

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
held on Wednesday 6 April 2022

Present: Tim Marcus (Chair), Alex Duke (virtual), Tanya Hamilton -Fletcher, Adam Hines (virtual), Laurie King (virtual), William Knight (virtual), Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Catherine Starmer-Howes, Isobel Tooley

In attendance: Marie Beresford (SEnCo, for item 3.8, virtual), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher, virtual), Andrew Thomas (Business Manager)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was opened by Vice-Chair of Governors Isobel Tooley.			
FGB 3.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from Peter Collins, Hannah Etherington, Amanda Rowley, Jessica Starmer and Rachel Tapping.			
FGB 3.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
FGB 3.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.			
FGB 3.4	Matters Arising & Actions Where not elsewhere on the agenda. An action list had been circulated. Items which were listed as ongoing were briefly discussed as follows: <u>Strategic plan:</u> agreed the Headteacher's suggestion that this be left until the School Development Plan for the coming academic year is formulated. <u>Training:</u> JM confirmed it remained the intention to include learning from serious case reviews into Continuing Professional Development sessions, and that these would be extended to governors. She would also hold sessions for governors on preparedness for Ofsted inspection.	Training sessions for governors and staff	JM	June '22

	<p><u>Published Admission Number (PAN)</u>: Agreed to drop the action to review the PAN as JM no longer felt a separate review was necessary, instead agreeing that it should be considered when the admissions policy comes up for review.</p> <p>[Tim Marcus joined the meeting and adopted the chair.]</p>	Drop from action list; ensure discussed when admissions policy reviewed	Clerk	Apr '22; Autumn '22
FGB 3.5	<p>Governing Body Matters [Item 3.8 was taken prior to this item.]</p> <p>1. <u>Clerk's recruitment</u> The Chair reported that a further candidate had been interviewed, but not offered the post. This left the Board in need to reconsider recruitment tactics; the Chair asked colleagues to think about networks and contacts that might be used to disseminate information about the post. Further discussion on the recruitment process would be held outside the meeting, and in the meantime the post would be readvertised through usual channels.</p> <p>2. <u>Committee appointments</u> Governors who joined the Board in September 2021, and who had been attending various committees to observe, were appointed to committees as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hannah Etherington: appointed to the Student Committee - Laurie King: appointed to the Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee - Rachel Tapping: appointed to the Community & Engagement Committee <p>3. <u>Pupil Premium Link Governor</u> APPROVED the recommendation of the Student Committee that Hannah Etherington be appointed the link governor for pupil premium.</p>			
FGB 3.6	<p>Chair's Report The Chair noted that it had been a difficult term for the school given the impact of absences due to Covid, but that positives such as continuation of teaching throughout and the excellent annual production were successes worthy of note.</p> <p>Asked by another governor if he had been able to continue coming in to see the Headteacher or had been too busy himself, the Chair confirmed they had last met face-to-face a few weeks previously, but were in regular contact by 'phone.</p>			

