

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
 Wednesday 7 December 2016, 6.30pm

Present: Geoff Atkinson (Chair), Mark Hatto, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), William Knight, John Lejeune, Tim Marcus, Nicola Newman, Steve Parker, Amanda Rowley, Al Stephens, Carl Styants, Isobel Tooley, Emily Wyer

In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher), Ian Rodd (Ward Goodman, Auditor) for item 3.10

Item		Action	Lead	Date
FGB 3.1	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from Nick Brady, James Peacock, Catherine Starmer-Howes and Nicky Taylor.</p>			
FGB 3.2	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no new declarations of interest or conflict of interest with any agenda item.</p>			
FGB 3.3	<p>Chair's Action The chair reported that he had taken chair's action to approve a recommendation from the Governors' Student Admission Panel to admit a student into Year 8. The panel had convened on 22 November 2016 to consider this case as the year group was above its published admission number (PAN). In coming to its recommendation, the panel had weighed up the advantage to the student of being admitted against the potential disadvantage to the school of being above PAN in that year group. The chair outlined the background to the case and explained that waiting to bring the recommendation to the full board for approval would have resulted in a detrimental delay to the student concerned.</p> <p>The board was asked to consider delegating authority to the Student Admission Panel to make decisions, rather than recommendations, in all individual cases, it being noted that it would likely always be the case that a delay would be detrimental to the pupil concerned. The board sought confirmation of the panel's membership and were informed that it comprised two governors appointed by the chair of governors, and one member of the senior leadership team, appointed by the headteacher. The membership could therefore change on each occasion the panel was convened. The panel had a responsibility, on behalf of the full board of governors, to consider in-year transfers where the year group concerned was above PAN and also to consider admissions in the normal admission round if the school was oversubscribed. In the latter case, the panel would be required to strictly apply the admission criteria in the order listed in the Admission Policy and decide on any tie-break situations.</p> <p>AGREED to delegate authority to the Student Admission Panel to make decisions rather than recommendations in individual student cases.</p>	Update SoD	Clerk	Dec '16

	<p>It was also noted that the Student Admission Panel has a responsibility to consider the Admissions Policy and requirements for consultation on an annual basis, and also reviews the PAN, bringing any recommendations forward to the full governing body.</p> <p>AGREED that a paragraph outlining the chair’s power to act on behalf on the board be included in the Scheme of Delegation. This would state that the chair would have delegated power to make decisions on any matter where delay is likely to be seriously detrimental to the school, a pupil or prospective pupil, a pupil’s carer(s) and/or family, a person who works at the school, public welfare, the prevention or detection of crime or the capture or prosecution of offenders. It would also state that these powers extend to the vice-chair of governors in the absence of the chair and that any decisions taken must be reported back to the governing body by no later than their next meeting.</p>	Update SoD	Clerk	Dec ‘16
FGB 3.4	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed.</p>			
FGB 3.5	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>FGB 2.4.2 Local Academisation – Options</u> Following the previous meeting it had been agreed in a discussion of the chair of governors, committee chairs and headteacher that a paper on the options for formal partnerships was no longer required for this meeting. Recent government decisions meant that there was no longer a requirement for all schools to become academies and TH reported that there appeared to be no urgency among local schools to join together in multi-academy trusts. The Swanage School would continue to build informal relationships with local primary schools.</p> <p><u>FGB 2.5 Curriculum Decisions</u> The board had received a paper summarising various paragraphs from the Department for Education (DfE) Governance Handbook, the school’s Funding Agreement and the Articles of Association in respect of which body is responsible for setting the principles of the curriculum. These showed that responsibility rests with the Academy Trust (Education Swanage), but the governing body has the power to exercise this responsibility, taking advice of the Principal (headteacher). It was noted that the governing body must also be mindful of its legal obligations under the Companies Act and Charities Act to apply due diligence and a duty of care to seek the advice of experts (in the case of curriculum decisions this would mean education professionals such as the senior leadership team) and to give that advice appropriate weight as part of the decision making process. It was further noted that in making any decisions on the curriculum the governing body would have to be mindful of the commitments made to the DfE in the original vision for the school.</p>			
FGB 3.6	<p>Headteacher’s Report Referring to his written report, TH briefed governors on:</p> <p><u>Staff leavers:</u> Since the Staffing Committee met on 9 November 2016, one member of staff had resigned and the reasons for this were briefly outlined. Addressing concerns over perceived high staff turnover, TH noted that a number</p>			

