

The Swanage School

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 5.30pm

**Present (via remote access):** Helen O'Connor (Chair), Peter Collins, Alex Duke, Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher, Adam Hines, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher)

**In attendance (via remote access):** Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Dan Ringrow (Head of House, for item 5.7.3), Mandy Sands (Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, for item 5.6)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held via remote access in accordance with guidelines in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.			
STU 5.1	<b>Election of Meeting Chair</b> Helen O'Connor was elected to chair the meeting in the absence of Isobel Tooley.			
STU 5.2	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Isobel Tooley. Kay Lawton would be late joining the meeting. Carl Styants was not in attendance.			
STU 5.3	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
STU 5.4	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
STU 5.5	<b>Matters Arising &amp; Actions</b> Where not elsewhere on the agenda  An action list had been circulated, with updates provided on actions and matters arising from the last meeting. The Chair noted that the discussion on pupil premium had been deferred to a future meeting given other priorities, and expressed that (as the pupil premium link governor) she had no particular concerns in relation to this area.			

STU 5.6	<p><b>Children Looked After</b> Mandy Sands, Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer, was in attendance for this item.</p> <p>1. <u>Children Looked After Annual Report</u> A report on the progress and support of two children looked after had been circulated by the Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer, it being noted that one student has since transitioned to another school. She reported that another child looked after will join the school in September.</p> <p>2. <u>Children Looked After Policy</u> <b>RE-APPROVED</b> the Children Looked After Policy subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- re-wording point 10 to reflect that the fortnightly mentoring sessions are in partnership with the young person, with their engagement paramount. THF offered to send some appropriate wording to include.</li> <li>- amending point 4 to include reference to learning remotely at home should flexibility be required (for example if students need to self-isolate or are otherwise not able to attend school).</li> </ul> <p>[Mandy Sands left the meeting.]</p>	Update and republish	Clerk	Jun '21
STU 5.7	<p><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>1. <u>Support from Dorset Council</u> JM reported that the school has been experiencing a lack of support from Dorset Council in relation to behaviour, attendance and exclusion since their re-structuring and as the new officer appointed has been off work recently. She noted that the new officer has significant experience in relation to exclusions but is new to attendance support.</p> <p>In response to a question as to whether lack of support is specific to the Purbeck locality or a wider issue as a result of the new Council model, JM expressed that she felt it was localised and confirmed that she had started to escalate concerns over support provision.</p> <p>2. <u>Update on behaviour since the return to school and any resulting actions</u> JM reported that low level disruption appears to have increased since the return from lockdown and had been a particular issue in the classes of a supply teacher where behaviour management had been less effective. In addition to a rise in low level negative behaviour, an increase in emotional and wellbeing issues,</p>			