<p>FGB 3.7</p>	<p>Headteacher’s Report A written report had been circulated and JM apologised for the lateness of this.</p> <p>JM reported on key matters as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The headline this term had been absences caused by a spike in Covid cases among both students and staff. The impact of absences had been felt across many areas of the school and progress on some other work displaced as a result. Governors observed that circumstances had not been of the school’s making and that adapting to mitigate their effect, as the school had done, was to be commended. - Wider issues relating to poor attendance are a cause for concern, particularly for a small number of Year 11 students who are refusing to attend. Aside from the concern for the students themselves, JM noted that the lack of attendance will have a sizeable impact on the published progress and attainment results for this cohort. Asked how much of the issue was due to the impact of the pandemic, JM responded that whilst it has always been a struggle to get persistent absentees and those on the periphery (i.e. on 90-95% attendance, or less) into school, the response by students and families to the school’s efforts appear to have been weakened by the disruptions to students’ routines created by Covid, with more not responding to the usual systems. In response to further questions, JM confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that most parents of these students had been working hard with the school to encourage attendance, but some had not engaged; • that families and students only sometimes attend meetings with the Local Authority Attendance Officer, noting that in their absence the meeting still goes ahead; • that early intervention support from the Local Authority is good, but the wider system is ineffective, it being incredibly difficult to find support once a child has decided they do not want to attend. She noted that ‘stagnant’ situations like this are difficult, and that schools cannot remove persistently non-attending students from roll as no other provision is available. - The process for deciding on the new approach to Curriculum Support Activities (home learning) had gone well, with research and a survey leading to change. There had been 			
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	<p>no criticism from parents, and several encouraging comments. Monitoring appeared to be working well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The review of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, in line with the new government guidance, and implementation of new policies was taking longer than ideal, but was in hand and would have a higher profile next term. In response to a question on whether there were any issues with behaviour in this regard, JM confirmed that there had been a case, but that it was unlikely anything could have prevented it. - Watersports would be resuming after Easter, and mixed with normal PE lessons to a greater extent, following feedback from students. - Development of the Year 9 curriculum to include employability skills was ongoing and it is intended this will grow next year. - ‘Ambition’ work with careers advisors for Year 11 students has been good and there are signs that it has inspired some students to more readily research and assess their next steps and career choices. - The administrative team had done a tremendous amount of work to pull together a Challenge Week programme and this was being launched to students and parents. - The planned science trip to Switzerland, to include a visit to CERN, had received excellent levels of interest and discussions were underway with the tour operator to see if capacity can be increased. - A number of students had taken part in the UK Maths Challenge, with several getting past the first round and receiving merits. - The introduction of the BTEC in Creative Digital Media is an exciting development. Meetings have been held with new staff: a full-time computing / digital media teacher and an Early Careers Teacher who will teach Digital Media and English. A significant piece of work will be to get digital portfolios up and running for Year 7 and Year 8 students, using their Chromebooks. - In response to a question on the plan for the Music Department, JM confirmed that the current Music Teacher, who is leaving at the end of the academic year, will not be replaced. Mrs Beresford, who is a qualified music teacher, will teach Key Stage 4 and Mr Peake will teach music and drama to Key Stage 3. 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school currently has a vacancy for an English specialist to take a lead in the English Department, with a focus on development of the curriculum. - A governor asked if the higher number of fixed-term exclusions reported was as a result of unsettled behaviour due to Covid. JM felt that this was true to some extent, with some students ‘pushing boundaries’, although noted that several of the exclusions had related to the same issue and that she had no particular concern that it indicated a general decline in behaviour standards. 			
FGB 3.8	<p>Special Educational Needs (SEND) & Medical Conditions Annual Review [This item was taken prior to item 3.5 as Mrs Beresford joined the meeting to present.]</p> <p>I. <u>SEND & Medical Conditions Annual Report</u> Mrs Beresford (MB), Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), was in attendance and had circulated in advance a presentation and data. This gave a profile of SEND need by year group, of those on the SEN Register and in receipt of Education Care and Health Plans (ECHPs), a summary of intervention and support types, with number of students participating, and the current status of ECHP reviews. Data on the number of students with medical conditions, by type and year group, was also summarised in the presentation.</p> <p>MB highlighted key points and answered questions from governors, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a particularly high level of need in the current Year 7, with 45% of students having special educational needs. Observing that this was a significant increase, a governor raised concern that the impact on students without SEN or ECHPs was also likely to be significant. The governor asked whether the school was able to say whether the increase was a result of the impact of the disruption to schooling during the pandemic, or due to the school gaining a good reputation for supporting children with SEND. MB and JM expressed that both factors were likely to have contributed. They reported that the school is seeing the impact of the pandemic in terms of gaps in education and emotional development. In answer to a question on reputational reach (whether students with SEND, and ECHPs in particular, are travelling to the school from outside the immediate local area) they reported that 4 of the 6 students in Year 7 on ECHPs lived in Swanage. JM observed that nationally there is a rapid growth in the 			

