

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
28th January 2016
Eco Building
6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present: Julian Benkel, Oliver Cattermole (from 6.20pm), William Deighan, Judith Ford, Giovanni Franceschi, Jess Morris (Vice Chair)

Officers Present: Teresa Carter (Clerk)

In Attendance: Ed Owen

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1 Introduction	
a) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Maggie Barradell, Jon Dee and Richard Lumley. Jess Morris chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chair of Governors.	
b) Declaration of Interests None	
2 Last Meeting dated 1st October 2015	
a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 1 st October 2015. The Vice Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.	
b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda None	
3 Chair's Update	
The Chair advised Governors of progress against the Governing Body key priorities for the year.	
• Data for all year groups - This was improving and the last training session helped build on Governors understanding of key performance measures. There was still work to be done in confirming the measures and realistic targets for all school years.	
• Closing the gap - Improvement required and it was hoped that the literacy plan would positively impact in this area.	
• Governor succession and recruitment - The Chair of nominations committee reported on this later in the meeting.	
• School Improvement and Local Authority Intervention - A meeting with the Local Authority had been held following which the school was redesignated as one requiring medium intervention (previously high) though visits would continue to validate forecast data. The outcome from the meeting was positive and feedback was provided to the staff team.	
The Chair of Governors activities since the last meeting included the following:	
• Pay panel meeting on 23 rd October, reported under 6a) below.	
• Headteacher performance review completed with the Vice Chair and support from School Improvement Partner.	
4 Headteacher's Report	
The Headteacher presented his report to Governors and in addition to the successes listed within the report advised that a letter of congratulations had been received from the Assistant Director of Children's Services regards the student attendance data which was currently the best in the city. From the Headteacher's written report the following points were highlighted:	
• The green flag inspection had resulted in renewal of the good award, which was attributed	

to the student group who had worked so hard in this area.

- The school’s website had been relaunched successfully.
- A decision had been made not to continue with Varndean View as an online portal for due to a number of technical issues. The provider had agreed reimbursement. Once a replacement Network Manager was in post testing would be completed on the earlier system before rolling out to parents.
- Student progress data in years 9 to 11 had been provided using the new key measures of Progress 8, Attainment 8, Basics and Ebacc. Further work will be undertaken to refine this data and the data for years 7 and 8.

6.20pm - Oliver Cattermole arrived at the meeting.

- Governors asked why progress in core subjects was lower than other subjects and the advice was that this was probably due to compulsory nature of the core subjects for all students and that the others were ones that they had specifically chosen and enjoyed more.
- The year 10 data included a number of highlighted red areas, which the Headteacher advised was common across the city due to parameters for grade boundaries having not been finalised.
- All schools were starting to experience difficulties recruiting teachers particularly in core subjects and some shifts in recruiting behaviour had been seen with the rush to secure any good candidates. Varndean School would have two vacancies in maths department from Easter. The position for next year would be clearer after the 31st May.
- Internal and fixed term exclusions continued to rise in the Autumn 2015 term due to high expectation with uniform, lateness and behaviour in lessons.
- The gap between attendance of pupil premium and non pupil students was narrowing due to some focussed work. There were still a large number of students travelling some distance to school having to use more than one bus and it was thought that potential changes to catchment boundaries would have an adverse affect on future attendance and punctuality.
- Governors noted that no year 9 students had been sanctioned with external exclusions or after school detentions and asked why this was different to other year groups. In response the data was tracked back and it was noted that this particular cohort received a low level of sanctions in previous years as well indicating that they were a better behaved group.
- The Headteacher remarked that the current year 11 had been challenging in their mid school years but seemed to more settled and engaged in their learning.
- A simpler, dashboard style of reporting to Governors was being developed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors.

5 School Improvement Item - Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- Best Practice in Pedagogy, Assessment and Research
- Literacy

Ed Owen presented the deep dive reporting on the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. In advance of the meeting Governors had received a deep dive report on teaching and learning. From this report the following points were highlighted:

- Changes to assessment of the quality of teaching had changed the previous year and further developed in the current year. Class observations were not being judged with a resultant grade and instead being used as a tool to improve practice through quality feedback using an established teaching and learning team of six expert practitioners. These individuals had been chosen following an application process involving external assessment. The team had carried out over 100 observations on which feedback had been provided and these observations formed part of an overall assessment of the individual teacher’s profile.
- Currently 15% of teachers were classified outstanding, 67% as good and 18% requiring improvement. Individuals would not know their gradings but would be aware of the areas that where they could improve their practice and whether a coach had been assigned to support them.
- Governors asked about appraisal targets and were advised that each teacher had an objective relating to GCSE outcomes.