	<p>such as stress and anxiety, had been seen among students. An increased level of support, for example “walk &amp; talk” sessions with volunteer mentors, had been put in place.</p> <p>JM also reported that workload has been relentless for staff since the return to school and that the demands of awarding teacher-assesses grades in place of the cancelled GCSEs has been having a negative impact on the wellbeing of teachers and likely to be affecting their capacity to manage behaviour as effectively as usual.</p> <p>[KL joined the meeting].</p> <p>The Chair asked the leadership team to let governors know if there is anything tangible that governors can do to help support themselves and staff. JM expressed that, for the leadership team, forbearance and understanding that times are not “back to normal” and that workload is at a maximum would be appreciated, with the consequent likelihood that this will impact on the capacity to be held to account as normal. For staff, it was noted that any gestures of thanks, as proposed by the Chair, would be appreciated.</p> <p>3. <u>Attitude to learning</u></p> <p>Dan Ringrow (DR) was in attendance to present to governors on strategies for behaviour management, reporting on a research project he has undertaken to increase the attainment of pupils by improving their attitude to learning through increasing the effectiveness of teaching and mentoring. He noted that with improved individual attitudes to learning, there would be greater whole class engagement, increasing effectiveness of teaching and leading to improvements in academic attainment. In terms of implementing changes to processes, these should be developmental by improving teaching and learning, should create minimal additional workload, be long-term, meaningful and trackable.</p> <p>He reported that in terms of identifying students with a poor attitude to learning, three “tiers” could be considered - a top tier who always engage well and work at their best, a middle tier who are often engaged but can lose focus, and a lower tier who fall behind due to their frequent disengagement and who are therefore not reaching their potential. Whole school strategies should benefit both the middle and lower tiers, and in addition students identified as lower tier should receive targeted one-to-one mentoring. Key to the process is discussing with students their barriers to learning, thereby affording the ability to create solutions in conjunction with students (and their parents), and to continually improve on these through a process of reflecting and modifying the initial strategies tried.</p>		
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	<p>Pupils requiring support would be identified through data drops, which include attitude to learning data submitted by teachers, in addition to behaviour entries. Data can also be analysed by department or individual to try and identify any trends. Knowledge and best practice can be shared between departments if trends show that there are departments or teachers who inspire better attitude to learning.</p> <p>DR noted that mentoring focused on self-worth, aspirations, barriers to engagement, resilience and relationships has been shown to work well where students have good attendance, low self-esteem, are high achievers but disengaged and for those who have low levels of parental support.</p> <p>Cascading information to other staff and sharing tips on best strategies to help individual pupils is an important element of the process and is achieved through short, focused sessions during the 'Friday-5' continuing professional development (CPD) sessions, via TEAMS communication and notes on Arbor (Management Information System).</p> <p>In departments, learning walks and casual drop-ins by Curriculum Area Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team check strategies are in place and that students and staff members are working well together.</p> <p>DR reported that he has put in place definitions for the scoring system used for providing data for attitude to learning to help standardize data input by different teachers.</p> <p>DR confirmed that the approach outlined is already being adopted in school and has been trialed with 4 or 5 students to date, with positive results. He noted that students have enjoyed being listened too and being engaged with from the outset. Parent involvement has been positive. As outcomes, all these students have requested mentoring sessions and three have requested support from the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).</p> <p>The Chair recorded thanks to Mr. Ringrow, noting how impressed she was with the approach outlined.</p> <p>It was suggested that consideration be given to using more aspirational language to describe the tiers, noting that the terminology of high, middle and low could be perceived as negative and perpetuate a poor attitude to learning (although it was explained that the intention is not to share these categories with pupils).</p> <p>In response to comments, JM confirmed that the school's approach to behaviour issues remains restorative practice and that recent CPD sessions have focused on this.</p>			
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	<p>The Chair suggested that Mr. Ringrow return to give a follow-up presentation in due course.</p> <p>[Dan Ringrow left the meeting.]</p>			
STU 5.8	<p><b>Progress Review</b></p> <p>JM provided contextual information in relation to the gathering and presentation of data, noting that the current set of data (as circulated) lacks validity for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The data has not come from regular testing during school-based learning and follows just 7-8 weeks of school since the end of lockdown.</li> <li>- The data was not, as usual, based on lots of class assessment and therefore lacks evidence. As teachers have not wanted to lower the confidence of students, they have tended to provide optimistic “best estimate” grades.</li> <li>- There was no SATS data for the current Year 7 and instead a “best fit” translation has had to be used from other data received from primary schools.</li> <li>- There have been some issues with spreadsheet formulas.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of parental reports, commentary had been particularly important and aimed to identify learning gaps. KL reported that she has started to assess the interventions that will be needed, particularly for pupil premium students. She noted that whilst the data lacks validity, it still highlights which students are likely to need interventions. JM confirmed that assessments since the return to school have been primarily diagnostic, aimed at identifying and fixing gaps in addition to checking recall and retention of work completed during the periods of remote learning. She noted that this has involved going back over basic concepts to ensure the foundations are in place for more complex learning. Students have not yet caught up and a deliberate policy of not over-assessing or sharing diagnostic grades has been in place.</p> <p>It was expressed that the next data drop should provide a clearer indication of current attainment.</p> <p>The Chair thanked JM for her report and it was accepted that further scrutiny of the data by the Committee was not worthwhile at this stage.</p> <p>[Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher left the meeting.]</p> <p>JM reported that data will usually be presented in the new “Formatrix” system going forward, as demonstrated at a previous meeting, and that this will be a powerful tool for identifying need for interventions. She noted that</p>			

	<p>a working group will meet after half-term to review the use and timing of data, and the impact on students, tying in with the use of Inset Days.</p> <p><u>Year 11 teacher assessed grades</u></p> <p>JM and KL reported on the process for determining teacher assessed grades, outlining that the grades must be given on an evidence base and that the exam boards had provided some assessment materials that can be used by schools. Teachers had been using an interactive spreadsheet to record evidence and to weight their assessments and other evidence, followed by stringent moderation. A range of assessments had been completed under high control conditions.</p> <p>The FFT Aspire tool had been used to review grades compared to past trends, however the small size of the cohorts and varying trends in Progress 8 scores over the years meant that the comparisons are not statistically significant, however they had allowed a review of whether grades were in line with the general trajectory in each subject. JM and KL reported that they have been moderating every grade for every student, seeking and reviewing evidence with teachers. Exam boards will require samples of work. The process closes two weeks after half-term by which time the evidence base must be strong.</p> <p>JM reported that the workload on staff has been extraordinary, highlighting that a teacher with two groups would have 7 or 8 pieces of work to mark, evidence and justify a grade for, for some 50 students. Some teachers had faced up to 500 pieces of work to review. As noted earlier in the meeting, JM expressed that because of the tough process and workload, staff stress levels are high, but professional integrity and the need to get the grades right meant that they are continuing to work incredibly hard throughout the process.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the call on teachers had been extraordinary and placed on record sincere thanks on behalf of the board for the work, professionalism and commitment throughout.</p>			
STU 5.9	<p><b>Home Learning Review</b></p> <p>1. <u>Home Learning Policy</u>  <b>RE-APPROVED</b> the Home Learning Policy, subject to ensuring consistency of wording by changing references to “homework” to “home learning” and noting that changes may be required as the school rolls out its vision for greater project-based learning.</p> <p>2. <u>Home school agreement / parent pledge update</u>  <b>RE-APPROVED</b> as presented, including updated wording in relation to biometric and image consent collection.</p>	<p>Update &amp; republish</p> <p>Update &amp; republish</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Jun '21</p> <p>Jun '21</p>

