The Swanage School

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 21 March 2018, 5.30pm

Present: Isobel Tooley (Chair), Angela Beal, Nick Brady (from 7.10pm), Tristram Hobson (Headteacher, from 6.30pm), Amanda Rowley, Al Stephens, Carl Styants, Nicky Taylor

In attendance: Danni Drodge (Curriculum Area Leader, Humanities, for item 5.3), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Curriculum Area Leader, English, Drama, French and Music, for item 5.3), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	By
STU 5.1	**Apologies for Absence** None.			
STU 5.2	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations or conflict of interest with any agenda item.			
STU 5.3	**Curriculum Area Leader Presentations** Kay Lawton (KL) and Danni Drodge (DD) gave a joint presentation on their curriculum areas, based on questions provided in advance by the Chair. KL's curriculum area covered English, modern foreign languages (French), drama (and performing arts) and music, and DD's covered geography, history, philosophy & religious education (PRE) and art. The questions covered are summarised below. <u>Messages taken from data and actions arising from data scrutiny:</u> - KL and DD displayed a snapshot of spring term progress data for each year group in each subject, showing predicted % of the cohort achieving grade 9 to 4 and 9 to 5. The data showed a wide disparity between these two levels for some of the subjects, indicating that the "jump" from grade 4 to grade 5 was problematic. Issues affecting teachers in terms of the new GCSE specifications and knowledge of where the grade boundaries would lie were explained, which were the same issues English and mathematics teachers had faced during the past year when their subject specifications and grading had changed. KL noted that even in English, where there had already been a year of experience, there was still very little information and very few exemplars from the exam boards to assist teachers. Both KL and DD felt that this had led teachers to be conservative in their predictions and to some extent over-rely on FFT (Fischer Family Trust) grades.			

- Data for Year 9 in particular indicated concerns for the 9-5 achievement levels in some subjects. Noting the wide range of ability in this year group, KL reported on actions that already had, and would continue to be, taken to challenge and support further. This included, for example, identifying those students with higher level potential and ensuring the right level of challenge for them. The data for option subjects would be reviewed once the option choices were released. It was also noted that in the GL baseline testing for literacy, Year 9 performance was significantly below the national average.

- The overall picture was Year 10 was also of some concern, it being noted that this was also a polarised year group, with some very academically-able students but also a number who struggled to access the curriculum. It was felt this group were being supported well, but additional interventions would be needed.

- It was recognised that staff were focused and working incredibly hard to support Year 11 prepare for GCSE's, for whom there were 5-6 more weeks of teaching. There would be a limited number of revision sessions for Year 11 taking place in the Easter Holidays, including in PRE and science where additional time was felt to be needed. Opportunities for intervention support with Years 9 and 10 would increase once the Year 11 cohort had completed their exams.

- All subjects were focusing on exam practice. KL and DD explained that the new GCSEs involved a shift in assessment criteria towards higher order skills, demonstrated by the need for an increased level of written analysis and evaluation. Most papers were higher specification than previously and foundation level papers in many subjects had been withdrawn. This focus meant that high level essay-writing and evaluative skills were important even in subjects where previously there had been less emphasis on them, such as drama, and represented a significant change for teachers as well as students. Transferable skills between subjects meant that the benefits of teachers working together across subjects was even greater. It was noted that KL had delivered CPD sessions to other staff to share experience of the impact of the new assessment schemes.

- The sharing of good practice between departments continued to grow, it being noted that in many subject there is only one specialist teacher. In geography, DD noted that she is networking with other geography teachers nationally via online forums where developments in teaching and lesson plans are discussed and resources shared.

- DD reported that she is working with colleagues to redesign the project based learning (PBL) curriculum, with plans to increase the level of geography and PRE content, as it was currently felt to be overly skewed toward history, and to develop the skills demanded by the new assessment schemes.

- DD and KL noted that geography, history, PRE and French would, in particular, benefit from a review of the curriculum model to increase the frequency of lessons in these subjects in KS3.

<u>Challenging the most-able students and incorporating exam techniques:</u>

- KL and DD reported on each subject in their curriculum area, having identified through learning walks, lesson observations and work scrutiny where there was unevenness in the level of challenge and therefore scope for improvement. Further staff development was planned to improve consistency and experience. It was noted that good schemes of work are designed to challenge the most able students, with extension activities appropriately built into lessons, and that these are continually developing. Examples of the schemes of work and assessment criteria sheets used by staff and students, and self-reflection by students, were displayed for the benefit of the committee.

