

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
Held on Wednesday 8th December 2021, 5.30pm

Present: Tim Marcus (Chair, virtual), Peter Collins, Alex Duke, Hannah Etherington, Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher (virtual), Adam Hines, William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Vanessa Millman, Catherine Starmer-Howes, Rachel Tapping (virtual), Isobel Tooley

In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher, virtual), Mandy Sands (Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, for item 3.13)

Item			
FGB 3.1	<p>Welcome, Apologies & Election of Co-chair Apologies were received from Amanda Rowley, Jessica Starmer and Andrew Thomas (Business Manager). Laurie King was not in attendance.</p> <p>The Chair reported that he would need to leave the meeting early. Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher was elected as co-chair for the purpose of the present meeting.</p> <p>The Chair and other governors recorded sincere thanks to the Clerk for her service, noting that she was transferring to an alternative full-time position for the school.</p> <p>[Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher took the chair]</p> <p>For the benefit of new governors Hannah Etherington and Rachel Tapping, members of the Board introduced themselves.</p>		
FGB 3.2	<p>Declarations of Interests Alex Duke and Adam Hines (staff governors) would be conflicted on the item relating to term dates and would therefore not vote.</p>		
FGB 3.3	<p>Pupil Premium Strategy and Report</p> <p>I. <u>Approval of the Pupil Premium Strategy & Report</u> Guidance from the National Governors' Association had been circulated. The Headteacher noted that the school was currently in the second year of a three-year plan and so the overall strategy remained as previously agreed, but also included revised and additional points arising from the</p>		

	<p>analysis of GCSE results and benchmark outcomes. Five key areas of challenge had been identified, for which strategies and budgeted costs were presented.</p> <p>In response to questions and challenge from governors, JM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreed to rethink the inclusion of a target for Attainment 8 unless based on previous attainment levels, given that progress is a better measure of what the school can achieve and that improvements in attainment should follow from improvements in other target areas; - confirmed that the school is able to use pupil premium funding on strategies that benefit all students; - noted that the supply of Chromebooks for Year 8 students (as a continuation of the roll-out of devices) had been placed under 'literacy and numeracy strategies' as software relating to targeting literacy and numeracy may be included on the Chromebooks, however she took on board the challenge that this item might be better included in the wider strategy; - agreed that Challenge Days to build confidence did not appropriately fit under the 'attendance strategies' heading and that this would be moved; - agreed that only the chart relating to 'closing the gap' between students who do and do not attract the pupil premium were relevant to this report. <p>APPROVED the Pupil Premium Strategy & Report, subject to minor changes as per the comments above, noting that this would be published on the school's website.</p> <p>2. <u>Appointment of a link governor for pupil premium</u> AGREED that it would be desirable and would reflect best practice to have a link governor for pupil premium. Hannah Etherington agreed to talk to the Headteacher about this, with a view to potentially taking it on.</p> <p>A governor asked about the attendance of pupil premium students and the strategy for improving this. Discussion on this point was deferred to the item on the Headteacher's Report.</p>	Update and publish	JM/Clerk	31 Dec '21
		Consider PP role	HE	Jan '22
FGB 3.4	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>1. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record, subject to adding Peter Collins and Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher to the recorded apologies for absence.</p>	Update	Clerk	Dec '21

	2. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 24 November 2021 were confirmed subject to amending the end time to 5.30pm.	Update	Clerk	Dec '21
FGB 3.5	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Where not elsewhere on the agenda. A summary of progress on actions had been circulated. The Clerk outlined the outstanding actions and asked governors to consider whether they would still like to have a summary Strategic Plan presented to the Board, given the outline of the strategy had been presented by the Headteacher at previous meetings within her vision document. As an early draft strategic plan had been compiled, JM AGREED she would complete this for presentation at the next meeting of the Board.</p>	Strategic plan	JM	March '21
FGB 3.6	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>1. <u>Resignations</u> The Chair reported that Vanessa Millman had resigned with effect from the present meeting. Thanks were recorded to her for her contribution to the Board and she expressed willingness to continue to be of support to the Headteacher if needed. She also noted she would be happy to become a member of the Academy Trust.</p> <p>2. <u>Recommendations for the Academy Trust</u> AGREED for recommendation to the members of the Academy Trust (Education Swanage):</p> <p>i) Proposed new byelaws, as presented in the circulated paper</p> <p>i) Proposals in relation to governor terms of office, as presented in the circulated paper</p>	<p>Send application form</p> <p>To members for the AGM (Jan '22)</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Dec '21</p> <p>Dec '22</p>
FGB 3.7	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p>Chair of Governors Tim Marcus reported that the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and staff team continue to work incredibly hard through the odd times created by the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted there had been no chair's action required since the last meeting. He remained in regular contact with the Headteacher who kept him informed of incidents and concerns but that there were no matters of particular seriousness to report to the Board at the present time.</p> <p>[Tim Marcus left the meeting.]</p>			

