

**Meeting of Full Governing Body
9th June 2016
Eco Building
6pm**

MINUTES

Governors Present: Maggie Barradell, Julian Benkel, Oliver Cattermole, Jon Dee (Chair), William Deighan, Judith Ford, Alex Marsh, Rob Reed

Officers Present: Teresa Carter (Clerk)

In Attendance: Simon Davies, Hilary Goldsmith, Jo Meloni, Mark Sorrell, Katie Wood

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1 Introduction	
a) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Serena Castiglione, Giovanni Franceschi, Richard Lumley and Jess Morris. Alex Marsh was welcomed to his first meeting and his appointment as Co-opted Governor was confirmed later in the meeting under agenda item 3.	
b) Declaration of Interests None	
2 Last Meeting dated 17th March 2016	
a) Acceptance of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved five pages of minutes from the meeting held on 17 th March 2016. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.	
b) Matters Arising not Included Elsewhere on Agenda	
• Catchment Areas - The council's engagement exercise had been completed and findings presented to council through the Children, Young People & Skills Committee who had tasked the established working group to work up best fit proposals to go to committee on 19 th September 2016. The Headteacher commented that it was important for Governors to engage once the formal consultation period commenced in the autumn term.	

ACTION - Consider a change to the proposed date of the first Full Governing Body meeting of 2016/17 to after the council committee meeting to enable a discussion on the proposed catchment and admissions arrangements.

JD

- School System - Rob Reed tabled a paper that provided useful summary information of the recent developments nationally as part of the Government's drive for all secondary and primary schools to be academies. Within the paper there was a description of the local landscape and Governors noted that currently Brighton and Hove included five education providers and that this was likely to increase with the planned opening of a new secondary school sponsored by University of Brighton and other local developments. In summary Governors noted the diversity of providers and complexity of the local school system already in existence.

6.16pm - Oliver Cattermole arrived at the meeting.

- School Uniform - The Clerk reported that following an initial comparison of uniform costs with local schools and national average costs it did not appear that individual items of Varndean's uniform were any more expensive than similar items supplied by other schools.

ACTION - The Headteacher advised that it was worth looking for alternative school uniform suppliers that could provide items at lower cost whilst meeting the ethical requirements previously set by the Governing Body.

HG

- Succession Planning - The wider group of Governors were being involved with several presenting at the meeting on work undertaken on behalf of the Governing Body.

3 Chair's Update to include

- Confirm Appointment of Co-opted Governors - AM & SC

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body confirmed Alex Marsh's appointment as a Co-opted Governor (previously agreed by email).

- **Exclusions and Grievance**

The Chair reported that a Governors Disciplinary Committee had been required to consider two permanent exclusion decisions and that on both occasions the Committee had upheld the Headteacher's decision. He further reported that a grievance had been raised which may require panels of governors to be formed during the later stages of the process.

- **Catchment Areas**

Covered previously under matters arising.

4 Headteacher's Report

Governors received a tabled student progress data dashboard with a supporting verbal explanation of its components.

- The data provided a snap shot of current academic performance for an entire year group (year 11) using the old and new national measures.
- In addition the new progress measures had been broken down into groups based on prior attainment, pupil premium eligibility, special educational needs, ethnicity and gender.
- Colour coding had been used to identify underperforming areas and Governors asked whether the red and amber areas for pupil premium students indicated that pupil premium income was not being spent effectively. In response it was advised that the gap between outcomes for non pupil premium and pupil premium students was narrowing demonstrating that educational interventions had been effective though there was still work to do to close the gap sufficiently.
- There was a query from a Governor about the numbers of students taking science as they did not correlate with the cohort size and the advise was that the new measures only reflected those students taking two sciences and that in line with other schools there were some students where is had been decided that they would only be entered for one science.
- Governors agreed that the data dashboard when provided for each year group would give sufficient information to enable a good understanding of each cohorts' progress and to identify any underperforming groups.
- There was comment that the data did not provide a trajectory position for each cohort from entry though it was recognised that the addition of this data would make the reporting unwieldy for Governors and that they were reliant on the leadership team to identify any detailed trends and areas where teachers were underperforming.

