

The Swanage School

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Held on Wednesday 15 September 2021, 6.10pm

Present: Tim Marcus (Chair), Alex Duke (by remote access from item 1.12), Hannah Etherington, Adam Hines, Laurie King, William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Catherine Starmer-Howes, Vanessa Millman (by remote access), Rachel Tapping, Isobel Tooley (by remote access)

In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher), Andrew Thomas (Business Manager)

Item		Action	Lead	By
FGB 1.1	Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular new governors Hannah Etherington, Laurie King and Rachel Tapping.			
FGB 1.2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from Peter Collins, Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher, Amanda Rowley and Jessica Starmer.			
FGB 1.3	Declarations of Interest Hannah Etherington informed the Board that she works at another local school (Deputy Headteacher of Swanage Primary School). There were no other new declarations or conflict with any agenda item. Governors were asked to update their annual declaration by return of a declaration form to the Clerk.			
FGB 1.4	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.			
FGB 1.5	Matters Arising & Actions A separate list summarising progress on actions and matters arising had been circulated, on which there were no questions.			
FGB 1.6	Chair's Report			

	The Chair had nothing to report under this item, noting that it had been a quiet period since the last meeting.			
	<u>START OF YEAR FORMALITIES</u>			
FGB 1.7	<p>Election of Chair & Vice-Chair for academic year 2021/22</p> <p>1. <u>The chair of the governing body</u> ELECTED Tim Marcus to continue as Chair of Governors, by unanimous vote.</p> <p>2. <u>The vice-chair of the governing body</u> ELECTED Isobel Tooley to continue as Vice-chair of Governors, by unanimous vote.</p>			
FGB 1.8	<p>Governing Body Constitution</p> <p>1. <u>Outcome of the Education Swanage governor election</u> The Chair confirmed for the record that Hannah Etherington, Laurie King and Rachel Tapping had been appointed as governors (trustees) by members of the academy trust for a four-year term of office to the end of the academic year, 31st August 2025, subject to DBS checks and other formalities.</p> <p>2. <u>Governor resignations</u> The Chair reported that Paul Angel had resigned as a governor (parent-elected) with effect from 31st August 2021. He also noted that Helen O'Connor and Carl Styants, who had been co-opted during academic year 2020-21 had notified the Clerk that they would not wish to be co-opted for a further period, due to other commitments. Thanks were recorded to them all.</p>			
FGB 1.9	<p>Governors' Code of Conduct APPROVED the Governors' Code of Conduct, subject to the rewriting of a section relating to breach of the code, it being noted that governors do not have the powers ascribed to them in the current wording.</p>	Update wording	WK/Clerk	Oct '21
FGB 1.10	<p>Chairing, Committee Membership and Roles for 2021/22</p> <p>1. <u>To agree committee membership</u></p>			

	As it was felt there was no immediate need to have post-holders in these roles, it was agreed to keep them under review and appoint at the next meeting of the Board, thereby allowing all governors, including new governors, time to consider putting themselves forward.	Agenda for appointment at next meeting		
FGB 1.11	<p>Admissions Policy</p> <p>The Clerk informed governors that any changes to the Admissions Policy requiring consultation would need to be agreed now, to allow time for the consultation prior to the deadline for submitting the policy to the Local Authority.</p> <p>A governor asked if the Board had previously considered placing the ‘sibling’ criteria above the ‘catchment’ criteria, noting that if oversubscribed this would potentially create a problem for families with a child already at the school, with the effect that the existing child might move away for the overall convenience of the family if the sibling were not admitted. It was suggested that it was unlikely that the school would be oversubscribed to the extent where it would not be possible to admit the sibling given the Board’s power to admit over the published admission number.</p> <p>No changes to the policy were proposed and the Admissions Policy was APPROVED as presented for entry in September 2023.</p>	Submit to LA	Clerk	Feb ‘21
	<p>[Alex Duke joined the meeting by remote access.]</p> <p>[Mandy Sands, Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, joined the meeting by remote access.]</p>			
	<u>SAFEGUARDING</u>			
FGB 1.12	<p><u>Safeguarding Update: ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, peer-on-peer abuse and policies</u></p> <p>The Safeguarding & Welfare Officer joined the meeting to brief governors on the changes to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’. She had circulated a copy with changes and key points highlighted and informed governors that there is an increased emphasis on peer-on-peer abuse. She noted that the school would need a stand-alone policy on this topic, which she plans to work on with the Safeguarding Link Governor. In addition, the Child Protection Policy will be updated to reflect the changes. These will be brought forward to the next meeting of the Board for approval.</p> <p>Governors also noted the increased emphasis on governance involvement in taking a lead in ensuring the school is doing everything it should to safeguard children.</p>	Policy updates	MS	Dec ‘21

