

The Swanage School

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

Held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 5.30pm

**Present:** Isobel Tooley (Chair), Peter Collins, Alex Duke, Adam Hines, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Jessica Starmer

**In attendance:** Sue Fletcher (Clerk)

Item		Action	Lead	By
STU 2.1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher, Hannah Etherington (governor invitee), Rachel Tapping (governor invitee) and Kay Lawton (attendee).			
STU 2.2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any item.			
STU 2.3	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
STU 2.4	<b>Matters Arising &amp; Actions</b> An action list had been circulated. The Chair observed there was nothing of concern either not on the current agenda or progressing. It was agreed that a discussion on the introduction of a Media GCSE would take place at the next meeting, if the leadership team are able to revisit it prior to this.	Media GCSE discussion	JM/KL	Spring '21
STU 2.5	<b>Baseline Data</b> An overview of baseline data testing completed for Year 7 and 8 had been circulated, it being noted there was no Year 6 SATS data for these students (due to the cancellation of SATs tests as a result of the pandemic). The FFT had, however, compiled estimated data for these year groups despite the lack of SATS results.  JM confirmed that baseline testing focused on English, Maths and special needs testing and had informed various types of intervention, support and challenge, with more to follow.			

	<p>Referring to reading and comprehension test data provided in the appendix to the report, governors asked about the apparently poor reading ability of the Year 8 cohort. The Clerk clarified that the data was for the whole of the cohort when they were tested in Year 7, where outcomes looked closer to national averages, but in Year 8 data was only for selected students (28), including those requiring additional support, hence the apparent drop in reading ability and the prevalence of below average reading scores in the second chart. The Chair observed that the Year 7 cohort appeared to be in line with national averages for reading, however JM informed the Committee that there are concerns about the level of need in this cohort more generally.</p> <p>The Chair asked which classes students miss when intervention sessions are taking place. JM responded that sessions predominantly take place during Crew time and lunch, to lessen the impact of being taken out of classes, that students are not taken out of core subjects (e.g. they would not be taken out of an English class to attend an English intervention) and that sessions are timetabled on a rotating basis so students do not always miss the same lesson.</p> <p>In addition, JM reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school is fortunate to have a highly skilled maths specialist Teaching Assistant, who is trained from foundation to mastery level and who is delivering highly effective sessions.</li> <li>- Interventions are focused, with pre-testing and post-testing when students join and leave and are run on the basis that students will be able to demonstrate progress against targets.</li> <li>- The new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), Marie Beresford, is extremely knowledgeable, and interventions are well planned, tracked and expected to lead to positive outcomes.</li> </ul>			
STU 2.6	<p><b>School Inspection Data Summary Report</b></p> <p>The Chair noted that she had put this on the agenda so that the Committee can see how the school might look to external parties, given that the Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) is one of the documents that Ofsted will use to inform the areas they focus on during an inspection. She noted that the last two years were not included in the report (since data has not been published for the years affected by the pandemic) and so some elements would be out of date. The Headteacher had compiled an analysis of the key</p>			

