

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
 Wednesday 19 October 2016, 6.30pm

Held at The Mount, 16 Durlston Road, Swanage, BH19 2HX

Present: Geoff Atkinson (Chair), Nick Brady, Mark Hatto, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), John Lejeune, Tim Marcus, Nicola Newman, James Peacock, Amanda Rowley, Catherine Starmer-Howes, Al Stephens, Carl Styants, Nicky Taylor, Isobel Tooley, Emily Wyer

In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Katy Kerr (Business Manager), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	Date
FGB 2.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from William Knight and Steve Parker.			
FGB 2.2	Declarations of Interest There were no new declarations of interest or conflict with any item on the agenda.			
FGB 2.3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2016 and 21 September 2016 were agreed and signed.			
FGB 2.4	Strategic Vision 1. The board split into three groups to discuss the strategic vision for the school, with each group asked to use a different framework within which to frame their ideas. These were: Ofsted inspection headings (leadership & management, quality of teaching, learning & assessment, personal development, behaviour & welfare, and outcomes for children), the school's committee structure (finance & premises, student, staffing and community & engagement) and the school's stakeholders (parents, staff, pupils, other local schools, community). Each group fed back to the board as a whole and it was agreed that the clerk would compile a summary document (see attached) and convene a meeting of a steering group to take forward the ideas for further discussion, with the intention of a 5-7 year strategic plan being drafted.	Summary	Clerk	Nov '16

	<p>AGREED that a steering group comprising the chair and vice-chair of governors, committee chairs and headteacher take forward the preparation of the strategic plan.</p> <p>2. Further to previous discussion on the question of academisation for all schools (see minutes 23 March 2016 (FGB 5.11) and 18 May 2016 (FGB 6.11)), TH asked governors for their current thoughts in relation to formal partnerships, to ascertain whether there was a consensus of vision in this regard. Possible options included: joining other like-minded, non-local schools in a multi-academy trust (MAT) based on shared vision and ethos; joining with other local schools in a MAT; joining with the Purbeck Education Partnership if this formed into a MAT; or alliances based on a teaching school model. Several governors expressed a desire to see the The Swanage School working with other schools without losing autonomy or decision-making powers. Links with local schools and like-minded schools elsewhere were both seen by some governors as attractive options. Given that there remained momentum nationally to form MATs, it was recognised that there was a need to further consider the benefits and risks associated with joining or not joining a MAT, both generally and more specifically in relation to local schools.</p> <p>AGREED to re-consider this subject at the next meeting of the governing body, for which a paper on the pros and cons of the various options open to the school would be helpful.</p>	<p>Convene mtg of group</p> <p>FGB agenda. Paper on options.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk TH</p>	<p>Nov '16</p> <p>Dec '16 Nov '16</p>
<p>FGB 2.5</p>	<p>Curriculum – Ebacc The board discussed at length a proposal from the Student Committee (see Student Committee minutes, 12 October 2016) that the school cease the EBacc system (where every student has to take a combination of subjects in Years 10 and 11 that will earn an EBacc if they achieve a grade C (grade 5 under the new framework) or above in each subject). In addition to compulsory subjects of English, mathematics and science, a foreign language and either history or geography are requirements for the EBacc and therefore currently are compulsory GCSE subjects at the school. The school also has philosophy, religion and ethics (PRE) as a compulsory GCSE since it is a requirement for this to be taught in Key Stage 4. Governors were reminded that the EBacc is not awarded to students, but is used as a performance measure for schools.</p> <p>The chair of the Student Committee outlined the background to the debate, noting that the discussion had started in light of some anecdotal feedback indicating that option choices may be perceived by some parents and students as too limited, which is exacerbated by the need to take French and either history or geography to fulfil the requirements of the EBacc. An ongoing government consultation in relation to whether the EBacc is made compulsory for all schools had meant that a full discussion of the issues had</p>			

been deferred by the committee on several occasions during the year and, although the outcome of that consultation remained unpublished, the discussion had taken place at its last meeting due to the time-frame for selection of options by the current Year 9 students.