FGB 3.8	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>A written report had been circulated, which included updates on School Development Plan priorities. JM highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Returning to face-to-face teaching</u>: It had been a positive start to the year good to be face-to-face teaching after the Covid lockdowns. - <u>Covid-19</u>: Management of Covid had been difficult, and additional measures such as the wearing of masks around school, had been reintroduced even prior to being required, following a number of cases almost as soon as school resumed in September. Over the term, cases had fluctuated, with spread mostly within year groups, and many asymptomatic. Governors asked whether students well enough were working at home whilst isolating and JM confirmed this was the case, with work and laptops being provided where needed. Use of AVI robots, of which the school has 4, to facilitate interaction between a student at home and the classroom, had also proved valuable for some students. JM noted that the robot technology was also being used to assist a school refuser and may help with reintegration to the classroom. - <u>2022 entry</u>: The Year 7 intake for 2022 entry was currently 58 on first choice. - <u>Special needs</u>: Currently there were 16 students across the school on Education & Health Care Plans. Two were in Year 11 and so will leave the school, however 6 to 10 are anticipated from the 12 applications made for students with ECHPs for 2022 entry. This would be a high percentage of the total student number and discussions were ongoing with Dorset Council (DC) regarding the school's banding for funding. The 'tipping point', which activates additional funding, had already been reached. In response to questions on whether the number of children on ECHPs in Dorset had risen or if the school is getting a higher proportion than other schools, JM believed it to be both. She noted that an additional eight Teaching Assistants would ideally be needed to meet the obligations and that this significant gap between needs and provision had been raised with DC. Where applicable, she had telephoned parents to let them know that the full provisions of their child's ECHP cannot be met. She also noted she has asked DC to cease recommending the school to students outside of catchment. A governor asked whether the decision previously taken to increase the catchment area should be reconsidered, but JM thought this was not yet clear. It was also noted that whether the applications arise due to a DC recommendation or parental choice, this reflected the caring ethos of the school, however an increasing proportion of students with higher-level needs that cannot be appropriately supported would not be good for them or the school in the longer 			
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	<p>term. In relation to the appointment of additional support staff, JM confirmed that the school is advertising for two additional apprentice Teaching Assistants. In addition, the Special Educational & Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) would be released from some of her other teaching responsibilities to focus on specialist SEN teaching, as with current funding there would not be scope to employ a further fully trained and experienced Teaching Assistant. JM informed governors that the SENCo is doing a superb job on organisation and strategy for meeting needs. She noted that the overall position in the county for students with significant or complex needs, which would be better served by specialist provision, is poor and alternative provision places are full.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Formative assessment</u>: Three 'Teaching Learning Community' (CPD) sessions had been run to date. The first two had been particularly valuable but some drop-off in engagement and delivery had been experienced for the third which took place at a 'pinch-point' in the term. Impact and engagement will be reviewed via a staff survey, with initial feedback having been very positive. The Staff Assessment Days (Inset) had been positively received by staff and valuable. On these days, staff are expected to consider key questions in discussion with the Curriculum Area Lead and by reviewing markbooks and assessments: 'Is the data valid?', 'what is the data telling me?', 'what am I going to do about it?' and 'what are the next steps for students, parents and teachers?' JM noted that the impact of the days can be discussed in more detail by the Student Committee. - <u>Development of the Project-Based Learning curriculum</u> continues to gather momentum, with ongoing reflection leading to further improvements. - <u>Curriculum Support Activities (homework)</u>: Progress on the objective to improve consistency and impact of CSA in terms of implementing new CSA timetables had been limited and would be a key focus for the Spring Term. - <u>Primary School Liaison</u>: The 'Enrichment Programme' projects set up had been excellent, including immersion activities and a project over several sessions, conducted in small groups, however the programme had been suspended (from November 2021) as per guidance from Dorset Council requesting schools not to mix until further notice. - <u>Employment through the curriculum</u>: Embedding skills throughout the curriculum and development of the use of crew time to research careers and next steps as part of the 'ambition pillar' was going well. The multi-faceted strategy the school was using had received positive feedback from outside agencies. A governor observed that analysing data from past students on their choices post-school, college and university would be useful as indicators of 			
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	<p>how well embedded in the curriculum this has become. JM noted that there are some indicators on the School Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Core provision</u>: a paper on changing core provision would be presented to the next meeting of the Student Committee. - <u>Annual production</u>: 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' is in rehearsal, for a show at The Mowlem Theatre in March. - <u>Staffing</u>: [Confidential minute] - <u>Exclusions</u>: [Confidential minute] - <u>Attendance</u>: A significant focus will be placed on attendance, to address worries about the impact of absence level, as explained in the written report. Covid-related absences had had a significant impact on attendance and can be seen in particular year groups as they have been impacted by cases. A governor asked about non-Covid related attendance and whether there were additional issues of concern. JM reported that there were several students who had developed a poor attitude to attendance and a culture of not coming into school. Anxieties about attending were having to be countered. In response to further questions, JM confirmed that not all students engage with remote learning when absent. She noted that it would be a significant challenge to re-establish good attendance and that a compassionate but firm approach would be taken. The coding around reporting absences to the Department for Education is strict, with students either in school or not, and therefore students working remotely are logged as an unauthorised absence. It would be possible to present data to the Board with a narrative to attempt to distinguish between those absent but learning, and those not learning. 			
FGB 3.9	<p>School Development Plan and Operational Priorities</p> <p>These had been discussed under item 3.8 above and there was nothing to add and no further questions.</p>			
FGB 3.10	<p>External Auditor's Report</p> <p>A copy of the report had been circulated. This had been discussed in detail at the Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>NOTED and agreed the recommendations and responses in the report (management letter).</p>			