The Headteacher continued with presenting his full report to Governors in the agreed format highlighting some key points as follows:

- Successes included a further 15 year 9 students completing the Brilliant Club, 10 students graduating from the University of Sussex's Making Choices programme and two students reaching the finals of a national cookery competition.
- Getting an effective parent portal up and running had been a challenge due to the inadequacies of the providers' product. A refund had been received and a new version of the parent portal was being tested in advance of release.
- Year 11 students were currently in the middle of exams and had worked hard in preparation for them.

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- The estimate was that 55.64% of students would achieve 5 GCSE A*-C grades including English and maths in 2016 examinations. This prediction was slightly down on last year's outcomes but reflected a cohort that had lower attainment on entry.
- The prediction for progress 8 was looking good at 0.3 but as this calculation could only be based on last year's national average position it was not possible to get an accurate prediction and the final figure would not be known until December 2016 when national data for 2016 was released. Nonetheless Governors were pleased that the prediction indicated improving progress.
- Math's department were predicting that 61% of year 11 students would achieve a grade C or above in their 2016 GCSE examinations. This was thought to be conservative, as the C/D borderline students had been placed in the D area for predictions. There was a question on the number of students predicted as not coming away with both English and Maths and the response that this number was likely to be around 50 students.
- The predictions for Ebacc were slightly lower due to a reduction in qualifying students and a slightly weaker cohort than in 2015.

School Improvement Item - Leadership and Management

Overall strategic target - Develop a culture which enables students and staff to excel through an uncompromising focus on consistently improving outcomes

Jo Meloni presented the deep dive report on the leadership and management section of the school improvement plan highlighting the actions taken in each strategic target area and the impact on school improvement.

Communication

- Website launched in new modern format. Current hit rate 10,000 per week (8,000 in 2014/15).

Curriculum

- Focus on new specifications and year 9 students commencing GCSEs in summer term.
- Curriculum information on website revisited, updated and expanded to provide comprehensive information on each subject.
- Alternative provisions looked at in students' earlier years.
- First year of specialist curriculum with opportunities for year 7 students to chose their own learning.
- Trialled year 7 nurture group to help with English by taking them out of modern foreign languages (MFL) lessons, some impact but not sufficient to warrant the delay in introducing MFL.

Appraisal and Continuing professional development (CPD)

- Research at the heart of CPD developing an outwardly looking workforce.
- CPD matched to aspirational targets.
- INSET day with staff attending a different school with a reputation for being good in an area linked to the individual's development area.
- Variety of opportunities for staff to obtain external qualifications.

5 Reports and Recommendations

a) Pupil Premium Report

Katie Wood gave a presentation to Governors on pupil premium funding including the amount allocated per student, how it was being spent and what impact it was having on narrowing the attainment and progress gaps between pupil premium and non pupil premium students.

- Governors were advised that there were three main strands to pupil premium being high quality first teaching, knowing the students and being able to demonstrate impact of interventions.
- The range of interventions had been listed for Governors along with the cost of providing and it was noted that packages of student support were personalised to suit the individual and focused on removing barriers to learning such as absence from school and lack of access to IT at home.

7.32pm - Julian Benkel left the meeting.

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- The issue of chromebooks to year 7 pupil premium students was given as an example of one intervention that had proved successful in giving IT access as well as providing an opportunity to engage with more hard to reach families.
- Governors queried why chromebooks had been issued following feedback from a student focus group as it would have been obvious that if given the choice children would have asked for additional technical gadgets. In response the advice was that the questioning of students had been subtler than asking them what they wanted and more to do with their learning experiences.
- An analysis of impact was included within the presentation and Governors emphasised the need for clarity of understanding on how the interventions were actually impacting positively on learning. The significant improvement in attendance (5%) was given as an example of clear impact resulting from the pastoral interventions.
- The future challenge of a changing demographic at the school was seen as a particular issue regards closing the gap with increasing numbers of non pupil premium with high prior attainment coming to the school.

b) Behaviour for Learning Policy

Governors were pleased to note that the School had updated the behaviour policy to provide a simplified and consistent system for managing behaviour with clear consequences for students following poor behaviour choices by the introduction of a behaviour index.