- DD noted that whilst the Key Stage 3 (KS3) schemes of work in PBL are already designed to challenge the most able, a further extension of this, particularly through development of skills, would be incorporated into the redesign of the PBL curriculum.

- On the whole, KL and DD felt that the incorporation of exam techniques was good for Years 10 and 11, although not yet embedded during the lower years. Drama was given as an example where long term planning had been updated to reflect the need for increased essay-writing in this subject, with exam technique built in to lessons in every 2-week teaching cycle. DD gave an example of using "structure strips" with success in Year 8 (these having previously been used for GCSE exam practice in the higher years) and planned to incorporate these techniques more fully across the lower years. Examples were given of subjects where further development of the assessment framework sheets into lessons would be beneficial and where schemes of work required updating.

- It was felt that techniques for the new GCSEs would need to be consistently embedded into teaching for lower years in order to drive success for future cohorts of GCSE students.

<u>Performance of boys</u>

- Addressing a question of whether Year 10 and 11 boys are continuing to underperform in terms of value added, KL and DD summarised the numbers and the actions in hand. KL reported that in English, French, performing arts and drama there were relatively few issues and where boys were shown to be underperforming she was fairly confident progress was being made and/or support and interventions were in place. For example, in Year 10 English where 7 boys had been identified as underperforming, the size of the group was being reduced and material constantly adapted.

- DD reported concerns with performance in PRE for boys in both Year 10 and 11, noting that there had been a significant level of disengagement over the past year. This had improved since the permanent teacher had returned and progress was being seen. Intervention sessions were in place twice a week for Year 11 and would be put in place for Year 10 in the latter part of the summer term. In geography and history a small number of boys had been identified as underperforming. Material and delivery was constantly being adapted and interventions running. In art there were no particular issues identified.

<u>Engaging with parents</u>

- It was acknowledged that staff capacity for developing new strategies for engaging with parents was currently limited. Phone calls and emails were being made as usual and did make some difference, for example in homework completion. Postcards sent home to celebrate successes had been introduced in geography and would be rolled out to other departments, along with increasing the number of positive entries on Progresso, to improve the level of engagement in relation to positive achievements and behaviours as well as negative ones.

- Governors recognised that engaging with parents, particularly those that were currently disengaged, was a whole school issue rather than an individual subject issue, particularly for early engagement at the stage a student was identified as making too little progress.

<u>Lesson studies</u>

- Lesson studies in drama had been a priority focus, given the poor results last year and demands of the new drama GCSE. This had involved extensive communication with the exam board, close analysis of exemplars, links with other schools, and some lesson observations and team teaching. As a result of these lesson studies, performances were based on exemplar findings, exam techniques embedded in each cycle of teaching and greater links to the English department put in place in relation to materials and methods. A similar exercise with performing arts is planned. KL noted some reservations about the performing arts GCSE and will be considering whether drama might be a more suitable option.

- Due to changing staff there had not been an opportunity for such deep level lesson studies in the humanities subjects, but the staff in these departments would benefit from being in involved with the scrutiny and development of the PBL curriculum.

	<u>Use of literacy testing to develop priorities for intervention</u> - KL reported that all students had undergone GL testing in literacy at the start of the academic year. Combined with the English department's baseline testing, this had identified that there were particular literacy concerns in KS3. This was being targeted through the identification of individual students who required support with literacy and the sharing of this information to all staff such that support could be provided in all lessons. Target groups for KS4 were also in place. The exercise had also highlighted a number of students whose GL tests results had been very different to expectations based on KS2 SATS scores. - Learning walks had revealed that some staff were insecure in teaching literacy and this is being addressed by staff training through CPD sessions to increase confidence and improve consistency in the way literacy is taught. <u>Review of Project Based Learning for Humanities in Years 7 and 8</u> - The effectiveness of, and plans for, embedding literacy (and mathematics) was being discussed as part of the PBL redesign. [TH joined the meeting] Governors thanked KL and DD for their informative presentation which contributed to governors' understanding and ability to monitor the issues facing staff and students. It was recognised that self-evaluation and reflection of this type by teaching staff is invaluable in the continued development of teaching and learning at the school.			
STU 5.4	**Minutes of the Last Meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.			
STU 5.5	**Matters Arising & Actions** Where not elsewhere on the agenda <u>STU 3.5 (STU 1.4) Surveys</u> Summarised responses to the recent Parent Survey had been circulated, it being noted that the Student Committee had submitted a number of questions in relation to bullying, behaviour, citizenship and collective worship. It was agreed to defer consideration of these to the next meeting when there would be more time for discussion. The Clerk reported that the Parent Survey would also be discussed by the full governing body at its			

