

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
Held on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 5.30pm

Present (via remote access): Tim Marcus (Chair), Peter Collins, Alex Duke, William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Vanessa Millman, Nicola Newman, Helen O'Connor, Amanda Rowley, Jessica Starmer, Al Stephens, Carl Styants, Nicky Taylor, Isobel Tooley

In attendance (via remote access): Anna Carvisiglia (Business Manager), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher)

Item	Action	Lead	By
FGB 11.1			
FGB 11.2			
FGB 11.3			
FGB 11.4			

	<p><u>FGB 9.16 Senior Leadership Team: Project Roles</u> Project briefs for two roles had been circulated and would be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p><u>FGB 10.5 Deputy Headteacher Appointment</u> The Chair congratulated Kay Lawton on her appointment as Deputy Headteacher. He reported that contracts were in place and that the appointment had been communicated to stakeholders.</p>			
FGB 11.5	<p>Chair's Report The Chair had no chair's action or other business to report, other than noting that he had been copied into an email from a staff member expressing discontent with regard to a job-related matter, but that it was not a formal grievance or a matter for governor attention at this stage.</p> <p>[Al Stephens joined the meeting.]</p>			
FGB 11.6	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>I. <u>Feedback (to inform the school self-evaluation)</u> JM informed governors that she had sought feedback from several sets of stakeholders to inform evaluation and planning and reported on these as follows:</p> <p>i. <u>Staff survey</u> Staff survey responses had been pleasing and generally positive. The key areas where scope for improvement had been identified were in relation to work/life balance, targets and deadlines, stress management and consistency in adherence to staff-related policies. Whole school training on stress had been provided in the past and would be repeated at a future Inset day. It had been particularly pleasing to learn that the vast majority of staff agreed / strongly agreed that the Senior Leadership Team will respond to actions identified from the results of the survey and would recommend the school as a place to work. Further information on some of the themes would be gathered on Inset day.</p> <p>Governors observed that the survey outcomes were impressive. It was noted that actions relating to the effect of heavy workload on staff anxiety and stress levels would be included in the School Development Plan.</p>			

	<p>ii. <u>Parent survey</u> Four key themes had arisen from suggestions made in the parent survey which related to: extracurricular activities, school reports, providing feedback / keeping parents informed of progress and attitude to learning (especially given the motivational difficulties caused by the pandemic). All these areas would be a focus of attention over the coming year and had led to a change in the planned actions on the School Development Plan. Very positive comments had been received overall, in particular in relation to the school's ethos, pastoral care, safeguarding, behaviour, pupil-staff relationships and dealing with bullying.</p> <p>Governors noted that the feedback received was a testament to the school after a challenging year and that engagement, support and challenge for all students, whether they had been motivated or otherwise during the school closure, would need to be key areas of focus for the return in September.</p> <p>iii. <u>Curriculum Area Leaders</u> Feedback from the Curriculum Area Leaders suggested that robust approaches were in place but not consistently implemented, for example in linking observations with actions. Feedback on key stage 3 had been particularly positive.</p> <p>iv. <u>Heads of House</u> Feedback from Heads of House had identified a desire for further development of the student leadership programme. JM noted that Miss Morris had taken on responsibility for the Student Council and that the re-launch had been very positively implemented. Miss Morris had also volunteered to work with the Parent Teacher & Friends Association and to co-ordinate Student Council activities with the PTFA where possible.</p> <p>v. <u>Governors</u> Committee chairs had provided helpful feedback, giving a summary of the areas of focus they felt were important to consider for the School Development Plan. These included the Key Stage 3 curriculum, students' attitude to learning, personal development of the leadership team and a stronger focus on implementation and understanding of objective setting among support staff.</p>			
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JM noted that student input was awaited, but the feedback gathered to date had been used to inform the school self-evaluation and in setting targets (School Development Plan) for the coming year.

One governor expressed concern that taking an Ofsted-centric approach in the questions asked when seeking feedback might mean that things important to the school are missed. JM noted that there was room for flexibility in creating the School Development Plan but that a key aim of the school self-evaluation was to evaluate against Ofsted criteria as well as against the school's stated aims and objectives, and that these were usually aligned in any event.

