

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
17th January 2019 at 6pm
School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Simon Bowes, Jon Dee, William Deighan, Judith Ford, Giovanni Franceschi, Alex Marsh (Chair), Hope McAdam, Rob Reed, Ian Rodgers, Emma Warde-Robinson
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Laura Fairbank, Gareth Hughes, Andy Roberts, Vicky Thorn

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Julian Benkel and from Emma Warde - Robinson who would need to leave the meeting after an hour.</p> <p>c) Declaration of Interests The Governors' declarations register was circulated with a request for any updates to be noted. There were no declarations relating to agenda items.</p>	
2	<p>Last Meeting dated 4th October 2018</p> <p>a) Acceptance of Minutes The Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 4th October 2018. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda All actions arising were either on the agenda or in process of being completed.</p>	
3	<p>Chair's Update The Chair of Governors provided a verbal update on activities since the last Full Governing Body meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher's performance management review had been completed by the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors with the support of an independent adviser. The process had been undertaken in line with the requirements and included the setting of appraisal targets for the year ahead which were aligned to the school improvement plan. A categorisation letter had been received in December from the Local Authority confirming that the School was categorised "self-improving and sustaining" following a desk top review of the school. There had been some discussion with the Local Authority regards the building works to support the expanded admission numbers. There was however concern at the lack of pace in the discussions and the prospect of not being ready to accommodate additional student numbers in September. The forming of a working group would support with providing clarity on this point. The Local Authority had reported a more positive message around financing whilst encouraging schools to continue to monitor budgets closely. 	
4	<p>Headteacher's Report The Headteacher before presenting his main report provided updates on two issues that governors had requested to be included as specific points for discussion.</p>	

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

Health and Safety

There had recently been three accidents involving young people around the school area. A Varndean student had been knocked over in Ditchling Road sustaining damage to his wrist , he was now back in school. A further more serious accident involving a past student had occurred in Preston Drove and he was still seriously ill in hospital. The third accident involved a student from Dorothy Stringer School. There had been contact with the Local Authority on these issues and there was local community activity and public meetings planned around people’s concerns about safety issues. The Headteacher requested permission from the Governing Body to write to parents regarding the feedback received so far and the avenues that they could personally use to raise their concerns. Governors asked what would be requested specifically, whether this was extending the 20 mph limit or putting in more traffic calming measures. The Headteacher responded that whilst this would be desirable a wider message was required so that people became more aware and mindful when driving around the city. There was comment that the focus on traffic calming was currently in the Hangleton area attached to the new school build.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body gave authority to the Headteacher to write to parents about the communications with the Local Authority regards road safety, the responses received to date and providing sign posting parents should they have concerns that they wished to raise.

There had been an in school incident involving a student who had fainted and hit and damaged his head when he fell. The Local Authority had determined that it was not a reportable incident as the head injury was caused by a fainting response. A plan had been put in place to support the student to mitigate any similar future incidents.

Buildings Expansion

Governors were reminded of the capital funding allocated for building expansion works. There had been a visit from officers with little action following it. There were suggestions of remodelling spaces as an alternative to new buildings. An architect was due to visit shortly following which there might be a clearer view on the scope of work projected. The Chair stressed the importance of Governor involvement to shape the buildings project in a way that would not compromise facilities for future students.

AGREEMENT - Working group for buildings expansion project to include Julian Benkel, Jon Dee, Rob Reed, Ian Rodgers and Gareth Hughes.

It was noted that being a PFI school there would be additional costs further disadvantaging the school financially in comparison to others across the city.

The Headteacher presented his main report to Governors on an assumed read basis covering the following points:

- Justine Greening (former education secretary) had visited the school in December with the purpose of meeting the Varndean goats following them being named as one of the “TES’ ten most influential people”
- Challenges around finances with significant top slicing by the Local Authority, some of which was being returned to Schools.

There was a question relating to the two assaults on staff recorded under staff core data within the Headteacher’s report and in response it was advised that the incidents had resulted in permanent exclusion decisions for the types of behaviour seen. The Governors Disciplinary Committee had been convened to review the decisions, they were only required for one as a managed move was facilitated for the other.

5 School Improvement

a) Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment

As a new member to Varndean School Laura Fairbank shared some her early observations.

- Standard of teaching and learning high supported by established teams for learning.
- Staff well informed

- Staff engaged in recent research.
- During learning walks examples of world class teaching had been seen.

The deep dive report on teaching, learning and assessment circulated in advance of the meeting was separated into three sections.

- Key activities taking place in the school.
- Progress towards achieving school improvement priorities.
- Departmental analysis.

Laura Fairbank talked Governors through the report in detail followed by Governors' comments and questions. The following summarises the discussions.

- Monitoring of teaching and learning was a big part of the Governors' role, as non-teaching professionals in the main it was difficult for them to get reassurance of the quality. Learning walks had taken place the previous year when it had been easier to make comparisons between different departments.
- External monitoring had previously been through Challenge Partners who reported to the Full Governing Body. The teaching alliance provided some opportunity for professional quality assurance and the school's allocated improvement adviser could be directed into carrying out activities relating to teaching practice.
- Leadership try not to carry out too many formal observations particularly in the departments working well. Peer observation is used within some departments.

b) Student Outcomes

- Gareth Hughes reported that the latest external data had just been released in the form of an inspection summary report showing the breakdown of what happened in 2017/18 examinations.
- The report which would be circulated after the meeting was good reading on the whole. There was strong performance with significantly above national averages in all progress 8 measures.
- Maths results had been exceptionally strong putting the school in the top 10% nationally.
- English had recovered from the 2017 position and compared well to national average,
- Science was significantly above average. The emergency measures introduced at end of previous year had paid off and addressed the concerns in the most recent Ofsted report.
- Languages were in mid table position, there had been mixed performance across the range of languages.
- Humanities was the most concerning area for the school.

