

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
Held on Wednesday 9th December 2020, 5.30pm

Present (via remote access): Tim Marcus (Chair), Peter Collins, Alex Duke, Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher, Adam Hines, William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Vanessa Millman, Helen O’Connor, Amanda Rowley, Jessica Starmer, Isobel Tooley
In attendance (via remote access): Anna Carvisiglia (Business Manager), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held via remote access in accordance with guidance relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.			
FGB 3.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from Paul Angel and Joanne Martin. Alison Stephens (for whom a “leave of absence” from meetings has been agreed) and Carl Styants were not in attendance.			
FGB 3.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item other than it not being appropriate for staff members to be present for items FGB 3.12 and 3.13.			
FGB 3.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
FGB 3.4	Matters Arising & Actions Where not elsewhere on the agenda. A written update had been provided. The Chair noted that the review of governance would be discussed in more detail during the Spring Term 2021, with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk drawing together the feedback received at the last meeting and putting forward some proposals for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the governing body. The meeting in February 2021 will focus on the 3-5 year strategic plan.			

FGB 3.5	<p>Governing Body Constitution</p> <p>1. Governor elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adam Hines had been elected by staff as a Staff Governor and was welcomed to the Board. Term of office: 4 years until 6th December 2024. - There had been no nominees for the recently promoted Parent Governor vacancy; this will be re-advertised. <p>2. Committee membership</p> <p>It was noted that AH had expressed an interest in joining the Student Committee but would observe all the committees before an appointment is made.</p> <p>3. Link governors</p> <p>APPOINTED Helen O'Connor as a link governor for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Induction.</p>	Readvertise	Clerk	Jan '21
FGB 3.6	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p>The Chair reported that, with the Vice-Chair of Governors, he will be conducting the Headteacher's performance management appraisal on Monday 14th December 2020. The new School Improvement Partner, Tracy Harris, would also join the meeting. She had visited the school for the day on Monday 7th December.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the Headteacher and staff team for navigating the difficulties of the past year so well.</p>			
FGB 3.7	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>JM reported on the change of School Improvement Partner (SIP), noting that the previously appointed SIP Andrew Lovett had taken on an additional role which had impacted on his availability. Tracy Harris, a former headteacher (Parkstone Grammar School and Ringwood Teaching School) and an Ofsted Inspector, with significant experience of strategic leadership had agreed to take on the role. JM had asked Ms Harris to work with the school to support the improvement from Ofsted grading "Good" to "Outstanding" and to provide an objective view in managing challenges and areas of development. During her first visit, Ms Harris had met with middle leaders and other key staff in addition to JM and gained an understanding of leadership, vision, ethos and behaviour. She had fed back with ideas relating</p>			

to attendance and further development of the SEND department which had been in line with JM's own thoughts and vision.

In relation to her written Headteacher's Report, JM highlighted the following:

- Staff absence: 25.5 teacher days, 2 teaching assistant days and 5 support staff days of absence had been due to pandemic-related self-isolation; to date no staff member had tested positive for the virus although there had been other medical absences, including one member of staff who had required a long-term absence of almost a month due to serious illness.
- Students on roll: Total number on roll as of 8th December 2020 was 325 students. There had been less student movement than usual, with just three new joiners since the start of term (in Year 8) and five leavers (1 to attend specialist provision, 1 transfer to Priestlands School, 1 to The Purbeck School to join a friendship group and 2 transfers to The Purbeck School due to a home move).
- Exclusions: Since the last report (period 19th October to 8th December) there had been five fixed term exclusions totalling 10.5 days; brief reasons for these were provided.
- Attendance: Whole school attendance is of concern, even taking into account the impact of the pandemic and some self-isolation. Overall attendance was 91.4% but the level of persistent absenteeism is of particular concern, averaging 22.9% but as high as 37.9% (Year 11 females).

Governors asked questions to better understand the figures, with JM confirming that persistent absenteeism is defined as less than 90% attendance and noting that 7 of the Year 11 female students had just slipped below the threshold with attendance around 89%, contributing to the very high overall rate. She also confirmed that 3 of the Year 11 students were dual registered and being educated elsewhere but that it was not easy to take them off roll or out of the attendance figures. Regardless, Year 11 attendance in particular was of concern although those who were attending were performing well. She gave examples of the genuine reasons relating to illness and injury why a large number of children in Year 9 had a poor level of attendance.

Governors asked whether students who are absent had been engaging in online work. JM reported that guidance from Dorset Council was that work should not be provided for students not attending due to Covid-related anxieties, in a bid to encourage re-attendance.