2. Staff wellbeing

JM reported that staff wellbeing during the school closure had been mixed and support was in place where concerns had been identified. Wellbeing had been discussed at the Inset day in June and JM noted that leaders need to continue discussing wellbeing issues with staff in an appropriate way.

3. Staffing

- The Catering Manager had indicated he would be resigning to move on to another job, but no other staff had given notice of leaving.
- Miss Probert had been appointed Curriculum Area Leader for English, Drama, Music and Languages, a post vacated following Mrs Lawton's appointment as Deputy Headteacher.
- Miss Morris had been appointed Head of House in place of Miss Probert.
- Ms Everett had been accepted for Mathematics Mastery training with the Centre of Excellence in Mathematics for which the school would receive £3k pa for training (to cover 9 days per annum). This would lead to Ms Everett gaining recognition as a specialist leader in education.

A governor voiced some concern over the disproportionate female presence across the senior and middle leadership teams, noting that it was important for the school to find ways to inspire boys with role models. JM agreed that the school needed to be mindful of this and that it would be a focus for the Heads of House, which was balanced with two males and two females, and also mindful of wider diversity, noting that there was only one Black, Asian or minority ethnic member of staff at present. She noted that the Student Council was very balanced, and that male staff and

external speakers could be used to provide good role models for boys. There was some discussion about the merits and drawbacks of taking a positive discrimination approach to appointments, it being noted that appointing the best person for the role irrespective of gender or ethnicity is an important principle, but also that where several people are capable of doing a role it may be appropriate to consider diversity of representation. It was also noted that it is important to continue to provide development opportunities for internal staff, to provide regular training on unconscious bias and to ensure recruitment processes are blind.

4. Recruitment

- An ex-student had been appointed as an IT Trainee (apprentice), to start in September 2020.
- A Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship is currently advertised.
- Additional hours had been given to the Community Administrator (also the Clerk) to focus on marketing.
- The Forest School Teaching Assistant's contract had been extended to Easter 2021.

Governors noted that Kick-start funding might be helpful for funding support staff.

5. Inset day (July)

The training day in July had been positive, with good feedback received on the risk assessment for re-opening in September. Training for Arbor (the new management information system) had been well delivered. The timetable had been re-written as a result of the risk assessment, which staff had received well.

JM also reported that staff have been researching best practice for catching-up students and re-engaging them after the school closure. More emerging themes on this would be discussed at the September Inset day.

6. Transition (Year 6 to Year 7)

The usual transition arrangements for Year 6 had not been able to take place, but a number of transition evenings had been held. The scope of these had been constricted by social distancing requirements (as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic), but they had been reasonably well attended and other parents/students would be contacted over the summer. Those who had attended had

	<p>given positive feedback. JM had visited primary school with one of the Heads of House and a web page dedicated to transition had been set up.</p> <p>[Nicky Taylor lost connection to the meeting.]</p> <p>7. <u>Admissions</u> Currently 70 students had accepted offers to join in September.</p> <p>8. <u>Arbor</u> The final migration of data from Progresso had taken place.</p> <p>9. <u>Communications and marketing</u> A marketing strategy was being put in place. Information on the arrangements for re-opening in September and for the new intake was being prepared through a comprehensive update to the Parents' Welcome Pack which would have clear and concise "Covid updates". It was suggested that further video clips for social media be released to welcome children back to school.</p> <p>Folders had been put together for Year 10 with work to do over the summer holiday.</p> <p>[Nicky Taylor re-joined to the meeting.]</p>			
FGB 11.7	<p>School Self-Evaluation (SEF) Update This item had been covered in the Headteacher's report under item FGB 11.6.1 above.</p>			
FGB 11.8	<p>School Development Plan (Covid Response: Full Opening)</p> <p>1. <u>Part 1 of the School Development Plan for 2020/21: Covid Plans and Priorities</u> Governors received and agreed a risk assessment / mitigation document, which had been compiled in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance. Governors had been provided with relevant guidance from the DfE and the National Governors' Association to inform their scrutiny of the plans, and a number of governors had provided input through emailed comments and suggestions prior to the meeting.</p>			