STU 5.10	<p><b>School Development Plan and Risk Management</b></p> <p>In relation to objectives on the School Development Plan and associated risks (as identified on the Risk Register), the Committee considered the following at this meeting:</p> <p><i>SDP Objective 1.3: Tracking, recording and monitoring of intervention strategies demonstrates good progress and high impact.</i></p> <p>KL reported that systems for tracking, recording and monitoring the impact of intervention strategies are firming up again post-lockdown. She noted that Year 7 students are being tested via the Lexplore diagnostic tool and that resources available with the tests are being used to support quality first teaching. If additional free licenses can be obtained, the use of the tool will be extended to other students. Other diagnostic testing is also taking place and individuals are being supported in small groups. Phonics support and Lexia are ongoing, with tailored support provided where possible. When student “bubbles” are allowed to mix, a greater level of targeting will be able to be accomplished.</p> <p>The impact of small group work in maths has been seen, for example by the maths specialist teaching assistant taking small groups for further maths for part of each double lesson: these students benefit, whilst also allowing the teacher to focus on the remainder of the mixed ability class.</p> <p>The Chair asked how the interventions align to the approach to improving attitude to learning, discussed earlier in the meeting. KL confirmed they fit well and as the strands come together a fully integrated approach with greater impact should result.</p> <p>A staff governor observed that the focus on achieving maximum value and impact from interventions, informed by data gathering, is an important priority and an exciting ongoing development within school.</p> <p><i>SDP Objective 3.1: Improve whole school attendance to at least national average.</i></p> <p><i>Associated risk: Students do not attend school (physically or virtually) sufficiently that individual learning and overall attendance is below reasonable expectations.</i></p> <p>JM presented attendance figures for each year group and reported that whole-school attendance currently stands at 91.8% for the year (for the weeks in school), and since the return in March has been 92.7%. This compares well against the national average of 88.6% but is still a significant concern and JM noted that persistent absence is 19.8% for the whole year, and 17.4% since March thus, whilst improving, it remains a</p>			
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	<p>challenge. Since reporting at the last meeting, all school refusers relating to Covid-anxiety have returned to school after discussion with parents. Action on other non-attendance will increase after half-term. JM explained that understanding anxieties and concerns over attendance had informed decision-making in terms of follow-up, but workflow in relation to issuing letters and making calls to follow up on attendance concerns had been interrupted. Year 7 have the best levels of attendance and Year 10 the worst which JM reported as being of great concern given how much of the GCSE curriculum Year 10 have already been missed.</p>			
STU 5.11	<p><b>Link Governor Reports</b></p> <p>1. <u>SEND</u> PC reported that in a recent meeting with the SENCo, discussion had covered the interventions as discussed earlier, and therefore had little to add in terms of a report. It was noted that the SENCo has recently resigned and will be leaving at the end of the academic year, with JM able to confirm that the replacement is a specialist SEN teacher, extremely student-focused and aligned with the school's values.</p> <p>2. <u>Mental Health</u> A report had not been received from the mental health link governor, but the Chair noted that wellbeing had been touched on throughout the discussion in the meeting. There were no further comments other than JM noting that the new SENCo is also passionate and experienced in dealing with mental health issues and plans to be instrumental in getting recognition for the school through the "mental health good school award".</p> <p>3. <u>Pupil Premium</u> The discussion on pupil premium has been deferred.</p>			
STU 5.12	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> None</p>			
STU 5.13	<p><b>Confidentiality</b> None.</p>			
	<p><b>Next Meeting</b> Date tbc, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SDP and risk review</li> <li>- Progress review Y7-10</li> </ul>			



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committee self-evaluation and impact</li> <li>- Behaviour &amp; Exclusions Policy review</li> </ul>			
	The meeting closed at 7.15pm			