FGB 3.11	<p>Financial Statement and Accounts</p> <p>The final Financial Statements and Accounts had been circulated, with drafts having been scrutinised and finessed by the Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>APPROVED the Financial Statements and Accounts for financial year ending August 2021.</p>	Confirm with auditor and publish on website once signed.	AT/Clerk	31 Dec '21
FGB 3.12	<p>Term Dates for 2022-23</p> <p>1. <u>Term dates for 2022-23</u></p> <p>APPROVED the term dates as presented, as follows: Dorset dates (circulated) with INSET days on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 1st September 2022 • Friday 2nd September 2022 • Tuesday 3rd January 2023 <p>PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 STAFF ASSESSMENT DAYS, one each half-term (students set work on Teams), dates to be determined by the Senior Leadership Team <p>Prior to approval, governors checked that there had been no negative feedback from parents in relation to the assessment days. Going forward, firmer arrangements would be made in relation to students working remotely on TEAMS as there had been some confusion in this regard.</p> <p>2. <u>Jubilee Day</u></p> <p>APPROVED an additional day off for students and staff, in line with guidance from the DfE for maintained schools, in lieu of the additional Bank Holiday for the Queen's Jubilee celebration which falls within the May half-term break.</p>			
FGB 3.13	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Mandy Sands, Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, joined the meeting (via remote access) to talk through the papers (circulated) and answer questions.</p>			

	<p>1. <u>Annual safeguarding audit</u> MS reported to governors that very few actions had arisen from the Annual Safeguarding Audit for Dorset Council, with the school sustaining a high level of provision and diligence. On the areas which appeared on the action list, she noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site security appeared on the action list as the form required a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. The Swanage School site is not secure but the building is. - A lockdown procedure (for intruders) is being prepared, for discussion and adoption at the next meeting of the Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee, and would require input from both a premises and safeguarding perspective. - Attendance at mandatory training will be added as an extra column on the Single Central Register. <p>Governors asked about the process for the audit and whether Dorset Council would follow up if they had any concerns. MS reported that areas identified for action were being addressed, so governors were being asked to note these, as per the report, and that Dorset should by now have flagged any concerns and had not.</p> <p>2. <u>Child Protection Policy</u> MS reported that the updates to the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy were in line with the guidance from the Dorset Safeguarding Team, who updated their template policy each year. She also reported that having a standalone policy covering peer-on-peer abuse was now recommended good practice.</p> <p>The Chair noted that all governors need to confirm they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. It was agreed that in future MS would include governors on her checklist so that this did not need to be a separate task undertaken by the Clerk.</p> <p>APPROVED the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy, as presented.</p> <p>3. <u>Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy</u> MS reported that in response to a report following a government review on peer-on-peer abuse in schools, there was now an expectation that all school have a standalone policy. A draft had been circulated for approval. The draft would require correction in relation to a reference to a county</p>	Publish	Clerk	Dec '21
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	<p>level Sexually Harmful Behaviour Team, as it was not evident such a team was yet established in Dorset.</p> <p>Governors noted that it would be helpful to make explicit in the Policy how to report an incident.</p> <p>MS reported that the school would be launching a survey for all year groups about their experiences.</p> <p>The Chair (also link governor for safeguarding) observed that there were a few areas in which the policy would benefit from further development and that she will liaise with MS about these and bring the document back to the next meeting.</p> <p>4. <u>Receive a report from the link governor</u></p> <p>The Chair recorded her thanks to the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, noting the amount of work which is being done to safeguard students and support their wellbeing. She noted that monthly meetings with other local schools have been reinstated. Training for staff on learning from serious case reviews has been discussed and this will be discussed with the Headteacher with a view to building it into CPD for staff and extending to governors. A check of the Single Central Register is planned.</p> <p>MS reported that the school is working with MIND in adopting a whole-school approach and that this would involve conducting surveys in relation to mental health. The responses would inform the package of support the school puts in place.</p> <p>Governors recorded thanks to Mandy Sands.</p> <p>[Mandy Sands left the meeting.]</p>	<p>Finalise policy for approval at next meeting</p> <p>Staff training on serious case reviews</p>	<p>MS/THF</p> <p>MS/THF/JM</p>	<p>Feb '21</p> <p>Feb '21</p>
FGB 3.14	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>The Board received the minutes from the following committee meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Community & Engagement Committee (6 Oct 2021)2. Student Committee (13 Oct 2021)3. Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee (20 Oct 2021)4. Student Committee (10 November 2021)5. Audit & Risk Committee (24 November 2021)6. Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee (1 December 2021)			

