

Meeting of Full Governing Body
4th March 2021
6pm
Via Zoom

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Jon Dee, William Deighan, Giovanni Franceschi, Alex Marsh (Chair), Hope McAdam, Emma McCrea, Ian Rodgers, Emma Warde-Robinson
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Vicky Anstiss, Shelley Baker, Laura Fairbank, Lynn Hill, Gareth Hughes, Andy Roberts

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Simon Bowes and Julian Benkel. Judith Ford was also absent from the meeting.</p> <p>c) Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest in addition to those on the declarations register included within the meeting papers.</p>	
2	<p>Last Meetings dated 10th December 2020</p> <p>a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 10th December 2020.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda None</p>	
3	<p>Chair's Update The Chair provided an update on governors' activities and priorities since the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update meeting on covid related issues with leadership team on 20th January, school reopening the following week. Year 7 admissions for September had been confirmed as 300. There had been some press interest in the numbers of families not getting their choice of school within the Varndean/Stringer catchment area. Contact received from the Local Authority about the longer term student numbers within the catchment with a meeting scheduled with officers for the following week. <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body had reached agreement by email prior to the meeting to the appointment of Emma Warde-Robinson as a Co-opted Governor on a term of four years. This appointment was confirmed.</p>	
4	<p>Headteacher's Report Before his report to Governors the Headteacher picked up the point about school admissions advising that 62 children had not been allocated a place within the Varndean/Stringer catchment area likely to result in a number of appeals that could be a challenge. There had been a number of</p>	

enquiries directly to the school, it had been agreed with Local Authority officers that these and any future enquiries would be redirected to admissions team and the press office as it was likely to get busy in terms of people approaching the school for a view.

The Headteacher highlighted a couple of other key issues for the school.

- School leaders had been invited to speak at a challenge partners national conference on wellbeing and how the school was moving forward.
- There was some anxiety amongst staff members regards students return to school, the amount of testing required as well as the increased risk to staff , many of whom were still waiting for their vaccinations.

The school leadership team provided governors with detail of the covid risk management process and plans for the return to school.

- A webinar had just delivered to families to communicate the procedures.
- All students were being tested before they returned with the first group of 250 tested earlier in the day. Year 11 were due to be tested the following day with their return scheduled for Monday 8th March. By the Friday after all year groups would have been tested and returned to school.
- The school were trying to return to normal as soon as possible, with the full timetable , lessons in usual classrooms with usual teachers. The usual expectations in terms of attendance , behaviour , punctuality and uniform would be in place right from the start. Normality was hoped to bring a feeling of safety and security to young people.
- Middle leaders had been working on their curriculum maps for the rest of the year mapping out what needed to be covered and how work was to be differentiated. There had been high engagement with remote learning but gaps were likely for some individuals. All students would be taught from the point that they were at.
- Monday morning briefings for sharing top tips to get whole school back on track.
- Work underway on development of an objective assessment system for year 11 progress by the end of May in readiness for submission of grades to the exam boards.
- The pastoral team had been inviting students that they felt might struggle with the whole school return. All students identified within certain themes of additional need , contact made and plans in place to support and follow up.
- The key worker provision was continuing reducing in numbers as year groups returned. Teachers were being released from the key worker provision to enable them to focus on preparation for year group lessons.

At this point Governors were shown a video of students performing a song about their experience of using zoom “you are still on mute”.

Governors were reminded of the school visioning session held with school leaders in November 2020 and received an update on how the development of that vision was progressing.