	meeting on 28 March 2018. TH noted that he had picked out some themes and had circulated these to staff. He was meeting with two parents who had identified themselves, to understand negative feedback they had left. <u>STU 4.6 Pupil Premium</u> AGREED to commend to the full governing body the appointment of Nicky Taylor to the role of link governor for Pupil Premium. TH noted that Pupil Premium was now an item at every leadership team meeting, with leaders and middle leaders looking at individual students on a cohort by cohort basis to identify and support their needs, and were confident that they were targeting effectively. NT would be updated from these meetings, as well as meeting on a regular basis with the Deputy Headteacher, to understand and monitor the use of funding, support and progress of disadvantaged students. NT reported that Pupil Premium information on the website was in the process of being updated.	FGB agenda	Clerk	Mar '18
	<u>STU 4.10 Policies</u> The Academically More Able Policy and Drugs & Substance Abuse policies had been republished following their approval at the last meeting. It was noted that the updating of the Sex & Relationships Education Policy remained a work in progress, with input still expected from "Targeted Youth". The redrafted Attendance Policy and new Positive Mental Health Policy would be considered later on the agenda (see item 5.8).	Update SRE Policy	JM	May '18
STU 5.6	**Progress Data** Governors had been provided with a full breakdown of data for each year group in each subject, along with mock exam data for Year 11. Data for a significant number of subjects had been discussed as part of the CAL presentation in item 5.3 above. Additional points were made as follows in reviewing the data set: 1. <u>Year 11 progress and mock exam results</u> With one or two subject exceptions, which were discussed with governors, there was general confidence in relation to the expected performance of the Year 11 cohort in the GCSEs. The mock exam data, as expected, was lower than the predicted outcomes for the actual exams. For the cohort overall a positive Progress 8 score was expected, although TH cautioned governors against taking the predicted data literally, caveating as at previous meetings that cohort level data becomes over-inflated when it derives from grades recorded for each individual student, particularly where the grades for individuals are an aspirational (although realistic) judgement of what that student could achieve at their best. Data currently predicted 59% achieving grades 9 to 5 in English and mathematics and it was noted that 50% would be a good outcome.			

	2. <u>Year 10</u> Noting that Year 10 had been discussed as being of particular concern in terms of progress at the last meeting, the Chair asked for an update. TH reported that the leadership team had reviewed each student, including looking at the overall curriculum taken by each. A number of curriculum changes had been made as a result (e.g. dropping/changing subjects) and interventions added. As noted in 5.3 above, he reported this was a polarised year group, with some very strong students whilst others were academically weak. The cohort also included a significant number of persistent absentees. Meetings with the parents of the persistent absentees (attendance less than 90%) were being held later in the week. [NB joined the meeting] 3. <u>Year 7,8 and 9</u> Year 7 and 8 had performed to expected levels in the GL testing and there were no concerns about these cohorts currently. As noted in the CAL presentation, Year 9 progress in English and PRE was of concern at present and results from the GL testing were poor, it being noted that there is a wide range of ability in this cohort. However, TH noted the positive attitude of many students in this year, for example, in their involvement in extra-curricular activities such as recent stage productions, and also noted the tendency for there to be a Year 9 "dip".			
STU 5.7	**Student Survey** A full student survey was still to be completed and would be revisited at a future meeting.	Follow up	TH/JM	May '18

STU 5.8	**Policies**
	
	1. <u>Attendance Policy</u>
	APPROVED the updated policy subject to:
	- clarification that students return "welcome back" forms to their tutor
	- insertion of information on the rewards for pupils who have good or improving attendance as follows:
	  o Special days out
	  o Attendance Cup for best tutor group
	  o Attendance certificates issued each half term
	  o A "raffle" for those with 100% attendance each half-term from which three winners receive a voucher
	  o 95% or higher attendance required for the Challenge Award
	- As noted above, attendance meetings with persistent absentees have been scheduled for this week.
		Update & publish	Clerk	Mar '18

