

The Swanage School

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STUDENT COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 20th November 2019, 5.30pm

Present: Isobel Tooley (Chair), Peter Collins, Jenny Maraspin (Acting Headteacher), Helen O'Connor, Alex Duke, Al Stephens, Nicky Taylor

In attendance: Sarah Everitt (Curriculum Area Leader, for item STU 2.3), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Sam Kerwood (Curriculum Area Leader, for item STU 2.3), Kay Lawton (Acting Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	Papers
STU 2.1	Apologies for Absence None.			
STU 2.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any item.			
STU 2.3	<p>Curriculum Area Leader (CAL) Presentations Sarah Everitt (CAL for Mathematics, Design & Technology and Computing) and Sam Kerwood (CAL for Science and Catering) presented to the committee on the following areas as requested by the Chair: action plans for their curriculum areas, continuous professional learning objectives for their teams, assessment frame-works and mark-books, home learning, and any concerns.</p> <p><u>Departmental action plans:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SE reported that CALs had reviewed last year's action plan, had conducted an analysis of GCSE results and reviewed performance management objectives. This had fed into the School Development Plan to ensure that objectives for the whole school and departments correlated. - A new methodology for setting objectives had been offered to staff members in Maths, making use of the IRIS software to video lessons for a joint CAL/teacher review to identify action points. - SE reported that the school's aim of achieving progress in the top 20% of schools nationally had translated, in the Maths department, into an action to improve progress for students with lower prior attainment, as this had been identified as the key issue affecting progress in Maths; this would also help address progress for disengaged and disadvantaged students given the overlap with low prior attainment. In Design & Technology a key objective is to develop Key Stage 3 (KS3) to maximise 			

potential at KS4. In Computing, delivery of the curriculum would be reviewed and adjustments made to the scheme of work and assessment to maximise the impact on learning, along with a content refresh. Progress for middle and high achievers would also need to be sustained. To achieve these aims, focus would be on planning and student retention.

- Noting that Science GCSE results had been poor, SK reported that the departmental action plan for Science is therefore broad, to cover improvement of teaching and learning within the department as a whole. She explained that the schemes of work in Physics and Chemistry have been adjusted such that they are better mapped to support both curricula, that cumulative testing has been re-instated as a half-termly activity to improve retention of knowledge and recall skills, that adjustments have been made to teaching following a reflection on practices and a review of GCSE papers, and that some new resources have been purchased to support teaching of certain subjects. The initial focus has been on KS4, however continuing professional learning (CPL) sessions will also focus on KS3 going into KS4.
- SK reported that in Science, disadvantaged students are identified on contextualised seating plans. There are plans to increase monitoring of classroom management and interventions through joint CAL/SENCo learning walks, and she also noted that disadvantaged students are provided with revision guides, resources and further opportunities such as trips and supporting primary school lessons to gain exposure to science in wider contexts. She reported that sets are used in Science, however noted that the bottom set are all pupil premium students and so this will be reviewed.
- A governor asked if it is generally the case that bottom sets are pupil premium students, if there are mixed ability sets in some subjects and if disadvantaged pupils tend to develop more positively in mixed ability groups. SE reported that sets are used in Maths but pupils are moved to higher sets when talent for the subject is identified or where it is thought that a student may otherwise benefit from the higher set. She noted that staff intend to re-look at planning in relation to sets, particularly as there are signs that it is easier to achieve a grade 4 or 5 on the higher maths paper which may be an issue for borderline students who have been in the lower sets (and may get “set blocked” as they miss the teaching for the higher paper). KL reported that in English the arrangements for sets changes from year to year depending on the best fit for the cohort, it having been found that some year groups work well in mixed ability sets, whereas a polarised year group, for example, can benefit from having a small nurture group for the lower ability pupils. Therefore, where sets are used they are generally fluid and on principle care is taken to avoid a “sink” group of disengaged pupils forming.