	<p>of factors influence these perceptions. The small, human-scale nature of the school means that a member of staff leaving has a big impact, including being noticed by pupils. Furthermore, the school has high standards and holds staff to account for their performance, therefore underperforming staff are not “carried” as they might be in a larger school. Of the staff who had left, some had been underperforming, others had gone on to other things in education or in their personal lives.</p> <p><u>Staff appointments:</u> Teaching posts in art and philosophy & religious education (maternity cover) and a design & technology technician had been appointed. The French post had been re-advertised and TH hoped to appoint on a part-time basis in January 2017, with an increase in existing staff hours making up the difference. A long term supply teacher was in place for humanities.</p> <p><u>Student roll:</u> There had been two leavers in Year 11 since the start of September, one to be home-schooled and one a managed move to a Learning Centre. In total, there had been 11 joiners in the same period. In response to a question on why there was a peak in the number on roll in Year 8, it was noted that there had been a peak in primary school numbers that year. A dip had occurred for the current Year 7 but it was hoped to reverse this for the next academic year with improvements to marketing.</p> <p><u>Exclusions:</u> TH reported on two permanent exclusions that had occurred since the circulation of his written report. The chair of governors had been informed and the local authority exclusions officer was involved. The cases had been referred to the Fair Access Panel to make new schooling arrangements for the pupils concerned.</p> <p><u>School development plan:</u> (see item 3.8 below)</p> <p><u>Town Council meeting:</u> TH and JM had been well received at a recent public meeting at which they had outlined the success of the school in the context of the first set of GCSE results, and expressed thanks to the Town Council for their support in establishing the school.</p>			
FGB 3.7	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The chair briefed the board on the recent meeting of the steering group convened to take forward the development of a strategic plan, following the brain-storming session at the previous meeting of the full board. This group had comprised the chair, vice-chair, committee chairs and headteacher. From the suggestions made by governors at the previous meeting, four broad categories had been identified for the strategic aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Character of students and the school - Beacon of good practice in teaching and leadership (including governance) - Good results in an appropriate range of GCSEs - Outward looking <p>For each, the key vision and objectives had been identified, as presented in the paper circulated to the board. TH would discuss the outline plan with his leadership team and staff during the inset days in January, after which the steering group would reconvene to consider measures and success criteria.</p>	Discuss with staff. Reconvene group.	TH Clerk	Jan '17 Jan '17

<p>FGB 3.8</p>	<p>School Development Plan 2016-17 Governors had received the School Development Plan (SDP) for 2016-17 from the headteacher. As previously, this summarised the key objectives for the year under four headings: Teaching & Learning, Behaviour, Leadership and Operational Excellence.</p> <p>It was agreed that the final item under Operational Excellence to “Improve the quality of communication and compliance within the school” would be actioned by the SLT and monitored by the full governing body.</p> <p>APPROVED the School Development Plan for 2016-17.</p>			
<p>FGB 3.9</p>	<p>Teaching School Status Governors had received a written report from the headteacher which summarised a meeting he and the deputy head (JM) had had with Graham Browne (GB), a former headteacher and representative of the National College for Teaching & Leadership for advising schools on becoming teaching schools. TH and JM had considered the evidence they would be able to show in an application to become a teaching school. TH reported that GB had been impressed with the school and felt that much of what the school is doing would stand the school in good stead with an application for teaching school status, particularly in relation to its Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme and the links being fostered with other schools. JM noted that in their pursuit of excellence in teaching and through the practices already employed, many of the criteria for teaching school status were being fulfilled. These practices and partnerships would continue to be pursued regardless of whether or not the decision was made to apply for teaching school status, as they benefitted the school.</p> <p>TH noted that the criteria for becoming a teaching school have recently changed such that a school rated “Good” by Ofsted can now apply. This might mean that an increasing number of schools would now apply. TH reported that he, JM and GB were of the view that applying in the current round was too soon for The Swanage School.</p> <p>Governors discussed with TH the financial implications of becoming a teaching school, it being noted that the initial funding received would be unlikely to be sufficient to cover the costs involved in the longer term. These costs would include the requirement for additional staff to cover the teaching hours of those involved in the provision of the ITT programme and support for schools, for example. Other risks of providing ITT and school-to-school support were also discussed. These included the potential for the turnover of ITT students leading to a perception of continually changing “staff” faces and a risk of “taking the eye off the ball” at the school given the need to support other schools. The increased pressure for staff, both those directly involved and those required to back-fill teaching, potentially resulting in lower morale, was also raised. TH agreed that there would be a need to keep the ITT programme and support for other schools at an appropriate level.</p> <p>The board also noted that there would be many benefits of becoming a teaching school. These included additional income in the form of professional fees earned and additional pupil numbers in the long run as the school gained an increasing reputation for excellence in teaching. Recruitment of excellent staff would likely become easier as teaching</p>			