The proposal from the Student Committee was that PRE would remain a compulsory subject (along with English, mathematics and science) but that French, geography and history would not. The system proposed (outlined in a paper received by governors) would satisfy requirements for the Progress/Attainment 8 system in which students would choose five subjects in addition to the compulsory ones, at least two of which would be from geography, history, French, computing and further additional science. It would remain possible for students to achieve the EBacc therefore, but would afford greater choice of optional subjects. This was felt by the committee to be a better fit with the ethos of the school, with individual students being able to play to their strengths to a greater extent, whilst remaining within an academically rigorous framework. The Student Committee recognised, in making the proposal, that agreement to change the system and move away from an EBacc structure would need to be revisited in the event the outcome of the government consultation was to make EBacc compulsory.

On behalf of the leadership team of the school (head, deputy head, business manager, curriculum area leaders and special educational needs co-ordinator), TH spoke passionately about their unanimous belief that the school should retain the EBacc system. His own concerns about moving away from the EBacc system at the present time had grown upon reflection on the outcome of the Student Committee meeting, and his predictions that the curriculum area leaders were likely to be supportive of the proposed change had turned out to be inaccurate.

Noting that two of the five league table measures relate to the EBacc (“EBacc pass rate” and “percentage entered for EBacc”), the leadership team were extremely concerned of the potential impact if the EBacc system is dropped at a time when the school is building its profile and is effectively in its infancy, having only one year of results at present. Furthermore, given the uncertainty over the outcome of the government consultation, and as there was a belief among some headteachers that EBacc measures may become key criteria for Ofsted, they felt that it would be premature to drop it at this stage. It was recognised that 90% of students (from the current Year 7) to be entered for the EBacc, as is currently the government’s consultation proposal, was highly unrealistic, but that this would be the case for the majority of schools.

TH noted that internal factors also contributed to the leadership team’s thinking. As a key difference would be for a modern language (currently French) to no longer be compulsory, there was emphasis on

	<p>this. The leadership team believed that learning a language develops valuable meta-cognition skills, and yet take-up would be extremely small if it was optional. It was acknowledged that the results in French for the 2016 GCSE cohort had been poor, but argued that the response should not be to remove French as a compulsory subject. It was noted by the chair of the Student Committee, however, that the disappointing pass rate had not been the rationale for their proposal, and also noted that students would continue to learn French to the end of Year 9 under the proposed system.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that for some individual students the proposal for change would result in a greater level of choice, the benefit to the school and the student body as a whole of continuing with EBacc and the risks of moving away from it at this stage in the school's development, particularly as the upper years were atypical in their size and composition, were therefore discussed. It was suggested that a survey of parents and pupils, both current and prospective, would be needed for the decision to be evidence-based.</p> <p>Several governors expressed unease at voting for a significant curriculum change with the information available and the differing views being expressed, particularly as they are not educational professionals.</p> <p>It was agreed that the debate raised a constitutional question as to whether the leadership team or governors were ultimately responsible for the curriculum offer and agreed this would need to be discussed further before a decision to change the philosophy underlying the GCSE options could be made.</p> <p>The proposal from the Student Committee was therefore not agreed.</p>	Stakeholder survey	SLT	Jul '17
FGB 2.6	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governors had received a written safeguarding update, following changes to the government paper "Keeping Children Safe in Education". AS briefly outlined the main points, including that a much greater emphasis is being placed on every governor understanding the issues, and noted that the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy had been updated accordingly. 2. APPROVED the changes to the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy. 			
FGB 2.7	<p>GCSE Results</p> <p>Governors received a written evaluation on the GCSE results from the headteacher. This had been considered at length by the Student Committee at its meeting on 12 October 2016.</p>			

FGB 2.8	<p>Committee Reports Governors received the minutes of the following committee meetings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community & Engagement Committee, 28 September 2016 2. Finance & Premises Committee, 5 October 2016 3. Student Committee, 12 October 2016 			
FGB 2.9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust</u> Agreed that Carl Styants and Tristram Hobson would be the school's representatives at meetings of the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust. 2. <u>360-degree Feedback</u> The chair noted that he would value a 360-degree feedback exercise where governors and others are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire, if they are happy to do so. He also noted that he would like to have short 1-to-1's with governors by email or in person to discuss areas of expertise, general competencies, achievements and areas of interest in relation to the work of the governing body. 3. <u>Salary Scales</u> The board noted that the Finance & Premises Committee had approved a 1% pay increment for all staff, effective from September 2016. 			
FGB 2.10	<p>Confidentiality No item required confidential minutes.</p>			
	<p>Thanks were given to Carl Styants for use of The Mount.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 8.55pm.</p>			