Continuing Professional Learning (CPL)

- SE reported that the actions identified in the departmental action plans were the key focus for CPL sessions, with staff members taking a lead on particular areas.
- As lack of retention has been identified as a key theme across most subjects, addressing this has been the topic of CPL sessions. Actions arising have included giving high exposure to exam questions, cumulative testing, reviewing schemes of work (adding “review and fix” points, using interleaving methods, improving spacing of key topics and embedding recall activities to focus on past topics as well as the current topic), along with developing assessment strategy and homework to support and improve retention.
- The Design & Technology teacher is working with the CAL for English to develop common language and literacy skills, particularly for use in the non-examined assessment.
- Embedding maths across the curriculum remained an objective and SE reported that work previously done to develop cross-curricular links between Maths and Science would be refocused and that working with other subjects, for example Science and Geography, would be progressed.
- In Science, CPL would be focusing on development of teaching to embed basic scientific and maths skills that students should have on completion of KS3 Science, as it is believed that students are losing marks on skills-based questions and are struggling with the maths content of the Science curricula. With reference to high prior attainers not performing as expected in the GCSE, a governor asked if this was due to a lack of basic skills or other issues. SK responded that as yet the exam board question-level analysis had not been undertaken, but this will be useful.
- IRIS reflections will also be used in Science, for teachers to learn from each other, focusing on target students and student engagement.

Mark-books and assessment frameworks

- Both CALs reported positive feedback on the new mark-books, noting that they are providing ongoing information on student learning, enabling teachers to more quickly identify which students are struggling with particular topics or skills, and to pick up issues they may have not previously identified. This facilitates specific, targeted intervention throughout the year and allows CALs to check that staff in their departments are addressing issues that are being flagged by the mark-books.

- SK noted that termly data-drops on “attitude to learning”, along with mark-book data, have supported identification of disengaged students and staff are attempting to identify possible reasons (e.g. teacher/student relationship, unidentified special educational needs, home difficulties).
- In response to questions regarding the interventions put in place when disengaged students are identified, SK reported that teachers will talk to the student, understand the issue and ask the student what can be done to help resolve it. Activities in class are being adapted if needs are identified and extra support can be put in place if required. She noted that Year 11 tutor groups have been established earlier than in the past.

Home learning

- Both CALs reported that home learning is being reworked, with a focus on making it relevant, useful and appropriate, and has been renamed “curriculum support activities (CSA)”.
- It was noted that research (Hattie Effect) had demonstrated traditional homework does not have a noticeable impact on student achievement. In Maths, various online systems are being trialled to support numeracy skills and have already made a significant difference to the amount of homework being completed, as well as providing useful information to teachers. In Computing, homework tasks are also largely online. In Science, CSA is being developed with the use of shorter but frequent tasks including a focus on key scientific skills, starter activities for the next lesson, short recall tasks and stretch/challenge activities. SK reported that the next step will be to ensure CSA’s are appropriately differentiated for all students in terms of need.

Concerns

- SK reported that CAL workload is a concern and that additional planning time would be beneficial, particularly in relation to putting a long term plan in place for the new Food and Nutrition GCSE. She noted that both she and another teacher will be undertaking external training to support their teaching of this. The Design & Technology teacher would be providing support for a framework in relation to coursework (non-examined assessment (NEA)), which is 50% of the Food and Nutrition GCSE.
- Governors asked how the Senior Leadership Team are supporting SK, given these concerns. JM reported that time off timetable has been given to work with the Design & Technology teacher to plan the schemes of work and NEA dashboard for Catering / Food & Nutrition, and for training. Classes will be covered internally or by supply, at time when minimal impact will be felt.