	<p>number of ECHPs. Across the school, the school is expecting to rise from 16 students on ECHPs currently, to 20-22 during the next academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noting that nearly 7% of students on roll for the coming academic year will have ECHPs, the national average was checked and confirmed as being 5% nationally and 7.5% in London (source: Department for Education data). It was noted that the government are to release a White Paper announcing a new strategy for the funding of SEND provision by local authorities. - MB noted that concern over limited funding to provide support for students with SEND and ECHPs would be exacerbated by changes to Dorset Council policy in relation to raising the thresholds for providing free services and external help, such as access to Educational Psychologists. The Board agreed that the school should continue to raise concerns over funding and provision of services through the recognised channels within the local authority. - There had been some changes to the SEN profile of the other year groups. In answer to a question, MB confirmed this was due mainly to reassessments and new diagnoses. - MB outlined some of the interventions in place, noting that reading was a focus for many students. They were supported via 1-to-1 reading support and a 'rapid read recovery programme'. An investment in Mirodo software had replaced Lexia, as Mirodo covered all three core subjects – English, Maths and Science - rather than just English. A dyslexia specialist was currently volunteering in support of 10 students. A governor asked about the impact of reading support and whether it is brought to an end for some students to enable others to join the scheme. MB reported that students with very low reading ability have been targeted first, and that they will need 1-to-1 input over a long period of time, possibly years rather than months. The threshold for no longer needing support will depend on progress as monitored by reading age over time. She noted that the 'rapid read programme' offers systematic and targeted (graduated) support and so it is hoped some good progress outcomes will be achieved. Of the 52 students identified as needing support, there were a range of abilities from those requiring the significant input to those whose reading age was just below average. - 9 students were currently engaged with the Emotional, Literacy & Support Assistant (ELSA), with 4 referrals waiting and additional referrals to be made. Equine therapy had shown a successful impact for the 3 students participating and funding is being sought 			
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	<p>for additional sessions. Art therapy was being put in place for 5 students. Forest school is not currently running, but it is hoped to re-establish this from September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A governor asked whether the school is working with primary schools to identify learning issues early, such that children do not arrive at secondary school with previously unidentified or supported needs. JM noted that reading recovery on such a scale (as above) is a new issue, with only 3-4 students needing such levels of support in previous years, and that primary schools have more expertise than secondary in putting support programmes together. During transition meetings, questions will be asked about reading ages to try and model the methods and strategies that are likely to work well. Swanage Primary School had expressed that it is keen to work with The Swanage School to ensure continuation of primary school strategies. MB also noted that examples of strategies for individual students which follow primary practice models, such as weekly spellings, are being used for individual students and will be rolled out more widely. - 73 pupils are currently on the SEN Register, and the SEN Department has implemented a key worker system, with each staff member looking after a number of pupils, responsible for their targets and liaising with parents. Staff are all involved in the ‘assess-do-review’ practice adopted by the Department. Students are generally aware of their targets and the things they should be working on. Information is shared to other staff in several ways, including through the weekly ‘Friday-5’ sessions where strategies for individual students are discussed. - Access arrangements for exams have been arranged, with 40 of the 65 Year 11 students have some type of access arrangement, which is significantly higher than usual. <p>2. <u>SEND Information Report, including local offer</u> Deferred consideration and approval to next meeting.</p> <p>3. <u>SEND Policy</u> MB summarised the changes proposed to the SEND Policy: the vision of the Department had been extended to include bespoke curriculums and a responsive approach, details of interventions and formative assessment had been updated, and the ‘assess-do-review’ approach had been reflected.</p> <p>APPROVED the SEND Policy as presented</p>	<p>Next agenda</p> <p>Republish</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Jul '22</p> <p>Apr '22</p>
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	<p>4. <u>Medical Conditions & Managing Medicines Policy</u> APPROVED as presented, subject to removing the appendix relating to Covid measures which were now out-of-date.</p> <p>The Board thanked Mrs Beresford, commending the impressive work ongoing in the SEND Department.</p> <p>[Mrs Beresford left the meeting.]</p>	Update and republish	Clerk	Apr '22
FGB 3.9	<p>Curriculum</p> <p>JM had circulated a paper asking governors to consider two proposals relating to the curriculum. She noted that the proposals arose from work on the curriculum model; this would have four option blocks to accommodate the new BTEC Creative Digital Media and as a result additional flexibility had been created for other developments.</p> <p>1. <u>Further Maths GCSE</u> JM explained that there would be scope in the curriculum model for Further Maths to be an option rather than an extra-curricular subject.</p> <p>APPROVED Further Maths to be introduced as an option subject for the current Year 9 cohort.</p> <p>2. <u>'I-achieve' for SEN support</u> JM informed governors that the proposal for using an option block to allow students to study one less option and instead use the block for additional support for core subjects such as English and maths or to take certifications such as Level 1 courses, was in effect formalising and extending what occasionally already happens when it is agreed with parents that dropping a GCSE is in a student's best interests. The provision would not necessarily be publicised, instead being discussed with individual students and their parents. By timetabling this as a block over 5 hours, it would be a more effective use of staff resources compared to several students coming out of each option block which requires alternative provision over 15 hours of the timetable.</p> <p>APPROVED the proposal for an 'I-achieve' (or similar title) option.</p>			