	<p>MS also informed governors of the focus on contextual safeguarding; for example, gangs, ‘County Lines’, and child sexual and criminal exploitation.</p> <p>There were no questions, other than as to whether the Dorset model policy will be used as the basis for the updates required to school policies, which MS confirmed would be the case. She reminded governors of the expectation that they all read the guidance annually. It was noted that it appears to be up to governing bodies as to whether they use Annex A for people who do not work directly with children.</p> <p>Thanks were given to Ms Sands.</p> <p>[Mandy Sands left the meeting.]</p>			
	<p><u>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGY</u></p>			
<p>FGB 1.13</p>	<p>Survey Outcomes</p> <p><u>Parent Survey</u></p> <p>JM reported that she had been delighted with the outcome of the annual parent survey, with every key indicator being extremely positive. In particular, she highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 94% of respondents had said their child was happy at the school, 95% that their child felt safe and 100% that their child was well looked after, all reflecting strong pastoral provision. - On the academic side, 92% said their child made good academic progress, 95% that they were taught well and 90% that the school has high academic standards. JM noted that she would like to see this last metric at a higher percentage. - Responses relating to the lockdown were more mixed, and mainly related to the first lockdown. JM noted her surprise that only 89% of parents had said their child’s emotional wellbeing was prioritized after returning from lockdown as this had been a key priority. She noted that it was clear from the responses that there were a very small number of respondents (3 or 4) who were dissatisfied, and that she would try and follow this up with them where possible. - 94% of respondents had said the school deals effectively with bullying and JM noted that the comments relating to questions on bullying and other negative incidents were particularly pleasing as parents had expressed that any issues that do arise are dealt with quickly and 			

	<p>thoroughly. More generally, there were also comments about responding well to concerns and good communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good leadership had been recognized, with 97% of respondents saying the school is well led and managed generally, and 93% that it was led and managed well during lockdown. - Overall, 97% of respondents had said they would recommend the school to others. <p>JM reported that curriculum support activities (homework) had emerged as a theme for an area requiring improvement and that this has been reflected in the School Development Plan. The percentage of respondents giving positive feedback about progress reporting had improved since the previous year, with 87% saying they receive valuable information about their child's progress. JM noted that 'improving reporting' remained an objective of the School Development Plan, but that it was rewarding to see the impact of the efforts already made.</p> <p>In answer to a question, JM reported that the surveys were conducted at the very end of the Summer Term and noted that this was not an ideal time to run a staff survey.</p> <p><u>Staff Survey</u></p> <p>JM informed governors that she had reviewed the results of the survey with staff at the September Inset day. She highlighted key points to governors as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The response to a question on whether the school supports continuing professional development (CPD) had not been as positive as expected, given that the school has supported staff with NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship), other leadership qualifications and teacher training. She noted that it had been a difficult year to focus on quality internal CPD however, as for large portions of the year staff had felt they were in 'survival mode', like most schools, as teachers and leaders responded to the challenges created by the pandemic and lockdowns. - 100% of staff had reported that they were proud to be a staff member at The Swanage School, and 100% that they know what the school is trying to achieve. By contrast, only 86% felt the school had a clear ethos and 79% that it has a clear vision and purpose with clearly communicated objectives, which had been surprising. JM expressed that her aim is for this to be 100%. - There had been mixed views expressed about the management of behaviour, reflecting that some teachers find this more difficult than others. 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Almost half of respondents felt that they do not have good work-life balance or a manageable workload for their role. JM noted that whilst there have been efforts to address work-life balance, it was clear this remains an issue for many staff members. All staff had felt they have the skills needed to do their job effectively and that they understood what is expected of them. - 75% of staff had reported their mental health and wellbeing are good and, coupled with some other positive indicators, JM felt this could be seen as a reasonable outcome after the year schools had experienced. - 93% of staff agreed the school is well managed and led, had confidence in the decisions made by the Senior Leadership Team and that the school takes effective steps towards improvement/change. The same number believed the Senior Leadership Team will act on the results from the survey, which JM felt reflected that staff are confident they are listened to and that the SLT will respond. <p>JM reported that she had given an open invitation to staff to come forward to discuss any negative responses they had given.</p> <p>Governors suggested that in addition to exit interviews, mid-year interviews between governors and selected staff might be helpful. This would be referred to the Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee to discuss further.</p> <p>In general, there was agreement between governors and the Senior Leadership Team that the survey contained too many questions and that it would be more effective to run a shorter survey more frequently. This would also help in planning actions as there would be less data to sift through. The free comments were thought to be particularly helpful and a shorter survey might encourage more people to offer comments. Re-running key questions after a short interval might prove useful in determining how things have changed after one or two terms back at school. JM suggested that the start of the summer term would be an optimum time to run the survey for balanced feedback.</p>	SFP agenda	Clerk	Aut '21
FGB 1.14	<p>School Development Plan</p> <p>A draft School Development Plan for 2021-22 had been circulated and JM thanked governors for their advance comments. She noted that there was a deliberate move to have less objectives on the SDP, to ensure maximum focus on key developmental priorities. However, other continuing priorities from the previous year had been retained as 'operational priorities.'</p>	Staff survey - start of summer term	JM	Easter '22