	<p>- Plans for teachers who need additional support were also discussed with governors.</p> <p>A governor asked about staff buy-in to the overall vision and strategy in relation to curriculum developments and JM reported that this had been positive so far.</p> <p>It was also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> noted that catering is now being taught by different specialist teachers in school, with a focus on embedding practical skills. A full length mock will take place to fully prepare students for the experience of the final exam. In Year 10, the GCSE has moved to AQA GCSE Food and Nutrition, in which there is a greater cross-over with the nutritional aspects of the biology GCSE which will help consolidate learning. confirmed that from the current Year 10, all students are taking Triple (separate) Science to start, then some will drop to Combined Science. Lower ability students should benefit from the teaching time allocated to separate sciences even if they later drop to Combined Science. observed that crossover between departments is enhanced by some teachers having dual teaching roles, for example two members of staff teach Maths and Science and another teaches Catering and Science. Agreed that there should be a demonstration of mark-books at the next meeting of the committee. <p>[Thanks were recorded to Sarah Everitt and Sam Kerwood, who left the meeting]</p> <p>The Chair asked the senior leaders if they had anything to add on the subjects covered. KL observed that sharing best practice between departments has paid dividends, for example in relation to planning.</p>	Agenda	Clerk	Jan '20
STU 2.4	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.</p>			
STU 2.5	<p>Matters Arising and Actions Where not elsewhere on the agenda</p>			

	<p><u>STU 1.6 Middle Leader Training</u> Ho’C, who had offered to see if Teach First have any training the school might access, reported that unfortunately the school was not eligible, however it was noted that middle leader training is being explored through links with John White from the Sigma Teaching Alliance.</p> <p><u>STU 1.6 GCSE Results Review</u> Many of the actions identified by the review of GCSE results had been covered by the CAL presentations (see item STU 2.3 above). KL briefed governors that the Humanities and English departments have also looked at CSA, and that outcomes feel positive. In Drama, elements of the NEA are being reviewed, and in French there may be a review of whether there is too much content for pupils to deal with. In Philosophy & Religious Education and History, it appeared the materials work better for academically more able students, so the focus here would be on the less academically able. Currently planning is block teaching and so interleaving will be considered. Behaviour management, particularly for newly qualified teachers, is being reviewed through the use of IRIS and has looked at pace, behaviour, activities and the level of engagement, with positive results.</p> <p><u>STU 1.8 School Development Plan (SDP)</u> The Chair noted that JM had adjusted some of the SDP objectives after feedback at the last meeting, which the full governing body had approved. Raising awareness of the service level agreement relating to staff wellbeing would be an ongoing action.</p> <p><u>STU 1.10 Policies</u> The Chair noted that there had been no comments on the policies initially considered at the last meeting (Academically More Able Policy and Uniform Policy), with the exception of the agreement that reference to a “bank of outstanding work” should be removed from the Academically More Able Policy. Both policies were therefore APPROVED subject to this one update.</p>	Update and republish	Clerk	Nov ‘19
STU 2.6	<p>GCSE Options Review It was noted that the GCSE options booklet requires a thorough review to ensure out of date references are removed.</p> <p>JM confirmed that there is no proposed change to the GCSE options for the current Year 9, apart from Catering & Hospitality changing to Food & Nutrition. All students through Years 7-9 have done single sciences and will continue with this (Triple Science) into Year 10, as agreed last year. In response to questions, JM noted that she was aware that this has not worked well in some schools, but that these tended to be schools which do not teach all the sciences in the lower years. The decision had been based on examples where compulsory Triple Science had been successful.</p>			