	<p>JM also observed that she would like freedom to explore whether triple science becomes an option. It was agreed that it would be wise to defer a decision on this to allow for more consideration and modelling. It was also noted that if too much is changed at once, the ability to analyse the impact of individual changes is lost.</p>			
FGB 3.10	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>I. <u>Report from the link governor for safeguarding</u> Link Governor for Safeguarding Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher reported that she continues to meet with the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer termly and is satisfied with the quality of safeguarding practice. During these meetings, the Single Central Register is checked and the last check had been good, with the SCR being managed more efficiently due to the implementation of an updated spreadsheet. The primary concern at present is the difficulty in securing support for safeguarding and mental health issues from wider services, although expressed this is likely also being experienced by other schools.</p> <p>The Chair asked if anything could be done to escalate concerns about lack of support from the Local Authority, noting that similar issues had been raised under the SEND item.</p> <p>THF reported her view that when children cross the threshold into the child protection system, the support works reasonably well, and that of most concern is the lack of early intervention support for those under the threshold. She noted that it was certainly an area governors need to stay aware of, and that lack of external support for children also has an impact on their attendance and engagement with the school.</p> <p>A staff governor supported this, noting that feedback from several parents has been that they are struggling to access mental health services.</p> <p>It was recognised that the reorganisation at Dorset Council and the impact of Covid on displacing normal work would have created a significant disturbance, but agreed that there may be a case for raising concerns about services with local councillors if escalation by the school through the operational structure is not successful.</p> <p>Agreed the Clerk needs to circulate a form to log that all governors have read the Keeping Children Safe in Education updates.</p>	Log	Clerk	Apr '22

	<p>2. <u>Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy</u> THF reported that it is now a statutory requirement to have a Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy and that the only outstanding issue in the policy draft was to include details of the reporting platform for students once it is finalised how this facility will operate.</p> <p>APPROVED the Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy as drafted, subject to inclusion of final details with regard to reporting.</p> <p>3. <u>Designated teacher for Children Looked After</u> RE-APPROVED Headteacher Jenny Maraspin as the designated teacher for Children Looked After, noting that in practice duties are delegated to the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer Mandy Sands.</p>	Update and publish	THF, MS, Clerk	Apr '22
FGB 3.11	<p>Risk Register Annual Review Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee William Knight reported that the Committee had undertaken a review of the Risk Register with a view to conducting annual risk review more effectively. Inconsistent scoring for the risk ratings had been harmonised and risks rated 'minor' after mitigation had been moved from the main Risk Register to 'Other Risks'. This had left 10 or 11 risks considered as 'major' or 'moderate' after mitigation; the intention is to more methodically review these each year on a rolling basis with input from other committees as appropriate. Input from the other committees would be welcome in relation to developing a schedule of risk review, in particular as to whether there is a preference for annually reviewing all their risks in one go, or considering one or two at each meeting on a rolling basis. Comments were requested to be sent to WK, the Business Manager and Clerk.</p> <p>WK reported that none of the risks had caused the Committee any undue concern at present.</p>	Committees to consider and feed back.	Comm. Chairs	June '22
FGB 3.12	<p>Dorset Council Transport Policy A copy of Dorset Council's consultation on home-school transport policy had been circulated. Business Manager Andrew Thomas reported that he had spoken to the former Headteacher to fully understand the issues and previous work undertaken in response to the inequity in the policy in relation to travel to and from The Swanage School. AT and JM reported on a recent meeting with a senior officer from Dorset Council where the inequity of the current policy had been raised. A written response had been submitted to the consultation asking for</p>			