There was a question regards the distinction between aggressive/violent behaviour to staff and to students and whilst both were considered serious it was agreed that action against staff showed was more of a breach of boundaries as it was an attack against authority and more likely be unprovoked. Each case would be dealt with separately with the appropriate tariff applied.

JM

A further question was around communication to parents and it was advised that the home school agreement provided the information initially and that the use of behaviour contracts for repeated poor reinforced the expectations.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated School Behaviour Policy as presented.

c) Vulnerable Students - Summary Report

The contents of the vulnerable student summary report were noted. No confidential case details would be discussed but the Chair suggested that a Governor should have the responsibility of working through some individual case studies with the school as a means of monitoring the provision for vulnerable students. This had been previously agreed with the Headteacher.

ACTION - Governor with safeguarding responsibility to meet with school leads to examine a selection of vulnerable student case studies

d) Health and Safety Report

Oliver Cattermole presented his report to Governors following a health and safety monitoring visit. Numbers of minor incidents reduced on previous year and reportable incidents in line with previous year.

e) PFI Contract Annual Report - Update

Governors received an update report on the PFI contract and were pleased to note the improvement in dealing with smaller premises issues effectively. As in previous year the list of planned works for summer had been received late and the council had made a decision to issue a warning notice to the service provider on this occasion.

f) Finance Report

Alex Marsh had visited the Director of Finance and Operations to obtain an oversight of the School's finance and presented his report to Governors with a recommendation to sign off

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the outturn budget position and approve both the proposed budget for 2016/17 and the updated scheme of delegation.

The assumption at the beginning of 2015/16 had been that all reserves would have been utilised by the end of the year and the School would need to be looking for significant cost savings. However whilst the school had run with an in year budget deficit there were sufficient remaining reserves to carry forward and to allow a detailed review of potential cost savings to be undertaken and its findings to begin to be implemented in a measured way over the course of the coming financial year. It was also noted that there were only minor amendments to be made to the scheme of delegation.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the proposed budget for 2016/17 as presented.

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body approved the updated scheme of delegation.

g) Stakeholder Surveys and Engagement

Judith Ford on behalf of the Governing Body had reviewed the School's stakeholder engagement activities and was able to report the outcomes from student parent and staff surveys and provide feedback from engagement activities with each of the stakeholder groups. There was a discussion about how Governors could more effectively communicate directly with staff members, as there was a number of "don't know" responses to the question on the staff survey about how effective a job the Governors do. An update after Governing Body meetings and an opportunity to meet before school events were suggested.

h) Equality Information and Objectives Statement for Publication

Maggie Barradell confirmed that she had visited the school before half term to meet with the School equalities lead and that the meeting had been both thorough and informative. The equalities action plan had been reviewed and an updated version would be published on the website for the start of the new academic year alongside updated equality objectives.

8.26pm - Oliver Cattermole left the meeting

i) Website Compliance - Report from Clerk

The Clerk reported that a website compliance check had been completed with one minor omission noted being the names of staff that would deal with telephone enquiries.

j) Nominations Committee

- Terms of Reference - Review

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved the Nominations Committee's terms of reference without amendment.

Note - Jon Dee left the meeting for the next item

- Terms of Office Expiring and Reappointments of JD & JB

AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Body agreed to reappoint Jon Dee and Julian Benkel as Co-opted Governors for a further term of four years on expiry of their current terms of office.

7 Any Other Business

a) Meeting Dates 2016/17

Proposed dates for four core business meetings for 2016/17 were circulated. These would be finalised before the end of summer term.

Meeting ended at 8.33pm