	<p>JM informed governors that there were some details left to work out, but staff feedback on the risk mitigation strategies had been positive. JM noted in particular that staff wellbeing needed to be included, that the air conditioning system needed to be double-checked (to ensure it was not recycling air and to fix classroom units which were not currently in operation) and that after-school clubs and hot meals would be put on hold for the initial return to give the school at least 2-3 weeks to work with the new protocols and systems before re-introducing these if considered manageable and safe.</p> <p>External hire of the facilities was discussed, it being noted that several groups were keen to return. AC reported that she had spoken to a number of other schools about their approach to hire and at present it was a mixed picture with some already having re-opened for lettings, and others preferring to wait. Governors were generally supportive of re-opening if deemed to be low risk but advised that Covid-safe guidance be carefully followed, insurance checked and that undertakings be gained in writing that groups would be following regulations and enforcing Covid-safe practices. It was agreed that the Community Administrator would draft a risk assessment for discussion by the Senior Leadership Team with oversight by a number of governors, including the Chair of Governors.</p> <p>2. <u>Part 2 of the School Development Plan for 2020/2: Plans and priorities based on the SEF process</u> This will be considered at the start of the Autumn Term.</p>	Risk assessment	SF	Aug '20
FGB 11.9	<p>3-Year Budget 2020-23</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee reported that the Committee had scrutinised the detail of the budget and were happy to commend it to the Board. It was noted however that the impact of post-September arrangements for teaching and learning were at present unknown and that there was a likelihood of lettings income being affected by the impact of the pandemic as a result of a potentially limited re-opening or requirement for additional staff hours for cleaning.</p> <p>Voted and unanimously APPROVED the budget for adoption and submission to the Education & Skills Funding Agency.</p>			
FGB 11.10	<p>Delegated Financial Authorities</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee reported that there were no proposed changes to the financial delegation limits, which were subject to annual approval.</p>			

	Voted and unanimously APPROVED the delegation limits.			
FGB 11.11	<p>Buy-Your-Own-Devices Scheme</p> <p>JM reported to governors that no further progress had been made on considering the detail of the options for ensuring that as many students as possible have access to a device (tablet or laptop) at school and at home, with a view to promoting a buy-your-own-devices scheme. She observed that there was significant value to students of having access to technology and to the school of using technology for learning initiatives, particularly in the current climate.</p> <p>Governors noted that consideration needed to be given as to how the school would provide a device to students whose parents were unable to afford the subscription costs of a rent-to-buy scheme, and whether to support a range of devices that students may already have, or to expect common devices and software for all students. It was noted there would be challenges in terms of perceived fairness in determining whether school policy should be to “buy-your-own” device, approved and configured by the school, rather than “bring-your-own” existing device. Whilst there was merit in all students having the same device and software, avoiding scope for peer pressure or bullying by putting all students on an equal footing, this would likely preclude students bringing in existing devices to school.</p> <p>JM observed that the goal for all students to have access to computers that they can bring into school - to support their school-work and enabling an efficient and adaptable return to remote learning if required in future – should be kept in mind as the starting point for discussion of the finer details.</p> <p>Governors were supportive of the principle but concluded that further thought and comparison quotes were required (information on one available scheme had been circulated). It was agreed to revisit when there has been further consideration and a firm proposal to consider.</p>	Revisit	SLT	Autumn Term '20
FGB 11.12	<p>Sports Hall</p> <p>Governors recorded thanks to Art Technician Nikki Lardner who had drafted designs for enhancing the look of the exterior and inside corridor of the Sports Hall, along with flags for the pathway and seating under the canopied area.</p> <p>In response to a question on return on investment, JM explained that the rationale for the enhancements was not only to improve the appeal of the building for the benefit of current students but also to provide a more inspiring experience for the many primary school children and parents</p>			

	<p>who attend clubs provided by community groups in the evenings and who are prospective parents and pupils of the school.</p> <p>Several governors had provided feedback on the designs following their circulation, and others expressed their support, noting the importance of presenting the school well. Increasing the amount of seating for students was also recognised as an important step in improving the school grounds.</p> <p>A further element of the plan was to install a TV screen which could display sports footage, news and promotional videos. However, it was noted that this would require constant management that there may not be time for.</p> <p>A governor noted that grants for sport and community facilities may be available, although might require tying in with a particular education and health scheme.</p>			
FGB 11.13	<p>Committee Reports Minutes had been circulated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Community & Engagement Committee (10 June 2020)</u> PA, the Chair of the Community & Engagement Committee, was not in attendance to give a report and there were no questions arising from the minutes. 2. <u>Staffing Committee (17 June 2020)</u> There were no questions arising from the minutes. 3. <u>Finance & Premises Committee (including Audit Committee) (24 June 2020)</u> WK reported that the Committee had noted that it is highly likely that the free reserve position will be outside the limits set, and therefore the Board should note that continued prudence was necessary to increase the reserves. He noted that the audit function covered audit of governance as well as finance, and that the Audit Committee wished to bring to the Board's attention that succession planning should be given consideration. <p>A copy of the management accounts had been circulated.</p>			