	<p>The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee highlighted that the Committee had agreed to enter a retendering process to inform the recommendation the Board makes to the Academy Trust for the appointment of auditors for 2022/23. He also highlighted that the Committee had considered interesting points from the Headteacher on the optimum number of students and agreed that a review of the Published Admission Number would be a welcome exercise. This would need to be considered further over the Spring and Summer Terms with a view to making any changes for 2024 entry.</p> <p>The Chair of a Student Exclusion Panel (11 Oct 2021) gave a verbal report that the governors on the Panel had been satisfied that the school had followed the required procedures and that the decision to exclude had been an appropriate course of action and had been fair and justified. The Panel had noted the considerable support staff had given the student concerned in a bid to avoid permanent exclusion, and that this had extended once the student had left the school.</p>	Review PAN	JM/Board	Apr '21
FGB 3.15	<p>Governor Development and Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Development or training needs</u> No specific needs were identified at the present meeting. New governors were advised to avail themselves of introductory training modules on the NGA Learning Link. <u>NGA Learning Link</u> The Clerk noted that the subscription to Learning Link remained in place and advised governors of the range of topics covered by the modules available. <u>'The Key for Governors' / Governor Hub'</u> The Clerk asked governors whether they would like to subscribe to 'The Key for Governors' now that 'The School Bus' subscription had been cancelled. She noted that 'The Key' had merged with 'Governor Hub' and hence subscription fees were higher than they might otherwise have been. Articles relevant to governors would not, however, be available through the school's 'The Key for Leaders' subscription. Governors agreed that a subscription would be valuable and to evaluate the usefulness of 'Governor Hub' for the Board. 			
FGB 3.16	<p>Clerk Recruitment</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the appointed candidate had withdrawn for personal reasons, although had indicated that she may be available in the future should governors decide to hold it open. Options open to governors included re-advertising, contracting with a clerking service (on which some</p>			

	<p>information and costs had been circulated), or finding a temporary post-holder whilst holding the job open for the previously appointed candidate. The Clerk had a possible contact for a temp.</p> <p>A governor spoke in favour of engaging an agency, noting that the agency would then have the responsibility for training and providing a clerk for each meeting. It was noted, however, that such a service level agreement should be subject to a competitive tender process.</p> <p>It was agreed to meet with the contact who had expressed an interest in an interim post. A governor also offered to get in touch with a possible candidate. A group comprising Tanya-Hamilton Fletcher, Catherine Starmer-Howes and Amanda Rowley offered to take this forward, with Chair of Governors Tim Marcus. The Clerk would inform the appointed candidate that the Board was considering option but remained willing in principle to hold the post open.</p>	Arrange meeting	Clerk	ASAP
FGB 3.17	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None.</p>			
FGB 3.18	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>Two items under the Headteacher's Report would require confidential minutes.</p>			
	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>To be held on 6th April 2022, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair's Report - Headteacher's Report, including drug use annual report - School Development Plan progress review - Committee Reports - Risk Register Annual Review (report from Audit Committee) - SEND Annual Report (SENCo) - SEND Information Report / local offer (SENCo) - SEND Policy annual review - Medical Conditions Annual Report (SENCo) - Medical Conditions & Managing Medicines Policy annual review 			
	The meeting closed at 7.45pm			