



**Meeting of Full Governing Body  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2015  
Varndean School  
6pm**

**MINUTES**

**Governors Present:** Maggie Barradell, Julian Benkel (from 6.14pm),  
Oliver Cattermole (from 6.50pm), Jon Dee (Chair), William Deighan,  
Judith Ford, Giovanni Franceschi (from 6.31pm), Jess Morris

**Officers Present:** Teresa Carter (Clerk)

**In Attendance:** Simon Davies, Jo Meloni, Ed Owen, Mark Sorrell

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	
<b>a) Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies for absence received from Athena Corbin and Richard Lumley.	
<b>b) Declaration of Interests</b> Governors were requested to complete their annual declaration of interest forms.	
<b>2 Last Meeting dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015</b>	
<b>a) Acceptance of Minutes</b> The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved four pages of minutes from the meeting held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.	
<b>b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</b> None	
<b>3 Chair's update</b> The Chair advised that the Headteacher had represented the school at the recent funerals for two ex students who were casualties of the crash at Shoreham Airport and a member of staff who had died in the summer holidays and thanked the school for providing the opportunity for Governors to pass on their condolences to the families.	
The Governing Body priorities for the year had been identified as follows:	
• Continued improvement to student progress data reporting across all year groups.	
• Closing the gap in achievement and progress between disadvantaged students and the whole school cohort.	
• Literacy & numeracy.	
• Governor succession planning via the nominations committee.	
<b>ACTION - Chair of Governors to meet with the Nominations Committee regards a succession plan.</b>	JD
<b>4 Headteacher's Report</b> The Headteacher's report in the agreed format had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Headteacher pointed out the additional table incorporating final attainment and progress data for each year group. Governors commented that the format of the data did not enable them to track the behaviour and attendance of a particular cohort over time and the correlation between those measures and the progress data. The Chair advised that the behaviour and attendance tracking could be	

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requested by Governors as part of the “deep dive” reporting at the scheduled meeting.

6.14pm - Julian Benkel arrived

There was a request for the Headteacher’s report to be presented in a more accessible format.

**ACTION - Headteacher’s report to be printed on A3 paper and posted to Governors in advance of each meeting. TC**

**Strategic Item - Outcomes for Students**

**a) GCSE Exam Results 2014/15**

The Headteacher advised that whilst it was pleasing to see a big improvement on the previous year’s GCSE results and there were many individual success stories there was disappointment that the overall targets set had not been met. It was however expected that the school would be above national averages in most of the measures. The Chair acknowledged that the school had worked hard and done well but having not met targets would likely receive a negative reaction from the Local Authority (LA). Governors were advised that a LA representative had recently visited and that the outcome of this was positive with confirmation that the schools predictions for grade C2’s were accurate.

A 2015 examinations analysis report with headline and department data had been circulated from which the leadership team highlighted the following key points:

- % of students achieving 5 GCSE grades A\* - C including English and Maths up 9% on 2014 to 58% (target 68%) (LA average 60%).
- Average point school at 42.2 put the school in a average C grade band (2015 C-)
- % of grades A\* and A were the highest that the school had ever achieved at 26% (national 17%).
- Subject analysis data for past the three years had been colour coded to highlight what departments the leadership team had assessed as having done particularly well (10 departments) and those that required improvement (6 departments). Governors asked about departments raising attainment plans and were referred to separate data reporting on the effectiveness of the plans and comments on the main report particularly about maths
- At first it had appeared that maths predictions were out but on further analysis it was noted that 15 students had failed to achieve predicted C grades due to a significant grade boundary shift of 8 marks. Following a question about the grade shift the leadership team advised that with an increasing number of 17 year olds resitting maths GCSE in sixth form this may have led to a push to grade boundaries by edexcel. This particularly impacted on schools with an average intake such as Varndean School. A comparison with other examination boards grading boundaries was suggested.

6.31pm Giovanni Franceschi arrived at the meeting.

- Predictions appeared to be accurate but the C3 grade predictions had caused an issue leading to a decision by the school to only predict secure grade Cs in future. Students would also only be advised that they were a C grade once secure at that level. Governors reassured the leadership team that any criticism on accuracy of predictions

- would be unfair, as they had been externally moderated as accurate.
- Governors were reminded that the 2015 year 11 cohort were teacher assessed at the end of key stage 2 due to the boycott on SATS examinations and that progress would have been measured from these assessments.
- Governors asked about the mobility of the 2015 year 11 cohort and were advised that at the start of the five years 45% of the students had been assessed as higher achievers at KS2 and that due to mobility this reduced to 38% by year 11.
- The school were not happy with the widening achievement gap trends between disadvantaged students and whole cohort (40% in 2015) though some of the increasing gap could be put down to the impacting factors in maths as previously highlighted.
- Students of black and minority and ethnicity performed in line with their peers and that students with special educational needs had performed better in 2015 and were in line with national averages.
- The Progress 8 measure appeared to be good for the school based on the national progress 8 figures for 2014. Governors advised that they would require some training on the progress 8 measure and other measures being used for 2015 onwards.
- Noting that psychology had performed better Governors asked whether the decision to withdraw it would be reversed. The Headteacher commented that the improvement was slight and did not represent good progress.