	<p>schools tended to attract the best newly qualified and experienced teachers. Strategically, the prospect of a teaching school alliance was a more attractive proposition for many governors than joining a multi-academy trust.</p> <p>In summary, TH informed the board that the SLT had concluded that making an application for teaching school status would not be the right thing for the school to do at the present time, but that they would continue to gather information with a view to an application in the future if decided appropriate. TH and JM planned to meet with the headteachers of two teaching schools in Taunton on 9 December 2016 to gain further insight into the potential stresses and gains of teaching school status and would be able to report on this at the next meeting.</p>	Update	TH	Feb '17
FGB 3.10	<p>Financial Statement & External Auditors' Report 2015-16 [Clerk's note: Ian Rodd of Ward Goodman, Auditors, was present for this item which was therefore taken first at the meeting]</p> <p>1. <u>External Auditors' Report</u> The external auditor, Ian Rodd, recorded thanks to Katy Kerr and her team for their excellence in preparing the accounts and facilitating the audit. The auditor's "management letter" was circulated and it was noted that the audit had raised nothing material or substantive and had found that all controls were operating as expected. The management letter contained only one action relating to the updating of governor records at Companies House and on the website and it was confirmed that this had been discussed by the Finance & Premises Committee.</p> <p>2. <u>Approval of the Annual Financial Statement</u> WK reported to the board that the Finance & Premises Committee had twice looked at the accounts (Financial Statement). This included receiving a briefing from the auditors at their meeting on 23 November 2016 and a consideration of the auditor's final amendments during a meeting which had taken place immediately prior to the present meeting of the full board. The Committee recommended approval of the Financial Statement.</p> <p>APPROVED the Financial Statement for 2015-16.</p> <p>3. <u>Appointment of Auditors for 2017/18</u> WK reported that the Finance & Premises Committee had agreed that it would be good practice and in line with financial controls to undertake a tendering process for the audit function, now that the school had been operational for three years. This would be in respect of the audit for the 2017/18 financial year. Ward Goodman had already been re-appointed by the Academy Trust for 2016/17.</p>	Finalise and submit	KK	Dec '16
FGB 3.11	<p>Budget 2016/17 WK briefed governors on the revised budget, noting that exact pupil numbers for the new intake are not known when the budget is created and that adjustments had been made to the income line now that numbers are known. Some expenditure lines, where budgeted on a 'per-pupil' basis, had also been updated. The outturn from 2015/16 was better than expected which improved the opening cash position for 2016/17. The overall effect on the budget for 2016/17 was</p>			

	<p>detailed in the written report and resulted in a predicted deficit of -49k compared to the previous budgeted deficit of -£78k.</p> <p>In responding to a question from a governor on whether it was usual for a school to run a deficit, WK explained that the school had run with a surplus in the last three years, having benefitted from a start-up grant which helped cover diseconomies of scale. It had always been expected that the fourth and fifth years of operation would be difficult financially (and in deficit) as the school would be running at below capacity in terms of student numbers (as the earlier, small cohorts continued their progress through the school), but without the benefit of the start-up funding. Prudence in managing the budget and saving in the early years had taken account of this. He noted that the deficit should level out in future, although the need to increase the number of students on roll for new cohorts was important for this to be achieved. Current uncertainties over government funding made accurate forecasting difficult.</p> <p>APPROVED the revised budget for 2016/17.</p>	Notify KK	Clerk	Dec '16
FGB 3.12	<p>Reports from Link Governors</p> <p>1. <u>Safeguarding</u> Governors had received “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (DfE), “Briefing for Dorset Schools: Protecting Children from Grooming...” (Dorset County Council), “Dorset Safeguarding Standards for Schools and Colleges” (Dorset Safeguarding Children Board), “The Nominated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection: Guidance for School Governors” (Dorset County Council) and “Serious Case Review: Southbank International School” (Safeguarding Children Board of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster).</p> <p>AS reminded governors of their responsibility to be aware of, and understand, the guidance provided for school governors in relation to safeguarding, in particular directing them to the summary provided in “Keeping Children Safe in Education”. She would be happy to answer any questions that governors had.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that JM is the designated teacher for looked after children in addition to being the safeguarding lead. JM informed governors that she meets weekly with Mandy Sands (MS), the safeguarding & welfare officer, on each of these areas. The day-to-day work is now undertaken by MS. The SEN Co-ordinator is involved with the pupils when there are special educational needs in addition to safeguarding issues.</p> <p>2. <u>Parent Link</u> JL had nothing particular to report at this meeting, save to note that feedback he was receiving from parents was very positive.</p>			
FGB 3.13	<p>Committee & Panel Reports The board had received minutes of the following meetings:</p>			