- A designer was working on a visual representation of the “butterfly” vision encapsulating some of the principles that the school had been working to. This was shown on screen share.
- Two main areas for the vision being staff and provision influencing together on the students and leading to the world class education ambition. Population of the two strands for the vision with contribution from whole school community.
- Twilight session held with staff to identify attributes and values that they would look for in their students. A good range of ideas came out of the session.
- Next steps to talk to students commencing with student leaders for their perspective on what they wanted from their education.
- Governors were invited to offer feedback on their “big picture “ ideas on where the school should be heading in terms of attributes and values. Governors contributed a number of ideas summarised here.
 - Career savvy students who are able to confidently make choices for their future and have all the information that they need to be able to make choices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children to look back on their time at school with fond happy memories. ○ Resilient young people with good mental health who are able to take what life throws at them. ○ Learners that could make good well informed decisions in terms of their adult lives. ○ Variety and scope of the offering at school beyond the core areas. Opportunity for young people to find out what makes them tick, finding their passion. ○ Students feeling part of school community and broader community that they live in. ○ Leaving school feeling successful and celebrated not necessarily just in academic results alone. 	
5	<p>School Improvement Plan - Behaviour, Attitudes and Personal Development School leaders provided governors with a deep dive report on aspects of behaviour, attitudes and personal development of students.</p> <p><u>Engagement and Achievement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 150 children had scored a one across the board, for key stage 3 that would be an average of 14 subjects and in key stage 4 an average of 9 subjects where the highest level of engagement had been achieved consistently. ● Before lockdown around 38% of students had no behaviour points at all and 75% had between zero and five behaviour points. It was noted that behaviour points might be given for something like not remembering to bring a pen. ● Over 82% of students had over 100 achievement points in one term recognising their efforts. ● Around 27% of students with 100% attendance and 61% met the standard 96% or above attendance expectation. ● Celebration of student achievements through the school newsletter and assemblies. ● Student voice opportunities through a structure that pulled together student leadership team, form representatives and constituencies in the students' summit within a student led model. <p><u>Pastoral/Safeguarding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two new school leaders had settled in well, making a valuable contribution. ● Data tables showed an increase in logging of pastoral concerns to do with girls possibly due to more sharing compared to boys who were more reticent to share to express their emotions. Some work to be done on encouraging boys to embrace some of the emotions and difficulties that they were experiencing and to feel secure that they would be listened to. There was also an increase in year 7 recorded pastoral concerns. This year group whilst participating in online transition activities had miss out on the usual face to face opportunities. ● All normal systems of meetings and triaging of students had continued with Brighton and Hove inclusion services in attendance at virtual meetings. ● Counselling services had been provided in school during most recent lockdown with some students just attending for their appointments. ● Reflective practices for pastoral staff continued with the expectation all would engage ensuring that they felt supported and not burdened with the levels of information about safeguarding and mental health that they were required to deal with in their roles. ● Learning for life focus as students return to be on resilience and self-care techniques. ● Form tutors had developed their roles to be increasingly supportive enhancing home/school relationships. <p><u>The Space</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Space provided a nurturing and supportive environment for students struggling with full time lessons. It had continued in a modified way during lockdown with checking in on students in the key worker provision that they were okay with the work and giving an opportunity to share how they might be feeling. ● Increase in students with English as an additional language (EAL) some with no grasp of English at all. These students were being supported by links with the local authority 	

language services and having time in the Space with specific language work before going into to full lessons.

- The numbers of students that remained in the Space were on a very part time basis often because they had dropped a GCSE subject to focus on core subjects.

Attendance

- Overall attendance at 94.7% above national and local authority averages though down on last year over the same period.

Behaviour

- The first half of the autumn term was one of very good behaviour with an average of 3 behaviour points per student. The second half term was more challenging as curriculum demands began to increase resulting in low level disruption and a few more extreme behaviours from students within the special educational needs and low prior attainment groups.
- Fixed term exclusion rates if projected forward would have been worrying. Unstructured time did seem to be a tension area where students unused to socialising were out together. This seemed to be in line with other local schools and may have been due to limited in school provision in term of alternative capacity.
- Defiance rates very low compared to previous years.

New Initiatives

- Safer Schools App, an educational tool for staff, students and parents supporting online safety to be launched shortly. Use of the app would keep everyone up to date on social media platforms and internet providers that they were using.
- The school had joined the Citizens Alliance for Brighton & Hove with a focus on mental health. Student leaders would be trained to lead and collect information to present at the alliance with recommendations for change within the community.

Recovery Curriculum

- Twelve areas identified for students in terms of where they might struggle. Planned actions attached and pastoral staff identified to lead on each area.

Equalities

- Equality update report provided for Governors information covering the summary statement of aims and strategic objectives in relation to equalities.
- In the absence of the student led groups being able to meet an alternative involving equalities champions groups was established and had been successful. Peer mentoring between students had developed from this initiative , a supportive measure particularly for year 7 students. This had also helped improve the dialogue between staff and students about challenges students were facing and engaged more parents in positive discussions.
- Data collection and analysis improved by the addition of a equalities category on the schools reporting system (CPOMS) and an offer of training to identify patterns within the data.
- Sharing of good practice during the Monday staff briefings and discussions at middle leaders meetings.
- Improving dialogue on equalities amongst staff and with students.
- Next steps included expansion of the equalities team with two appointed coordinators, training to support BAME students, the relaunch of the BAME mentoring programme and a detailed audit of the curriculum in the summer term.