6.50pm - Oliver Cattermole arrived at the meeting.

**b) School Improvement Plan 2015/16**

The Headteacher presented the proposed school improvement plan under the following four core strands:

- Outcomes for students.
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Leadership and management.

It was noted that the school improvement plan was heavily focussed on literacy to improve outcomes in subjects requiring writing many of which were now compulsory as part of the Ebacc. A separate whole school literacy plan would be coming to Governors but in the meantime the school were using the “Every Child a Reader” system for the lower achievers in literacy to improve their reading ages.

The improvement plan detailed strategic targets had been broken down into year groups and would also be used as a working document to record current positions half termly following data harvests. The various methods of measuring in each year group were explained briefly.

Governors were advised that staff were being encouraged to be research focussed and visit other schools to identify what works well within their own subject areas.

Assessment for 2015 onwards would be based on growth mindset grades with ambitious targets for all students in line with the top 20% performing schools. Governors though liking the concept behind the model had some concerns that Varndean were introducing something different to their peer schools. They were advised that all schools were trying something different for 2015 following the direction from government for schools to assess without the traditional levels system.



The school was determined to set aspirational targets so as not to cap performance. This had shown to be successful in some subjects where exceptional progress of 5/6 levels had been achieved.

Following a question about individual student targets governors were advised that each student would have an end of year 11 target to work towards and that these targets would be reassessed half termly.

**AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the school improvement plan as presented.**

**c) Student Outcome Targets for 2015/16**

The year 11 School Improvement Plan (SIP) targets for 2016 were noted as follows:

- Progress 8 to be 0.5 or above.
- Attainment 8 to be 5.4 or above.
- Basics measure to exceed 76%.
- Ebacc to be above 39%.

**AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the SIP targets above subject to training for Governors on the measures to enable an understanding of the reasonableness of the targets.**

**5 Carried Over from Last Meeting**

**a) Stakeholder Surveys, Staff, Students and Parents**

Summary reports on the three stakeholder surveys outcomes had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The leadership team highlighted some key issues arising from the surveys including the following:

- 14 out of 20 questions on the parent survey showed and improved agree and strongly agree response and 3 questions had a reduced positive response.
- The next parent survey was due to be completed as student review days in November.
- 78 staff members had responded on the staff survey being an increase of 8 on previous year but still not fully representative of the staff body.
- Out of the 20 questions in the staff survey 13 showed an increase on those responding agree or strongly agree and 3 showed a reduction.
- Leadership team were surprised to only see a slight increase on positive responses around behaviour management as it was thought that great improvement had been made in this area. Further questions would be put to staff to try to understand why this was.
- In response to a question from Governors it was advised that the results from the staff survey could be broken down into types of staff. There was interest in seeing this data and it was suggested that a Governor visit the school to go through it with the school lead.

**ACTION - Governor visit to interrogate the staff survey data and full response summary analysed by staff type.**

OC

- Governors were concerned that only 60% of staff respondents agreed that their contributions were valued. This had been an area that the Headteacher had discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors.
- Governors were pleased to note an improved response in all surveys regards incidents of bullying.
- There was an increase in the numbers of staff disagreeing to the

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question that Governors do an effective job though it was noted that there was no option to answer with a “do not know” for this question.

- The outcomes from the student safe and well being survey showed an improved position across many measures particularly in key stage 3.

## 6 Other Governance and Regular Items

### a) Complaints Summary Report 2014/15

The contents of the summary report for complaints and compliments received during 2014/15 were noted. Governors were pleased to note that complaints were being resolved at stages 1 and 2 of the complaints process. The one stage 3 complaint was within an area out of the control of the school.

7.39pm - Maggie Barradell left the meeting

### b) Declarations Register and Other Governor Information for Publishing

The clerk advised that changes had been made to governors constitution regulations that required Governing Bodies to publish more detail about their membership on the schools website. A draft document was provided to demonstrate the content and format of what would be published. This included a register of any declared interests that the Governing Body deemed to be relevant and material. Governors were asked to submit any ideas regards the development of the Governors’ document prior to publication. A frequently asked questions page was suggested.

**ACTION - Gather ideas and comments on the draft governor document to develop a final version for Governor approval prior to publication.** OC

### c) Constitution of Governing Body - Review the Instrument of Government

The Governing Body reviewed its current constitution and agreed that the total number of 12 governors was sufficient. It was noted that the instrument of government document presented was incorrect, as it did not include the Headteacher position.

**ACTION - Clerk to investigate the inaccuracy of the instrument of government documentation and obtain correct version in line with agreed constitution.** TC

## 7 Policies and Other Documents for Approval

### a) Pay Policy

The model pay policy from the Local Authority had just been received and it had not been possible in time available to incorporate the changes into the existing policies. A summary of the changes was however presented to Governors for information.

**AGREEMENT/ACTION - The Full Governing Body approved the principal changes to the pay policy as detailed and delegated final approval of the pay policy to the pay panel.** JD JB

## 8 Any Other Business

### a) Open Day

The school were congratulated on a successful open day and Governors were thanked for their attendance.

Meeting ended at 7.56pm

Next meeting - Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016

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