	2. <u>Positive Mental Health Policy</u> **APPROVED** the policy, with minor changes as follows: - deletion of reference to a "lead" first aider - updating of the monitoring and review section as agreed at the last meeting AGREED that the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer be asked to "roll out" the policy.	Update & publish Notify MS	Clerk TH/ JM	Mar '18 Mar '18
	[AS left the meeting]			
STU 5.9	**Reports** 1. <u>Special Educational Needs</u> The Chair reported that the governor with responsibility for SEND had resigned as a governor and therefore a new SEND link would be needed. Committee members were asked to give this some thought, with a view to an appointment being made at the meeting of the full governing body on 28 March 2018. 2. <u>Mental Health</u> There was nothing particular to report, with the new Positive Mental Health Policy having been discussed earlier on the agenda (see item 5.8). 3. <u>E-Safety</u> NB reported that he had met with the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer after she and the IT Technician had completed the 360^0 Safe online safety self-review tool. A written report and copy of the self-review outcomes had been circulated. Of the 28 areas covered by the review, the school had met or exceeded the threshold for accreditation in all but 2, an improvement since the last review. NB noted that the review tool was proving to be useful in highlighting areas the school could still make progress on, whilst reassuring that things are done well. However, it was unlikely the school would want to apply for formal accreditation due to the cost involved. Greater involvement of parents on questions of online safety had been flagged as desirable by the self-evaluation, and ways of doing this would be given some consideration. The involvement of "tech-savvy" students to work with the school, for example in relation to online trends, was seen positively and was a way to engage students who previously had, or might have, used their knowledge and skills for detrimental purposes.			

	The co-ordinator of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum had attended the meeting to discuss her work on PSHE, it being noted that use of continuing professional development (CPD) sessions for a greater amount of staff training on e-safety would strengthen delivery and effectiveness. The low incidences of "sexting" and online bullying compared to other schools was pleasing. There was discussion of the use by teachers of personal mobile phones to take photographs during school trips and events, it being noted this needed tightening up, being against school policy and safeguarding guidance. On a related note, TH reported that the use of mobile phones to generate and upload images for a school Instagram account had been discussed by the Community & Engagement Committee at a recent informal meeting, with the conclusion that this would be problematic. The Clerk informed the committee that posting to Instagram could now be done without a mobile phone and so this did not need to be a barrier to the school having an account. The report mentioned both a data audit and an internal audit of technical security strategy, and it was noted that if these had been documented then they would be useful evidence for compliance with the requirements of GDPR. The headteacher agreed to follow up on this with the IT technician in the first instance. Compliments were given to the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer and the IT Technician for their work on e-safety and e-security, and to NB for his monitoring and report.	Check whether audits have been documents	TH	Apr '18
STU 5.10	**Any Other Business** <u>Exams policies & procedures</u> The Chair noted that a number of new exams-related policies and procedures were required this year and that the Examinations Officer had these in hand. An existing Exams Policy had been updated and a new Internal Assessment Appeals Procedure produced, however the Chair reported her view that these were operational matters and did not require governor approval, thereby should be agreed by the Examinations Officer and Headteacher. One issue in relation to internal assessment appeals that was referred to the committee was a question of when a refund should be given in the event of a mark change arising from an appeal (noting that this was for first-stage appeals on controlled assessments prior to grades being known). It was AGREEED that a refund should be applied if the mark changed by >=10% of the original mark.			

	A new Disability Policy (Exams) had been circulated as this contained a number of policy matters which fell under the governing body's remit. The Chair asked for any comments to be made by the end of Thursday 22 March 2018 in order that the policy could be finalised before Easter. <u>Ofsted</u> The committee were pleased with the verbal feedback given by the Ofsted inspector at the end of the Ofsted inspection, and noted the points that are expected to be included in the formal letter.		Committee	22/03
STU 5.11	**Confidentiality** No item would require confidential minutes.			
	The next meeting will be held on 16 May 2018, and will include: • Progress data • School Development Plan objectives • Policy updates • Parent survey responses relevant to Student committee remit			
	The meeting closed at 8pm.			