	<p>However, contrary to this guidance, work had been provided including some face-to-face tutorials in English and Maths with the Higher-Level Teaching Assistants. Governors supported this approach, noting the primary duty of care for the education of pupils.</p> <p>In response to a question on whether reduced attendance correlated with student or parent mental health and anxiety issues as a response to the pandemic and Autumn Term lockdown (during which schools remained open), and whether students with mental health problems are being identified and supported, JM confirmed that early identification of students with such issues had been prioritised. She outlined the strategies in place for providing support, such as volunteer work being undertaken by the Youth Wave Team. She reported that at present 3 (or 8? - checking) students were not attending school for fears relating to catching the virus and that she was personally, regularly in touch with their parents. A governor asked whether staff were aware of the Place2Be programme, which provided training in student mental health and JM confirmed that the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer had sent out details.</p> <p><u>New staff</u>: JM reported on staff changes, noting in particular that new Site Manager Ian Byrne had already made a big impact.</p>			
FGB 3.8	<p>Annual Report & Financial Statement 2019-20</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee introduced the Annual Report and Financial Statement, which had been circulated in advance, noting that members of the Committee had individually scrutinised the detail, and he recorded thanks to the Business Manager and Auditors for responding to and resolving the questions and issues raised. The bottom line had been a 46k surplus for the financial year 2019-20, which he regarded as an incredible achievement and a good position for entering the coming year.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>APPROVED by unanimous vote the Annual Report & Financial Statement 2019-20 in line with the recommendation of the Finance & Premises Committee.</p>	Signing and submission of accounts	AC/TM	Immediate
FGB 3.9	<p>External Auditor's Report – Management Letter</p> <p>Governors had received and formally noted the Report to Management from the Auditor.</p>			

	<p>The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee reported on the two findings in the Management Report, one in relation to purchase of alcohol using school funds, arising from a small purchase made in relation to the welcome reception for volunteers and supporters prior to the Members' Annual General Meeting, and one in relation to recording related party transactions, arising from an oversight in not reporting at the time a transaction to the Education & Skills Funding Agency. Both issues had been rectified to the satisfaction of the auditor.</p>			
FGB 3.10	<p>Swanage International [Confidential minute]</p>			
FGB 3.11	<p>Committee Report Minutes had been circulated and committee chairs made additional comments and answered questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Staffing Committee (11 November 2020)</u> There were no comments or questions in response to the minutes. 2. <u>Community & Engagement Committee (18 November 2020)</u> There were no comments or questions in response to the minutes. 3. <u>Student Committee (25 November 2020)</u> IT, Chair of the Student Committee, reported that the Committee was this year taking a different approach to hearing from staff, and would receive presentations on specific items on the School Development Plan and Risk Register from staff with key responsibilities. A plan for the year had been devised to cover each item at least once, and twice for many. She noted that the first tranche of presentations had been informative and detailed, and the Committee had been satisfied that they demonstrated that staff were working purposefully towards the objectives, with progress already looking good. 4. <u>Finance & Premises Committee (2 December 2020)</u> The Management Accounts (Business Manager's report) had been circulated. The Chair of the Committee, WK, noted that the meeting had been the last for the current Business Manager Anna Carvisiglia, and that the Committee had taken the opportunity to record sincere thanks to her for her hard work and accomplishments in the role. There were no other comments or questions in relation to the meeting report. 			

FGB 3.12	<p>Teaching & Learning Responsibility Payments [Adam Hines, Alex Duke, Kay Lawton and Anna Carvisiglia left the meeting]</p> <p>Unanimously APPROVED the recommendation from the Finance & Premises and Staffing Committees for a 2.75% increase in Teaching & Learning Responsibility Payments, backdated to 1st September 2020.</p>	Implement	AC	Immediate
FGB 3.13	<p>Business Manager Appointment [Confidential minute]</p>			
FGB 3.14	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>1. <u>Business Manager</u> [This item was taken prior to items 3.12 and 3.13 above.] On behalf of the governing body, the Chair thanked Anna Carvisiglia for her work as the School's Business Manager and wished her well for her new job.</p> <p>2. <u>End of Term</u> JM reported that the DfE had advised schools to consider closing early for the Christmas break, on 17th December rather than 18th December, to allow for staff needing to be available for 6 days after closing to respond to any contact tracing requests in the event of a positive Covid-19 test. She noted that the planned end of term had been lunchtime on 18th December and asked governors if they would support having a half-day staff inset day on 18th, closing to students on 17th.</p> <p>AGREED to support the above proposal should JM decide to do so.</p>			
FGB 3.15	<p>Confidentiality The item on Swanage International has been minuted confidentially as may be commercially sensitive. The minute relating to the appointment of a new Business Manager is confidential.</p>			
	<p>Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 February 2020.</p>			
	<p>The meeting closed at 7.10pm</p>			