	<p>issues and what the school is doing about them. This also referenced FFT data (based on 2020 outcomes) where relevant. The key issues identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The IDSR data showed a drop in the average number of GCSEs, which to external parties might indicate a narrowing of the curriculum: JM confirmed the school had not restricted the curriculum or reduced the number of options, and indeed more students now take triple science (three GCSEs) rather than combined science (two GCSEs). Since the report (where the average was 8 GCSE entries in 2018 and 2019) the average had returned to 10 GCSEs (2021), as it had been in 2017.</li> <li>- Philosophy, Religion &amp; Ethics (PRE) remains an issue with (at the time of the report) an average point score in the lowest 20% of schools nationally. JM reported that performance has improved but remains of concern, and that it is difficult to establish the reasons given that there have been improvements in engagement and as planning, teaching and assessment are good, evaluated through lesson observations and book scrutiny. There was discussion of the relative merits and drawbacks of having PRE as a compulsory subject. The Chair concluded that despite the good reasons for including PRE as a core subject, if it is not engaging students despite good teaching, it would be appropriate to review whether it should continue to be a core subject or be replaced by an alternative GCSE. The possible introduction of Extended Project Qualifications (EPQs) into the curriculum was suggested, it being noted that these may provide a suitable alternative for some students, although it was not known what impact they would have on Progress 8. Noting that it is a requirement to continue to teach some PRE throughout KS4, a staff governor asked whether key PRE teaching and concepts could move to Crew-time if an engaging alternative subject was deemed suitable to replace it. It was agreed that such decisions should not be rushed and will need thorough review to be able to make a suitable proposal for any alternative. Changes, if decided upon, were thought to be unlikely for the next academic year.</li> <li>- Attendance, on which JM will report to the full governing body, would likely be an issue the school would be asked about during an Ofsted inspection. Whilst the gap had narrowed between school and national attendance averages, there was more to be done and gaps in attendance were again emerging due to the impact of Covid cases.</li> <li>- The IDSR showed that progress of disadvantaged students was less than non-disadvantaged students, based on the pupil premium measure. The Chair noted</li> </ul>	Review PRE as core	JM/KL	Spring / Summer '21
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	<p>that in 2020 prior to Covid, the school had narrowed the gap and that in 2021, the gap did re-widen but was based only on seven pupil premium students, so data was affected by their individual circumstances. JM added that a potential positive impact would arise from the measures put in place with the national tutoring programme funding for 2021/22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The SEN data in the report showed slightly negative progress, however JM noted that in that year (2019) approximately 10% of the SEN students had joined in Year 11, having been excluded or at threat from exclusion by other schools, which had significant impact. In response to a question on the extent to which a school can refuse students entering so late, JM reported that it is no longer the case that a school can refuse entry to students on less than 85% attendance or due to fixed term exclusions, powers which headteachers had had in the past. JM briefly explained the Inclusion Panel process, held between the three local secondary schools (The Swanage School, The Purbeck School and Lytchett Minster School).</li> <li>- A low level of students had passed the EBacc, which would likely be questioned. It was noted that the FFT report had suppressed the EBacc numbers (as the cohort is small now that French is an optional GCSE), which hid the fact that some students had achieved passes in all EBacc subjects during 2021.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, governors noted that, whilst the focus of the discussion had been on what to improve, it was important to recognise the many good outcomes indicated by the IDSR report and Progress 8 scores, such as consistently strong maths, English, Drama and Design Technology. It was also noted that a step-change is expected in Science this year as the current Year 11 is the first cohort in which the vast majority have taken triple science throughout Key Stage 4.</p> <p>The Committee was satisfied the points identified by the IDSR report are being managed appropriately.</p>			
STU 2.7	<p><b>School Development Plan &amp; Risk Review</b></p> <p>I. <u>Embedding formative assessment</u>: The responses to a staff survey on the first dedicated assessment day had been circulated. The Chair noted these were informative and had shown that the response from staff had been very positive. In response to a question on the feedback provided by one of the Curriculum Area Leaders about a lack of time for their own assessment due to time spent meeting with members of their team, JM</p>			

noted that other CALs had shared their practice of monitoring team members during routine meetings, with the result that their assessment day had not been impacted to such an extent. Looking forward, JM felt that, to share good practice, team members could give a five-minute presentation at the end of the day on what they have achieved.

JM confirmed that assessment days are taking place in the middle of each half-term and will inform assessment mark-books which are being made available to parents via the Arbor portal. The release of Year 7 and 8 mark-books would coincide with a virtual parents' evening being held by Crew Leaders who will inform parents of the purpose of the mark-books and how to access them. The Chair observed that it sounded like this fulfilled the purpose of tying the assessment days with sharing of information to parents to encourage their understanding and support of their child's academic progress.

2. Outstanding Key Stage 3 project-based learning curriculum: JM circulated sample books produced by the XP School in Doncaster, who excel at inquiry-based learning, as examples of project end-products. She informed governors that similar books, or output such as digital portfolios, were planned for the projects being undertaken by Year 7 and 8 students in Project-Based Learning (PBL) lessons. These would showcase individual work as a celebration of learning. She outlined the theme of the Year 7 project as an example, noting that there is overlap with English and Art lessons and that students have benefitted from welcoming several external speakers.

JM reported that feedback from the PBL team on the distribution of Chromebooks to all Year 7 students had been positive, and noted that there is an intention to increase their impact by using more sophisticated applications (e.g. Microsoft's digital storytelling application 'Sway').

In response to a question by the Chair about the further roll-out of Chromebooks, JM reported that she is keen to issue to Year 8 students as soon as possible. The school had been given a further 25 Chromebooks as part of a government scheme and had 10 spare from the Year 7 rollout, so a purchase of around 30 more would be required. As part of the rationale, it was intended that students would be able to input into their own reports and respond to behaviour incidents and targets, thereby empowered to be active in their own educational records as well as their learning.

A governor asked about a comment regarding removing the lockers, freeing up wall space for the display of student work, and JM confirmed that this was the intention if remaining barriers could be overcome. She noted the lockers had not been in use since March 2020 and in many respects student movement around the building was easier as a result, lost property had declined (as students always have a bag with them), and PE lessons benefitted from having students already in their PE kit, eliminating the need for changing.