	reconsideration of the provision in paragraph 1.1.13 which provides free transport for children travelling from Swanage to Wareham for school, but not for students outside Swanage travelling in the other direction.			
FGB 3.13	<p>School Uniform Review</p> <p>A paper had been circulated outlining the provisions of new statutory guidance in relation to costs of school uniform. It was noted that a tender process is underway for a new supplier to take effect from 2023, and that a survey will be sent to all parents, staff and students, a draft of which was shared.</p> <p>A governor observed that the list of restrictions in relation to presentation requirements appeared to apply more to girls than boys. These will be reviewed as part of the process.</p> <p>In response to a question on whether there are plans to revert to changing for PE in school (rather than attending wearing PE kit all day), JM reported that no firm decision had yet been reached, but that wearing PE kit all day was easier for PE lessons.</p>			
FGB 3.14	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>Minutes of the following committee meetings had been circulated. Committee chairs briefly reported and questions were invited.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Student Committee: 19 January 2022</u> IT noted that important matters discussed by the Committee had been covered earlier in the meeting. 2. <u>Community & Engagement Committee: 2 February 2022</u> AR was not in attendance to report; there were no questions or comments. 3. <u>Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee: 16 February 2022</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including management accounts (Business Manager Report December 2021) THF reported that there was nothing particular for the Board to note. 4. <u>Student Committee: 16 March 2022</u> Important matters discussed by the Committee had been covered earlier in the meeting. 			

	<p>5. <u>Audit & Risk Committee: 23 March 2022 (rescheduled from 9 May 2022)</u> WK noted that the verbal account of the recent internal audit had been extremely positive and that this was a reflection on the hard work undertaken by the Business Manager and Finance Officer.</p> <p>6. <u>Staffing, Finance & Premises Committee: 30 March 2022 (rescheduled from 23 March 2022)</u> – <u>Minutes not yet available.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including management accounts (Business Manager Report February 2022) <p>THF noted that there had been an important update from the Business Manager on the financial pressures facing the school in the coming year. AT summarised that costs are rising and this is coupled with pupil numbers having decreased this year with the impact of reduced funding (General Annual Grant) being felt next year due to the funding lag. Whilst increases in funding per pupil might offset the decrease in numbers to some extent, costs were rising across the board and staff pay rises would also be a significant impact. His prediction was that it would be almost impossible to achieve a balanced budget. This was noted by governors.</p> <p>Business Manager reports included with the papers were received and it was noted that the current fiscal year was running well.</p>			
FGB 3.15	<p>Any Other Business <u>Governor elections</u> Noted that three governors would be coming to the end of their term and should be asked whether they will re-stand. Governors were asked to network in order to encourage new candidates to come forward for election at the Annual General Meeting of Education Swanage, to be held in June.</p>			
FGB 3.16	<p>Confidentiality Depending on wording, the item in relation to the Clerk’s recruitment may require confidential minutes.</p>			
	<p>Next meeting To be held on 13 July 2022, and to include (tbc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outcome of Education Swanage governor election at June AGM 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair's report - Headteacher's report - Uniform review and supplier tender - Survey outcomes - School Development Plan end of year review and priorities for next year - Approve 3-year budget - Committee reports - Governance evaluation and impact statement - Governance arrangements 2022-23 			
	The meeting closed at 7.30pm.			