- The last Ofsted inspection report had noted that an area for improvement was the use of best practice across the school and this was something the school was actively doing with the teaching and learning group.
- Departmental time had been refocused with an expectation that the meetings would be entirely on one of four areas in rotation. These were teaching and learning with literacy focus, data analysis and narrowing gaps, work scrutiny and learning communities.
- Continued professional development opportunities were available around research and each teacher had a research related objective. Several had visited other schools and brought back good practice. Governors asked about the type of things brought back and were given an example of maths teaching assistants being used for marking to release teaching planning time and also the methods used at one school in getting students better prepared to work under exam conditions.
- Three teachers had been trained on the outstanding teacher programme bringing the total number trained to five. Each of the 5 would be used in delivering the outstanding teacher programme to their colleagues.
- The Middle leaders Development Programme had been introduced in July 2015 and thirty one staff had enrolled for their own professional development in areas such as closing the gap, implementing effective management structures and managing teacher appraisals.
- The Able and Gifted student programme was being delivered through the Brilliant Club. This programme aimed to widen university participation and individual student aspirations.
- The Challenge Partners review had been completed in October 2015 and a summary of the School's areas of strengths and for development as identified during the review were listed within the report to Governors.

Literacy was a big focus for the school with the school improvement plan identifying two literacy related targets. A detailed literacy plan had been drawn up with the aim of improving academic literacy across all subjects. A copy of this plan together with a literacy policy had been circulated to Governors. A number of activities from the plan were noted as follows:

- A decision had been taken to enter some students in the IGCSE, which had a 20% speaking, and listening element that was more suitable for a type of learner.
- Use of smart phones was being encouraged to record and practice students speaking in public and members of the Senior Leadership Team had recorded videos of them selves giving tips on speaking in public.
- Moderation of internal examinations was being moderated to ensure that marking was accurate using qualified examination markers.
- In year 10 a team were looking at the interventions in English and taking the time to sit with individual students to identify any learning obstacles with a view to putting in place interventions to overcome such obstacles.
- Initiatives such as “Drop everything and Read (DEAR)” and “Every Child a Reader (ECAR)” as previously advised to Governors were continuing. In response to a question from Governors it was advised that 32 children in total would be supported through ECAR during the current year.
- Planned inset training days throughout the year would have a literacy focus and be delivered by members of the English department.
- Action tutoring involved tutors coming in to school for eight weeks to tutor English on a one to one or one to two basis just before the English examination.

School

ACTION - On the suggestion of the Headteacher Governors agreed to a future agenda item on pupil premium with the pupil premium champion presenting on the various initiatives introduced and successes with closing the gaps.

- Year 11 students that had not completed their coursework were being withdrawn from lessons and supported. Twenty four students were involved.
- Non English teachers being trained to improve their teaching of literacy skills.

At this point in the meeting the school summarised the current raising attainment plans for year 11 students. Copies of the plans had been circulated to Governors for information. The subjects under plan were Math's, English, Science, Health and Social Care, Media, Geography, History, Spanish, PE and Music.

6 Reports and Recommendations

a) Pay Panel

The Full Governing Body noted the contents of the pay panel report and ratified the pay policy that had been circulated earlier in the week.

b) Nominations Committee

The Chair of the Nominations Committee provided an update on business conducted by the committee and plans for involving Governors in off meeting activities and for development of a governor succession plan.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the five proposals detailed in the Nominations Committee report to Governors.

c) Finance Report

- **Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

In the absence of the Finance Governor the Clerk presented the finance report to Governors and requested approval of the completed SFVS return prior to the Chair of Governors signature and submission to the Local Authority.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the SFVS return for 2016 as presented.

ACTION - SFVS return to be signed by Chair of Governors and submitted to the Local Authority before 31st March 2016.

- **Insurance**

The summary of insurance was noted and there was a question regards the arrangements for school trips insurance.

ACTION - Clerk to report back on arrangements for insurance on school trips.

- **Benchmarking**

It was noted that the school appeared to be average in the majority of the benchmarking tables presented.

d) School Trips

The Full Governing Body noted the contents of the school trips report and that the residential trip programme for 2016 had been approved under delegated authority.

7 Other Policies and Documents for Approval

a) Data Protection Policy

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Data Protection Policy as presented.

b) Sex and Relationships Education Policy

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Sex and Relationships Education Policy as presented.

8 Any Other Business

The Headteacher advised that the school were leading on a national conference in relation to Challenge Partners on 1st February 2016.

Meeting ended at 7.36pm

Date of next meeting - 17th March 2016