	<p>4. <u>Student Committee (1 July 2020)</u> There were no questions relating to the minutes of the matters discussed (it was noted that the minutes had not yet been checked by the committee chair).</p>			
FGB 11.14	<p>Link Governor Reports</p> <p>1. <u>Safeguarding</u> AS had nothing to report.</p> <p>2. <u>Careers</u> NN noted that government funding is available through the Job Centre to support students whose plans for next steps have gone awry, and therefore that registering with the Job Centre may be worthwhile in order to access this if required.</p>			
FGB 11.15	<p>Governance</p> <p>1. <u>Evaluation of effectiveness</u> It was agreed that this would be discussed as an item on the next agenda, the Chair noting that the Board should challenge itself as a matter of good practice. JM noted that her experience as an Ofsted Inspector led her to believe that the governing body was effective, with a good level of accountability. As a Headteacher, she found the challenge from the governing body to be healthy and useful.</p> <p>2. <u>Election process for Chair & Vice-Chair</u> The usual election process for Chair and Vice-Chair was agreed, with elections to be held at the first meeting of the academic year in September, with a show of hands if only one person puts themselves forward and a secret ballot if there is more than one.</p> <p>3. <u>Committee structure for 2020-21</u> It was agreed to review the committee structure at the first meeting of the Autumn Term, after the evaluation of effectiveness. In the meantime, the Clerk would circulate a draft schedule of meetings for the current committees, looking to see if the meeting of the full board could be moved to be the first meeting of the cycle to try and avoid duplication of business.</p> <p>4. <u>Succession planning</u> The Chair suggested that this also be addressed at the first meeting of the Autumn Term.</p>			

	<p>5. <u>AGM arrangements</u> The Clerk informed the Board that a temporary change to legislation due to the pandemic allowed for Annual General Meetings to be held fully or partially by remote access if held prior to 30th September 2020 and suggested this would likely be the most suitable option given the current social distancing requirements.</p> <p>6. <u>SharePoint for governance</u> The Chair and Clerk reported that the school is moving over to use of SharePoint for storage of documents and workflow and that the intention is to set up a SharePoint site for governors to access and share documents avoiding the need to circulate so many documents by email. Careful thought would be given to confidentiality and a training session would be held. Governors were reminded of the need to be careful when handling and downloading school documents.</p>			
FGB 11.16	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>1. <u>Governors</u> On behalf of the Board, the Chair recorded thanks to Helen O'Connor who had been co-opted to the Board for the year. She noted her willingness to continue. He also thanked Nicola Newman and Carl Styants, both of whom are coming to the end of their term of office. He expressed hope that Mr Styants would stand for re-election, but noted that Mrs Newman had indicated she would not be re-standing due to other commitments. The Chair recognised that her attributes and skills had made an outstanding contribution to the Board and that he was personally very grateful for her assistance on a number of matters during his chair-ship.</p> <p>2. <u>Project Roles</u> Discussion of the project roles, on which information had been circulated, had been missed earlier in the agenda. JM stated that although she recognised this was an operational matter, she would value the Board's consideration of the roles proposed - these were a Technology for Teaching Lead and an Apprenticeships Lead. She confirmed there would be clear objectives and benchmarks for success. Governors expressed that such roles have value and are good for staff development, and therefore supported them going ahead, although some caution was expressed with regard to the potential for resentment due to other staff perhaps feeling that they work outside of their job description without a Teaching & Learning Responsibility payment. JM observed that these were very defined roles, akin to other defined roles such as a Curriculum Area Leader or Head of House.</p>			

FGB 11.17	Confidentiality No item would require confidential minutes.			
	Next Meeting The next meeting will be held in the Autumn Term.			
	The meeting closed at 7.42pm.			