Questions and comments from Governors

- Governor monitoring activities of behaviour, attitudes and personal development had provided comprehensive reassurance with just a couple of things picked up on. These were the potential demoralising effect of attendance targets for students in the current situation with anxieties around covid and the data that showed that safeguarding notifications in the

	<p>pupil premium student group had reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale of challenge that school faced was much broader than normal with a range of support for ongoing recovery. Refining boundaries and re-establishing routines were a challenge in themselves. • What type of things came out from the year 7 transition and should schools be focussing on particular issues for next year 7 cohort. • Who were the mentors in the BAME mentoring programme? <p><u>Responses to Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school had seen an increase in safeguarding reporting overall around 35% yet reporting in the pupil premium group was only 9% higher. This was out of line with what might have been expected for pupil premium students struggling with lockdown. Reporting for this group would be a focus to take forward. • Form tutors were in a good place with strong relationships to deal with an emerging concerns early. The five school system provided a strong model with capacity to work on the identified themes to support students. • The increase in reporting for year 7 was mainly around communication and detail of what was shared having not had the opportunities for getting to know students in greater detail on transition. Building tutor groups had been a bit more difficult than usual and in some cases the dynamics were not quite right leading to some adjustments. The school ran the “go big, be awesome” project last year which was well received and praised but not as well attended as hoped. This would be run again alongside the taster days to attempt to get a bit more parental engagement. • Student mentors were used in the BAME programme that had been operating for past three years. Initial mentors came into school from the University of Brighton. 	
6	<p>Financial Control</p> <p>a) Finance Group Report Governors were updated on business conducted by the finance group at a meeting on 22nd January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School’s finance in a healthy position with projected surplus being carried forward to the next year. This included a significant amount that had been ring fenced for improvements to school infrastructure to accommodate higher student numbers and to improve site security. Since the previous report more money had been set aside to invest in the school as part of the strategy for school expansion and improvement. • Monies had not yet been spent as planned due to delays in building works and agreements between the PFI company and local authority. • The schools financial value standard was submitted to the Local Authority by the 31st January. • The governors allowances policy had been reviewed by finance group and was recommended for approval. <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the governors allowances policy as presented.</p>	
7	<p>School Infrastructure</p> <p>a) Buildings Group Report Governors received an update from the buildings group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors were now on site setting up ready for construction having taken over the backfield area for their welfare facilities and storage compound. Scaffolding was being erected over the canteen prior to removal off the roof. • The work was being phased with canteen and reception at the beginning. There would be some logistical disruption with movement of classroom. The contractors had been easy to work with and were sympathetic to the school’s desire to minimise disruption. • The work in the goat quad area would start in late May followed by the additional 	

science classrooms in late June.

- The site team were doing well in managing the demands of the school generally alongside having contractors on site.
- The school thanked Governors for their support regards building expansion works and for being on hand when needed.

Governors comments and questions

- During lockdown there were more incidents of young people climbing over high fences to get on to the surrenden campus. What was the school's position should there be an accident?
- There was a precedent from about a year ago when a young person did get injured on climbing a fence. The health and safety adviser from the local authority did a site visit and because of the signage in place it was considered that there was no liability on the school.

Response to Governor comments and questions

- It had been advised that any injuries from climbing fences was at the risk of those doing the climbing. There had been recent incidents of securing chains being cut.
- The police had upped their visits to site in the evenings and had stopped a group of 10 people trying to access school site.

b) Health & Safety Report

The lead governor for health and safety presented a written report to governors.

- Main health concern was around covid , the risk assessment for return to school the following week was unlikely to be very different to that previously used. Preventative measures established previously would continue with some slight adjustments to ventilation and the one way system.
- The presence of asbestos in the canteen was known and had passed an annual asbestos survey. It was encapsulated and was low risk though might be disturbed by demolition work in that area. All safety precautions to reduce risk would be out in place.

8 Policies and Other Documents for Approval

a) Careers Guidance - Details of Careers Programme

The lead governor for careers guidance presented a written report on the monitoring activities that she had undertaken. The progress made by the school against the 8 Gatsby benchmarks was covered off. The careers education , information, advice and guidance delivery statement was proposed for approval and publication on the school website.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the careers guidance document as presented. Review in one year.

b) Children with Medical Needs who Cannot Attend School

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Children with Medical Needs who Cannot Attend School policy as presented subject to the inclusion of an expansion of the abbreviation EWO in the published version. Review in one year.

c) Designated Teacher for Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the looked after children and previously looked after children policy as presented. Review in one year.

d) Exclusions Policy

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the exclusions policy subject to a final review by the clerk of section 7 of the policy against department of education guidance and change of

	<p>pupils to students throughout the policy. Review in one year at the same time as the behaviour policy review.</p> <p>e) Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated induction of newly qualified teachers policy as presented. Review in one year.</p> <p>f) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated freedom of information publication scheme as presented. Review in three years.</p> <p>g) Whistle Blowing Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated whistleblowing policy as presented. Review in three years.</p>	
10	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Chair & Vice Chair Election Process</p> <p>Governors were advised that an election would be held for Chair and Vice Chair of Governors at the meeting scheduled for May.</p>	
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Meeting ended at 8.08pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting - 20th May 2021</p>	