	<p>JM reported to governors on her plans for the key developmental priorities, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Formative assessment</u>: embedded through CPD and reporting, with an aspiration to create a ‘real-time’ reporting system for Year 7 and Year 8 where parents receive continual information, including guidance on how to support and ‘fix’ gaps. - <u>Outstanding Key Stage 3 project-based learning curriculum</u>: to fully develop an inquiry-based approach to learning, developing high-level thinking skills and immersion in projects enhanced by links with the community and speakers. - <u>Curriculum support activities</u>: to improve the consistency and impact. - <u>Peer-on-peer abuse</u>: To create a culture of zero tolerance, addressing behaviours that have become the ‘norm’ among teen society (for example, sharing inappropriate images) empowering students to say no and report. In response to questions on how the impact will be assessed, JM proposed using, for example, reporting data and interviews with students before work is done to realign the ‘norms’ and again afterwards. - <u>Crew</u>: to establish the ‘Crew’ concept in place of tutor time, building relationships and trust with leaders and peers within the Crew. In response to a question, JM confirmed that this year Crews are mixed for Year 7 and 8, but single-year groups for Years 9,10 and 11. This was to some extent for practical reason to reduce the mixing of year groups due to Covid, but the experience over the past year of moving away from fully vertical tutor groups had shown there to be some strengths to single year-groups that would need to be considered alongside the weaknesses in due course. The purpose of Crews would be to build character, ambition, community and productivity - known as the four ‘pillars’ - which would be measured and rewarded through a similar system to house points. Re-emphasis of ‘The Swanage School Way’ would also be a key part of Crew time. <p>In relation to questions regarding mixed-year socialising, JM noted that re-building social cohesion across the school to pre-pandemic levels would continue to be an important consideration in decision making and should improve with the reintroduction of clubs and mixed year Challenge Days. A governor asked whether there were any plans to resurrect ‘The Swanage School Challenge’ and JM confirmed this would be desirable but that it might look different to the previous award. She also noted that the school is actively looking at introducing the Duke of Edinburgh Award, in the hope all Year 9 students will partake at ‘Bronze’ level.</p>	Circulate final version SDP	JM	Oct ‘21
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	The Board was satisfied to APPROVE the School Development Plan, subject to JM updating the written plan to take on board comments circulated prior to the meeting and circulating to governors a final version.			
FGB 1.15	<p>Headteacher Performance Monitoring The Chair reported that with the Vice-chair of Governors, he had met with JM for an appraisal meeting in July 2021 and would bring forward a recommendation on pay for approval during the Autumn Term.</p> <p>He noted that he meets with JM most weeks and that he and the Vice-chair have access to BlueSky (the performance management software) for JM, to monitor performance objectives. The School Improvement Partner will be invited to school again soon.</p>	Pay recommendation	TM/IT	Autumn '21
FGB 1.16	<p>Any Other Business None.</p>			
FGB 1.17	<p>Confidentiality No item would require confidential minutes.</p>			
FGB 1.18	<p>Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on 8 December 2021</p>			
	The meeting closed at 7.35pm			