<p>1. <u>Staffing Committee, 9 November 2016</u> CS noted that the committee had discussed the recruitment of a French teacher in particular and recruitment processes in general, in light of experience gained from successful and less successful appointments. JM had given a presentation on the quality assurance process for teaching (learning walks and lesson observations) and the CPD programme for staff, with which the committee was very impressed.</p> <p>2. <u>Finance & Premises Committee, 23 November and 7 December 2016</u> WK noted that these meetings had largely been devoted to the scrutiny of the Annual Financial Statement and feedback from the external auditors. The committee had also reviewed compliance with requirements outlined in letters from Peter Lauener, the Chief Executive of the Education Funding Agency, and Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, as well as looking at changes to the requirements laid out in the Academies Financial Handbook.</p> <p>The board considered the question raised in Lord Nash’s letter of whether the Principal (headteacher) should be a member of the board, now that this was not required, and AGREED that the headteacher should remain on the board and have voting rights.</p> <p>The maintenance schedule had also been considered, it being noted that the costs of maintenance are predicted to rise sharply from the seventh year in the school building and that funds must be put aside to cover these.</p> <p>The board received a briefing from SP (Responsible Officer) on the risk of financial crimes and fraudulent activities.</p> <p>3. <u>Admission Panel Meeting, 22 November 2016</u> WK reported to the board that the Admissions Panel had reviewed the Admissions Policy and propose no substantive change for 2018/19 that would require consultation. It was noted that consultation will be required during the next academic year for admissions 2019/2020 given the requirement to consult every seven years regardless of whether there are changes.</p> <p>WK noted that an increase to the PAN did not require consultation. The Admissions Panel would meet again to discuss PAN and bring forward a recommendation to the next meeting of the governing body, at which time the Admissions Policy for 2018/19 would require approval.</p> <p>4. <u>Student Committee, 30 November 2016</u> IT highlighted that the committee had received presentations from students on student leadership and The Swanage School Challenge, which had been launched, and from the curriculum area leader for English, languages, drama and music. There had been discussions on mental health policy and the need to promote positive mental health, e-safety and a review of the Behaviour & Exclusions Policy. A new “behaviour ladder” had been introduced which summarised the consequences of various behaviours. The review of the process for exclusions had led to the school signing up to a service agreement with the Legal, Democratic & Strategy Services Department of the</p>	<p>Convene</p>	<p>Clerk</p>	<p>Jan ‘17</p>
--	----------------	--------------	----------------

	Borough of Poole for clerking and finding panel members for independent reviews. It was noted that the same department provides this service for admission appeals that reach the independent review stage.			
FGB 3.14	<p>Scheme of Delegation – Annual Review</p> <p>The clerk outlined the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a remit for the new Community & Engagement Committee - minor updates to the wording of the remit for the Student Committee and the Finance & Premises Committee - a change in name of the Student Exclusion Appeals Panel, to Student Exclusion Review Panel - added clarifications to the remit of the Student Admission Panel and Student Exclusion Review Panel <p>APPROVED the updates to the Scheme of Delegation.</p>	Update SoD	Clerk	'Dec 16
FGB 3.15	<p>School Improvement Partner & Headteacher’s Appraisal</p> <p>The chair and headteacher reported that Kay Taylor had been appointed as the new School Improvement Partner. Mrs Taylor had a wealth of experience including as a headteacher, the CEO of a multi-academy trust and Ofsted inspector, and TH was confident she would be extremely helpful to the school.</p> <p>[There is a confidential minute for this item]</p>			
FGB 3.16	<p>Governor Monitoring, Development & Training</p> <p>1. <u>Monitoring Visits or Activities Undertaken</u> Governors reported on their visits and meetings at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WK had attended a CPD session and had been impressed with the enthusiasm and participation of teachers. - IT had met with JM to discuss the student survey and future plans. - EW had met with the safeguarding & welfare officer to discuss mental health. - AS and NB had met with the safeguarding & welfare officer to discuss e-safety and other aspects of safeguarding - CSH had met with the premises manager to conduct a health & safety inspection - JL had attended the parents’ evening. - SP had met with KK in relation to completing the CC8 Charities Checklist <p>2. <u>Feedback on Training Courses</u> IT, AR, MH and the clerk had attended a training course on exclusions, run by the exclusions officer for Dorset County Council. This had been informative, interesting and useful.</p> <p>3. <u>Training Needs</u> The clerk noted that she was aware of various training needs, including a request from EW for an exploration of training options in relation to the role of the mental health governor, and would devote some time to looking at training options as soon as possible.</p>			

FGB 3.17	<p>Any Other Business There was none.</p>			
FGB 3.18	<p>Confidentiality The item on the headteacher's appraisal (FGB 3.15) was deemed confidential.</p>			
FGB 3.19	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>1. <u>Data Forms</u> The clerk thanked governors for completing new data forms where this had been asked of them. This was to facilitate getting the Department for Education database (Edubase) fully up-to-date with governor details and to ensure a full set of governor records was on file at the school.</p> <p>2. <u>Next Meeting Dates:</u> Community & Engagement Committee: 18 January 2017 Finance & Premises Committee: 25 January 2017 Student Committee: 1 February 2017 Full Governing Body: 8 February 2017</p>			
	<p>The meeting closed at 8.50pm</p>			