c) GCSE Predictions

- Stronger position predicted in cycle one based on fairly robust evidence. A teacher's round assessment included pre public examinations (PPE)
- Good assessment systems last year with Staff even more confident in assessment procedures. Predicted outcomes therefore considered reliable.
- Stronger predictions than at same point of time previous year.
- Attitude for learning good with positive response from students to revision resources put in place through GCSE pod on exam based subjects. Take up of this was strong in vulnerable groups.
- Better examples of pedagogy seen throughout departments.
- Alert to some of concerns summarised within the raising attainment plan summary.
- Year 11 attendance slipped in autumn term 2 and spring term 1. Motivation at farther parts of the group were a challenge. Attendance had taken a hit with the split week holidays.
- Science results expected to improve further.
- Computing a smaller cohort and likely to show better performance.
- Outcomes in French and geography a concern for School Leaders replicated by comments from students. Greater support provided in these two subject areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term view that good progress made in raising attainment with a narrowing of the subjects in need of attainment plans. <p>Governor questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning cycle one English was showing 39 students graded 9-7 was this a deterioration in performance of higher achieving students? In response it was advised that outcomes for prior high attaining historically improved for remainder of year. • Do students do a full examination for PPE when subject matter not fully covered? In response it was advised that PPE1 was narrower and tended to be on what subjects had been covered. • How confident were staff with the grade boundaries? In response it was advised that information was sought directly from the exam boards. • On the progress 8 tables there was red highlighting, without the national average how did school predict progress 8? In response it was advised that the school used the coefficients from the previous year. Attainment 8 was a more reliable measure. The red areas were mainly because the scores were based on current performance. • Did students perform worse in PPEs than the final exams? It was confirmed that was the case. • Governors requested data comparing the current performance with the same the previous year for comparison. (to follow) <p>d) Careers Programme Information School offer regards careers summarised in information provided. The school lead had done a full evaluation of the offer against the Gatsby benchmark being the gold standard for careers. The school was in quite good shape. The weakest area was around engaging with real employees.</p> <p>ACTION - Simon Bowes as Link Governor for careers to carry out a review of information required in relation to what was going on in school and to report to next Governors.</p> <p>e) Pupil Premium Statement - for information Poverty Proofing Audit had been commissioned by Local Authority to evaluate the work of schools. It was a thorough approach with useful feedback such as that given regards the green PE kit if students forget their own. Big discounts on enrichment offer don't always make trips accessible. The School would look at ways of organising so that all students had an opportunity to go on one big trip. Records of extra-curricular activities taken up by PP students were held and it could be seen that the bursary system was helping. The difficulties that disadvantaged students had were regards attending out of school activities as they tended to live further away from the school. A bigger piece of work around identifying the full cost of attending school over the full five years with early communication to parents was proposed. Governors asked why the Saturday maths school was no longer running given the good outcomes in maths the previous year and were advised that the Head of Maths was confident with the quality of teaching and that this along with after school provision was sufficient. The Saturday programme had given extra demands on staff. It was noted that whilst improvements seen in pupil premium student progress the in school gap was not reducing as all students making progress.</p>	
6	<p>Financial Control - Finance Group Report Jon Dee on behalf of the finance group provided an update on the current financial position supported by notes from the group's most recent meeting. A full predicted finance outturn report had been circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current positive outturn position in line with expectations and plans at £123k. This included £100k that was prudently set aside for variable costs and to leave school in a break even position. • The Director of Finance and Operations had left the school and currently there were transition arrangements in place pending arrival of the new appointed person on 1st February. There was a question regards finance governor involvement in the recruitment 	

	<p>process and it was confirmed that one governor had been on the panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked whether there were any areas suffering from budget restrictions and it was advised that the whiteboards were requiring replacement. • It was noted that a consultation was underway regards increasing teacher pension contributions that had not been budgeted for. 	
7	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>a) Governance - Skills Audit A skills audit had been completed using the national governors’ association model. Looking at the weaker areas from the audit they mainly related to charity law that was not so relevant to a mainstream school. The opinion was that the Governing Body could be strengthened by individuals with community or local employer links. There was a comment about legal expertise on the Governing Body and it was concluded that if required the service would be purchased externally or Local Authority services used. It was noted that there was both a gender and ethnicity in balance on the Governing Body. The nominations committee would consider the skills audit when next meeting. There was a brief discussion about the training available through the service level agreement with Governor Support.</p> <p>b) Instrument of Government - Review/Confirm Governance Structure</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body confirmed the current structure as detailed in the instrument of government.</p>	
8	<p>Other Reports</p> <p>a) Pay Panel Report The contents of the pay panel report were noted.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the teacher’s pay policy.</p> <p>ACTION - Circulate the supplementary guidance document referenced to in the pay policy.</p>	TD
9	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</p> <p>Governors commented on the procedures relating to a recent staff disciplinary panel and whether the current procedures were fit for purpose. It was confirmed that apart from lack of refreshments/water at Hove Town Hall the process had worked well. Alternative locations would be considered if needed in future.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved two policy/procedural documents as follow:</p> <p>a) Staff Discipline Procedures b) Teacher’s Appraisal Policy</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) School Annual Show Governors invited to the show on 15th February.</p> <p>b) Cascade to staff There was a question on how information about Governors meetings cascaded to staff. Judith Ford advised that there was informal feedback at the following staff meeting held weekly.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7.52pm Date of next meeting - 14th March 2019</p>	