

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
2nd December 2014
Varndean School
6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present: Maggie Barradell, Oliver Cattermole (from 6.30pm), Jon Dee (Chair), Giovanni Franceschi (to 8.44pm), Frances Franklin (to 8.38pm), Richard Lumley, Robbie Mitchell, Jess Morris (to 8.22pm)

Officers Present: Teresa Carter (Clerk)

In Attendance: Jo Meloni, Mark Sorrell

Agenda item

Action

Note - Item 4 was taken at the end of the meeting. The minutes are recorded in original agenda order

1 Introduction

a) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Julian Benkel and William Deighan

b) Declaration of Interests - Receive Register

Governors received the completed annual declarations of pecuniary and business register and noted the contents.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body agreed to publication of the annual declarations register.

2 Last Meeting dated 2nd October 2014

a) Acceptance of Minutes

The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 2nd October 2014. The Chair signed them as confirmation of their accuracy.

b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda

None

3 Chair's Update

a) School Improvement Plan

Following the October meeting the final proposed school improvement plan was circulated to Governors with an opportunity for further comment. The school improvement priorities had driven the format and contents of the Governors annual agenda. A final copy of the agenda was provided in "table mat" format at the meeting. It was noted that additional meetings might be scheduled for specific school improvement priorities.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the 2014/15 school improvement plan and the agenda for the year.

b) Pay Panel Recommendations for Approval

The Chair had previously reported by email of the outcomes from the pay panel meeting and the decisions on pay awards for members of the leadership team. An amended pay policy with a summary sheet of the changes had been circulated.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the recommendations from the pay panel regards senior leadership pay awards and the pay policy for 2014/15 as presented.

c) Complaints Process and Summary

Governors involved with a complaint had met to review the process and consider whether any recommendations to the school or Full Governing Body were appropriate. Following this meeting some amendments to the complaints policy were proposed to clarify the process.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated complaints policy.

Governors received the annual report on complaints and compliments noting that whilst formal complaints had risen from 7 to 10 there were 43 recorded compliments compared with 28 the previous year. Those Governors who had attended the making the grade events spoke positively about the initiative and how it was very informative for parents. It was noted that further work was required if the school wished to engage better with the harder to reach parents.

d) Governors' Statement on Behaviour Principles

The Governors statement on behaviour principles had been drafted by extracting the key principles within the existing approved behaviour policy.

AGREEMENT/ACTION - The Full Governing Body approved the Governors statement on behaviour principles subject to a cross check by the Clerk for consistency with the behaviour policy.

TC

The Chair updated Governors on discussions with the Local Authority and advised that a school improvement strategy board had been set up to support and challenge the school on its journey to maintain its good category and towards our shared high aspiration of becoming outstanding. As part of the school's own improvement strategy there had been activity with the challenge partners programme and an Ofsted type inspection had been completed. In addition an HM inspector had been engaged to moderate the school's own self evaluation and to scrutinise progress data.

4 Headteacher's Report

Strategic Item - Achievement

a) Raising Attainment Plans (RAP)

Governors had received summaries of the raising attainment plans for the eleven areas identified as under achieving at the October meeting being computing, drama, English, geography, health and social care, history, Individual learning support, modern foreign languages, psychology and science.

It was agreed that due to the potential of maths impacting on the school's main performance measure of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C including English and maths that Governors should also receive progress data from this department.

Each of the individual plans included the reasons for a RAP, mainly due either poor results in 2014 or a downward trend in results. Tracking data and the current position based on November pre public examinations (mocks) had also been incorporated. There was a detailed discussion of each plan with a particular focus on the strategy to change the examining board to IGSE for English for some of the students. Governors questioned the appropriateness of making this change mid-year but following assurance that extensive research had been carried out (the iGCSE syllabus was considered more suitable for the students under consideration) and the expertise was in place to deliver to the IGCSE were supportive of the plans and encouraged the school to recruit more staff if needed to ensure that the strategy was successfully delivered. It was reiterated that English needed to deliver results this year.

Following the detailed questioning and explanations of each individual RAP an overview of the interventions was summarised as use of setting where appropriate, focus on pupil

premium students twelve at a time and structured conversations with students regards their progress.

b) Closing the Gap Strategy

Mark Sorrell presented the school's closing the gap strategy with a tabled paper. Several tables of data were incorporated within the strategy paper to highlight GCSE achievement trends over ten years, use of professional predictions, and the actual and estimated gaps in GCSE achievement for the pupil premium student group and for progress in English and science.

There were several questions from Governors for clarification of the data where there appeared to be either lack of progress or an escalation in estimated final positions which the leadership team answered.

Governors were disappointed that the current version of the strategy predicted an increase in the attainment gap by 1% during the current year despite the proposed strategy and actions. The leadership team pointed out a number of issues with the current year 11 cohort including high mobility, previous size of gap, lower prior attainment and past quality of teaching. The current year 10 would benefit from a number of strategies that had been put in place and there was an estimated significant narrowing the gap in 2016. The school's ambition was that all ability children would get a quality of provision within class reducing the need for add on interventions.