STU 2.7	<p>Student Progress Review</p> <p>JM reported that as there is no progress data as yet, teachers have used the data they do have and noted that mark-books have become significant in identifying trends and weak areas for individual students and putting actions in place. As noted in the CAL presentations, planning has focused on interleaving methodology to improve retention and recall. Department meetings are focusing on student books and discussion of individual students' progress and needs. Use of the Hub is also being focused.</p> <p>Governors asked about areas of concern. JM responded that Year 9 has a 60% risk of complacency based on "Attitude to Learning" data, and it is felt that there are potentially not enough students in the group with a positive attitude to effect a change. This cohort is also significantly lower in terms of writing ability than they should be. Leaders have already met to try and scrutinise the root of the problem to put plans in place to address it. In Year 11 there are some concerns around Physics knowledge, but this has been identified early and extra intervention time has been allocated.</p> <p>JM noted that Year 11 are being targeted in small groups with CALs as their tutors. Tutor time is being used effectively and the Year 11 attitude to learning is reasonably good.</p>			
STU 2.8	<p>Knowledge Transfer</p> <p>The Chair asked for information on how knowledge transfer is assured when new teachers arrive and pick up a class. JM explained that where possible there is a handover with the outgoing teacher, or that two CALs meet with the new teacher. A proforma would be introduced to help the process. JM also observed that mark-books should help with identifying if the work set out in the scheme of work has actually been covered.</p> <p>Governors asked if there were any new teachers this academic year and how this process had worked for them. Art was the only subject and the handover was with the CAL who was able to pass on a lot on information. Nonetheless the new teacher, who is experienced and knows what needs to be achieved, was working hard to bring pupils up to date.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Staff Governor if he had seen good practice elsewhere. He felt that it is also important to know who the students are, rather than simply what they have done academically. He suggested that profiling the characteristics of students might be worth considering as part of a handover, for example the IRIS software could be used to record an interview with each student and the outgoing teacher, with students asked about their strengths and weaknesses and invited to say what they feel they need from the incoming teacher. The committee endorsed this idea, noting that it was in keeping with the human scale ethos.</p>	Consider implementing for future staff changes	JM/ KL	Easter '20

STU 2.9	<p>Principles and Practice for Subsidising Individual Student Activities and Equipment / Materials / Uniform</p> <p>The Chair explained that a question had arisen at the Finance & Premises Committee in relation to process and criteria for allocating pupil premium funding for trips, activities or resources for individual students.</p> <p>JM reported that every pupil premium student is given a discount for trips and that this is planned into the costings for trips. Pupil premium students also receive revision guides. JM also explained that a “pot” of funds is set aside for use on individual students, with referrals mostly coming out of child protection reviews or directly from the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, the office staff who have detailed knowledge of pupil circumstances or from tutors. Responses to emergency situations would also come from this “pot”. Currently, requests are considered by the Senior Leadership Team on an ad hoc basis, however JM accepted that there should be a more robust process and that, at the very least, a referral form should be implemented so that there is a record of requests and decisions.</p>	Create form	JM / AC	Jan '20 F&P
STU 2.10	<p>Link Governor Reports</p> <p><u>Pupil Premium</u></p> <p>NT reported that she had not yet had the opportunity to meet with JM, but has identified questions to be raised. She noted that she wants to better understand whether Ofsted are looking differently at pupil premium under the new framework. JM was able to report that, as part of their “deep dive”, inspectors will be looking at pupil premium students and will expect each subject leader to be able to articulate and demonstrate with evidence how they are supporting them. In addition, they will consider what can be extrapolated from the data, particularly if the data demonstrates a gap in progress or attainment for pupil premium students compared to other groups. They would expect to see positive discrimination to address any gaps.</p> <p>Governors asked if the school could currently demonstrate what Ofsted would be looking for. JM believed they could, but would be unlikely at the present time to be able to demonstrably evidence that actions being taken are closing the gap. However, it was questioned whether many schools would be able to show this. It was noted that teacher expectations and culture is a top defining factor in closing the gap, i.e. to teach the same, in the same way, and acknowledged that it is hard to eradicate unconscious bias.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the reassurance that strategy for pupil premium students remains a focus, and that there is a desire to ensure that pupil premium students are supported. She observed that an update of the annual pupil premium statement would be required for the next meeting and in the meantime a meeting between JM and NT was needed.</p>	Meet & discuss strategy	JM/NT	Jan '20 Student

STU 2.11	Policies Consideration of the Literacy Policy was deferred until the next meeting.	Agenda	Clerk	Jan '19
STU 2.12	Any Other Business None.			
STU 2.13	Confidentiality No item would require confidential minutes.			
	Next meeting Wednesday 29 January 2020, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDP mid-year review - Risk register annual review - Pupil Premium annual review - Student progress review - E-Safety annual review - Policy review 			
	The meeting closed at 8pm			