3. Improving Curriculum Support Activities (CSA): JM reported that a timetable was in place for curriculum support activities (homework), which would shortly be implemented. The intention was to integrate 'Show My Homework' with Microsoft Teams to enable analysis to run through 'Show My Homework' which was superior in this regard to the reporting available on Teams assignments.
4. Developing Character: Staff governor AD reported that staff feedback had been collected about the use of Crew time and the '4 pillars' - character, community, productivity and ambition. Overall, staff were finding the small group dynamic positive, but some were unsure about running Crew time without shared lesson plans and some were not sure how much freedom they had to try out their own ideas. Good initiatives were starting to take place however, and a few examples were shared with the Committee. The surprise success of whole school 'attendance bingo', where good attendance had been rewarded with more chances to win, was described. In response to a question from the Chair about the large number of points awarded to students for productivity, AD confirmed that 'productivity' had deliberately been conceived as separate to 'character' and was being judged as the 'opposite of laziness', however the awarding of points in relation to this pillar remained a work in progress. He explained that the 'character' pillar was concerned with wellbeing, resilience, kindness, and similar traits. He confirmed that the first year of the Crew system was a transition year where the pillars would hopefully be embedded but also continually reviewed and if necessary, changed. It was noted that it can take years to fully embed a new shared language. JM reported on plans to use the first few days of the academic year for taking year groups on challenging team-based activities where there is a clear, strong message to build the Crew ideology and make it pivotal in the school's identity.

The Chair summed up by saying that it appeared progress was being made in all areas of the School Development Plan. JM agreed but also acknowledged that the leadership team

	recognises where the weaknesses are and will work on these, noting also that culture shift will be a process that takes time.			
STU 2.8	<p><b>Pupil Premium and Other Funding</b></p> <p>JM had provided a short summary paper outlining the areas on which pupil premium funding will be spent. The Chair observed that some items appeared to overlap with special education needs and mental health and asked whether these were really pupil premium initiatives. Noting that there was some flexibility in the spending of the pupil premium, JM explained that whilst the analysis had not yet been conducted, it has been inferred that there is overlap. The PP lead would be asked to look at this and invited to attend the next meeting for the presentation of the Pupil Premium Annual Report and Strategy.</p> <p>[Clerk's note: the Pupil Premium Annual Report and Strategy will now be presented at the December meeting of the Full Governing Body.]</p>	Invite DR to next meeting for PP annual review.	Clerk	Jan '22
STU 2.9	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>The two policies for review (Academically More Able Policy and Curriculum Policy) were deferred to the next meeting.</p>	Review policies	JM/KL	Jan '22
		Next agenda	Clerk	Jan '22
STU 2.10	<p><b>Link Governor Reports – Mental Health</b></p> <p>The link governor for mental health, JS, reported that she had met with the school's Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer. She had been satisfied that, although the level of need is high, the team in school are coping in terms of supporting students and are managing to access external agencies where appropriate. The Wave Youth Team are also still volunteering to mentor students and run 'walk and talk' sessions. The Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer had expressed concern over the potential reluctance of some students to talk to staff and felt that some families may be struggling to know what they can do to help. As a result, she would be considering reactivating peer support systems and providing additional information to parents.</p> <p>In response to a question, JS noted that she had not specifically asked whether the school is currently experiencing an abnormal period in terms of mental health and wellbeing issues, but that it had appeared that lockdown has had an impact on the level of social anxiety being felt by young people. Staff governors were asked if they had noticed this and</p>			

	<p>agreed they have noticed the pandemic has had an impact on mental health and wellbeing issues, describing it as if the 'baseline has gone up'. They also observed that some students feel their future looks generally bleak and, for example, are worried about world issues such as climate change and the impact for their generation.</p> <p>The Chair observed that the work being done by the school, for example building up character and enabling empowerment and change, ties in with the issues that young people are facing.</p> <p>JS reported that she had not discussed staff mental health during the meeting with the Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer, but would discuss running a staff mental health survey. JM and the staff governors noted that work-life balance will always be difficult, but that measures to alleviate pressure have been made.</p>	Discuss staff mental health survey	JS	Jan '22
STU 2.11	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> None.</p>			
STU 2.12	<p><b>Confidentiality</b> No item would require confidential minutes.</p>			
STU 2.13	<p><b>Next Meeting</b> To be held on 19 January 2021 (brought forward from original 26 January date), to include (tbc):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SDP &amp; Risk Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding formative assessment: feedback from summative assessment week and assessment day; report on outcomes from lesson observations</li> <li>• Outstanding KS3 project-based learning curriculum: Use of Chromebooks and review of effectiveness</li> <li>• Improving CSA: Review of whether CSAs are supporting student progress (tied in with progress review data)</li> <li>• Developing character: staff and student survey result from previous half-term's programme; Crew Points report</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Link governor reports including SEN</li> <li>- Progress review Y7-Y11 (first term data)</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- E-safety annual review (self-audit)</li><li>- E-safety &amp; ICT Policy</li><li>- Evaluation of Chromebooks as a teaching tool, consideration of next steps</li></ul>			
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