ACTION- The Chair advised that the closing the gap strategy was a work in progress that would be picked up again and a further report provided for the next meeting. Further work would also be undertaken on the RAPs.

JD/WD

It was noted that whilst previous year professional predictions were generally accurate for the majority of subjects overall they were not sufficiently accurate in English due to an over assessment and insufficient monitoring of these assessments. Governors were advised that changes in English curriculum had not been sufficiently incorporated within teaching. This was being addressed by increased challenge of professional predictions by SLT and the HMI supporting the school.

Governors wished to understand more fully, how the predicted and reported progress data was being generated and challenged by SLT.

ACTION - Frances Franklin to meet with the HMI supporting the school (with the agreement of the Headteacher) to examine the tracking system being used at the school to assist with interpretation of presented data.

FF

5 Reports and Recommendations from Governors

a) Equalities Report

Governors were reminded that at an earlier meeting Governors had considered the school's equalities policy and that a Governor had agreed to work with the school regards some updating of the policy. The Clerk and one Governor had attended the first meeting of a Local Authority Governor equality focus group and whilst one Governor would continue to engage with the group it was felt that the Varndean were ahead of some of the initiatives that were introduced at the focus group meeting, particularly in relation to recruitment of staff and governors.

6.30pm - Oliver Cattermole arrived at the meeting.

b) Safeguarding Audit

Governors noted the contents of a safeguarding report following a meeting on 17th October to review the school's safeguarding audit. Following some questioning the visiting Governor had been satisfied with the evidence presented to support the audit findings and

recommended governing body sign off. Governors asked about the statutory requirements for safe guarding training and whilst noting that many Governors had completed training there had been a number of new members so some updating might be required.

ACTION - Clerk to research what safeguarding training was available and recommended for Governors to complete. TC

c) School Trips

Governors received a verbal report on the Governor review of proposed residential and higher risk school trips. Confirmation was received that the risk assessment process, insurance and potential liabilities were reviewed and that no decisions were required by the Governing Body as the programme of trips was in line with the previous years.

d) Finance Report

Governors noted the contents of a finance report and a reduction in the reserves in line with the strategy agreed with the Local Authority.

e) Nominations Committee

- **Terms of Reference**

The Full Governing Body reviewed the Nominations Committee terms of reference and noted the committee’s duties around a balance of membership, appropriate skills to suit needs and succession planning.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the Nominations Committee terms of reference with two minor amendments (removal of “sub” before committee)

The Chair reminded Governors that whilst individual Governors had undertaken evaluation visits, all Governors had joint responsibility for the areas reviewed and that the Governing Body annual agenda documented the tasks and reporting that was required.

6 Other Policies and Documents for Approval

a) Standing Orders & Code of Practice

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the standing orders and code of practice documents as presented.

b) Supporting Students with Medical Needs

AGREEMENT/ACTION - The Full Governing Body approved the supporting students with medical needs policy as presented and requested a monitoring report of this policy at the Full Governing Body meeting where behaviour and safety would be the focus. WD/AE

c) Data Protection Policy

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the data protection policy as presented.

d) Whistleblowing Policy

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the whistleblowing policy as presented.

8 Any Other Business

a) School Transport

Summary data as requested was received to identify the post codes of students categorised as persistently absent and those not making expected progress in English and maths. Governors concluded that there appeared to be no clear connection of high absence or lack of performance to any particular postcode and that transport issues did not appear to impact on student outcomes. There was a request for further information regarding the postcode areas, which the enquiring Governor would follow up with the school lead on transport issues.

b) Governor Services Partnership (GSP)

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



One Governor had attended the most recent GSP meeting and reported that the main topic of discussion was the changing demographic in Brighton & Hove and the City's underperformance within the black and minority ethnicity (BME) group of children and the benefits of having positive role models for this group.

c) **Governors Conference**

Governors were reminded that the Governors conference was coming up in January and all Governors were encouraged to attend.

Meeting ended at 8.59pm
Date of next meeting 29th January 2015

Actions arising from the Full Governing Body meeting on 2nd December 2014

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

Actions Agreed	By Who	By When
The Chair advised that the closing the gap strategy was a work in progress that would be picked up again and a further report provided for the next meeting. Further work would also be undertaken on the RAPs.	JD	Next meeting
The Full Governing Body approved the Governors statement on behaviour principles subject to a cross check for consistency with the behaviour policy	TC	Next meeting
Clerk to research what safeguarding training was available and recommended for Governors to complete.	TC	Next meeting
The Full Governing Body approved the supporting students with medical needs policy as presented and requested a monitoring report of this policy at the Full Governing Body meeting where behaviour and safety would be the focus.	WD/AE	26 th March 2015
Frances Franklin to meet with the HMI supporting the school (with the agreement of the Headteacher) to examine the tracking system being used at the school to assist with interpretation of presented data.	FF	Next meeting