed that without capital expenditure and planning time for growth any significant increase in intake would create operational difficulties for the school, potentially impacting on children's learning.
- Current GCSE performance whilst looking low for level A*-C including maths and English was in line with normal patterns at the end of autumn term.
- Fixed term exclusions reduced substantially and attendance improved to 93.2% representing a 1% increase on last year's figures. Governors were alerted to transport issues for children travelling by bus from some areas of the city, which might impact, on punctuality.
- Recruitment of head of PE in progress with interviews the following week. Staffing of maths department continuing to be a challenge with a teacher resignation. Governors enquired about the levels of resignation of newly qualified teachers in maths and were advised that there had been two, which was unusual.

Strategic Item - Quality of Teaching

a) Quality of Teaching

Krissi Carter presented a detailed report on the school development area of quality of teaching including data from class observations was provided. Governors were advised that there were three types of observation at Varndean being unplanned learning walks by the senior leadership team (SLT), planned developmental observations where teachers chose the lesson to be observed and observations through subject reviews. The data provided showed that 75% of lessons observed during learning walks were judged to be good or better using the Ofsted criteria. These judgements had been externally verified by the Local Authority's secondary school advisor and were therefore considered accurate. Governors noted that this was some way off the 85% target but represented outcomes from unplanned visits only. The final measure would come from the summer term planned observations. In addition to this it was noted that the observations would continue to be moderated by the School's advisor a former HMI.

The teacher development programme deriving from the appraisal interviews was outlined much of which was delivered in house. A recent satisfaction survey confirmed that 95% of those responding had found the training they received to be relevant.

Further staff had gone through a coaching programme with an expectation that they would progress to a higher grading. Case studies had shown that previous coaching had been effective. Star lesson technology had been



introduced to enable teachers to use filmed lessons to identify areas for their own development.

19% of Varndean teachers had completed the outstanding teacher programme along with colleagues from other schools. Two other courses were planned for the summer term.

A voluntary teaching and learning group were meeting outside of directed time to develop a common language for learning (growth mindset), embedding school wide approach to the teaching of literacy, raising aspirations, developing a coaching culture and effective differentiation. Governors offered to provide personal information on their backgrounds and routes into employment to support a similar exercise from staff to help raise student aspirations.

All

ACTION - Clerk to be provided with a template to circulate to Governors to complete with their background and employment details

A pre assessment visit for NACE accreditation had taken place and there was optimism that full accreditation would be given to the school in June 2014.

Governors asked for further information on what support was being provided to teachers with improving requirement lesson observations. It was advised that lesson observations were part of an overall judgement of teachers and did not automatically lead to implementation of an improvement plan. Individual case studies provided evidence that where improvement plans were in place there was impact on the quality of teaching and student outcomes.

Governors commented positively on the innovative ways that the school was using to get the best out of people.

b) Homework Processes

Two homework systems had been piloted with the parent portal being the preferred option. It was launched online in October with parental log ins to enable them to see the relevant homework for their child. An interim survey had indicated that 30/60 minutes of homework a night was considered sufficient and that 81% of parents thought that the quality and quantity of homework being set was right. Some positive emails had also been received from parents about the homework system despite some initial technology issues.

Governors asked for clarification on an issue regarding further passwords for maths being sent out and the effective use of the system by staff including the marking and feedback to students. In response the advice was that all staff were aware of the parent portal and were using it with paper copies provided to students without computer access. Heads of department had responsibility for the quality of marking and had reviews timetabled to check that homework had been collected and marked.

7.34pm - Krissi Carter left the meeting.

5 Policies and Other Documents for Approval

a) Home School Agreement

The Full Governing Body considered the home school agreement that had been updated to reflect the behaviour policy and school motto of “ Attitude to Learning. Approaches to Life”.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Home School Agreement subject to amendments as discussed.

- b) Staff Disciplinary
- c) Staff Capability
- d) Staff Grievance

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the staff disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures as presented with a three yearly reviews or earlier review if changes made to the local authority model policies.

6 Reports and Recommendations

a) Finance Report/Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The Full Governing Body had been provided with written reports on finance and SFVS. It was noted that one question on the SFVS (22) advised that an audit of voluntary funds had not been completed and that a check of the bank statements was considered sufficient by the reviewing governor as the balance had only moved by £20. The balance on the account was noted and governors considered using it to set up an annual student award. Other suggestions were invited prior to the next meeting.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body agreed that the schools voluntary funds would not require auditing.

ACTION - Suggested uses of the balance on school fund to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher. All

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the SFVS submission for 2013/14 as presented. This was duly signed by the Chair.

It was advised that on the budget report to 31st December the planned overspend in the year had reduced due to delayed appointments. This had been offset in part by expenditure on the infrastructure at the school including the all weather pitch, solar panels and office extensions, all of which governors had been made aware off.

There was a discussion about the reserves from previous years and governors were reminded that these were held in part to support the restructure and to increase the investment in staffing and would be utilised over a three year period as agreed with the Local Authority. The challenge would be to maintain a sustainable budget from 2016 onwards.

As part of the finance review the insurances had been examined and a schedule of the insurance arrangements had been provided.

b) School Trips

A review of proposed school trips had been undertaken and the outcomes reported to the Full Governing Body. The reviewing governor asked the Headteacher to provide additional information on the proposed ski trip and a trip to Findhorn, Scotland. It was noted that the ski trip was in half term so would not impact on children's learning and that the findhorn trip was supporting leadership development. Governors were interested in receiving further information on the amount of pupil premium being used to support the ski trip for students eligible for free school meals and what the benefits to those attending would be.

AGREEMENT - Subject to the confirmation of pre trip health and safety on the

ski trip the Full Governing Body approved the residential school trips programme for 2013/14.

- c) **Nominations Committee - Governor Vacancies & Recruitment**
Governors were advised that there two vacancies to fill, both for co-opted governors. It was noted that two applicants had been shortlisted for consideration by the nominations committee for one of the vacancies. Whilst it was not possible to elect a staff member to the remaining position specific invitation to staff was suggested, as governors still wanted the option of additional staff representation, though on a skills-based basis. The Chair suggested that now would be a good time for him to stand down from his interim membership of the Nominations Committee. A replacement member of the Committee was requested JB

ACTION - Nominations Committee to provide the Clerk with the wording for an invitation to staff members to apply to be a co-opted governor.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body appointed Maggie Barradell unanimously to the nominations committee.

- d) **Varndean Links**
Governors noted the contents of the Varndean Links report.

7 **Any Other Business**

- a) **Duke of Edinburgh Awards**
Governors asked for thanks to be passed to Alison Browning for her commitment and energy in support the students through the Duke of Edinburgh programme resulting in a successful 85% conversions rate.
- b) **University Places**
Governors were advised that two previous Varndean students had received offers to study at Cambridge.

Meeting ended at 8.39pm
Date of next meeting - 24th April 2014



Actions from Full Governing Body meeting 30th January 2014

Actions Agreed	By Who	By When
Clerk to be provided with a template to circulate to Governors to complete with their background and employment details	KC & Govs	Next meeting
Suggested uses of the balance on school fund to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher.	All	Next meeting
Nominations Committee to provide the Clerk with the wording for an invitation to staff members to apply to be a co-opted governor.	JB	Next meeting