The Swanage School

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Wednesday 29 March 2017, 6.30pm

Present: Geoff Atkinson (Chair), Nick Brady, Mark Hatto, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), William Knight, John Lejeune, Tim Marcus, James Peacock, Nicola Newman, Stephen Parker, Amanda Rowley, Catherine Starmer-Howes, Carl Styants, Isobel Tooley.

In attendance: Dave Dawson (SENCO, item 5.7), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher).

Item		Action	Lead	Date
FGB 5.1	**Apologies for Absence** Apologies were received and accepted from Alison Stephens, Nicky Taylor and Emily Wyer.			
FGB 5.2	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
FGB 5.3	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.			
FGB 5.4	**Matters Arising** <u>FGB 4.5 Staff Turnover</u> The Staffing Committee had discussed the perception of high staff turnover at its meeting on 8 March 2017, receiving a report from the headteacher on the reasons staff members had left and the duration of employment. The conclusions were outlined in the minutes of the meeting, which governors had received and on which there were no questions. <u>FGB 4.5 Alumni Destinations and Testimonials</u> TH circulated a summary of destinations for the students who had left in 2016. Of these, all except one had progressed to further education or vocational training, across eight different colleges/training providers. Testimonials had not yet been sought, but this was still intended. <u>FGB 4.6 Teaching School Status</u> TH confirmed that an application for teaching school status had been made and that the outcome was expected in June. If not achieved on this occasion, the school would receive full feedback and would apply again once any pointers were taken on board.			

FGB 5.5	**Headteacher's Report** In outlining the main points of his written report, TH made the following observations: - A current trainee on placement at the school had been appointed as a science teacher, to start in September 2017. An appointee had not been found for the music vacancy and this had led to a rethink on running the Music GCSE, which would be replaced with the Performing Arts GCSE (see below). An experienced peripatetic music tutor would be employed to continue the GCSE teaching for the current Year 10 students. - 15 students had joined the roll since the start of the academic year. Three of these had been referred to the Governors' Admission Panel for a decision on admission into Year 8, which had reached the Published Admission Number (PAN). TH noted that the school had been happy to accept these extra students but would in future have to contest further admission to this year group as classes were now at capacity. Nine students had left roll in the same period, four of whom were from Year 11. This was queried by a governor and TH confirmed that one had been permanently excluded and the other three had been jointly on roll with a learning centre and were now solely registered there. - Several factors were making GCSE result predictions difficult for 2017 including new exam specifications and unknown grade boundaries in some subjects. The estimates indicated that the overall Progress 8 score is likely to be above average, but not as good as in 2016. Year 11 students were currently working hard. In relation to the new 9-1 grading scheme, confirmation had been received that 4 would be the pass mark, in that the same proportion of students who got a C in 2016 would be awarded a 4 in 2017. However, from 2018 the pass mark was expected to be a 5. - Attendance had been discussed in some detail at the Student Committee (22 March 2017). Whilst whole school attendance for the academic year to date had dropped to 93.27%, it was noted that each student with poor attendance had a personal story that made their poor attendance understandable. The school needed to be more rigorous with attendance meetings (with parents) and interventions in future, having held a round of meetings in March, but having missed a round in December. - The first Bronze Award in the Swanage School Challenge had been awarded. - Formal and informal links with the local primary schools have developed well, with many initiatives and events in place and planned. - Quotes for development of the atrium are being sought and the i-desk area is being redesigned, to improve vibrancy in the school environment.			

	- Curriculum changes for 2017-18 had been discussed at length in the Student Committee (22 March 2017). French would be taught to Year 7 through an integrated approach in project based learning and challenge days, rather than discrete lessons. As noted above, drama and music would be combined into performing arts, although whether this would continue in the longer term was still to be decided. - Students had performed exceptionally well in a number of national competitions, including producing the winning logo design in the "Tenner" challenge run by the Young Enterprise Scheme and competing in the Rotary cookery regional finals. The Rock of Ages concert had been excellent and had boosted confidence for the many students who participated, as well as raising the profile of the school in the town.			
FGB 5.6	**Strategic Plan** The steering group (comprising the chair, vice-chair, committee chairs and headteacher) had met again and had planned the structure of the strategic plan, but the plan had not yet been drafted. A further meeting would be convened with a view to reporting back to the board before the end of the academic year. The Chair invited other governors to contribute further if they wished.			
FGB 5.7	**Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)** [Clerk's note: this item was taken first] The board welcomed Dave Dawson, the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENCO). 1. <u>Summary data and annual report on SEND</u> The board received data on SEND, noting that 130 students (43.8%) have special educational needs of some kind recognized by the school's "tier" system. Of these, 60 students (20.2%) were on the SEND Register, including 6 (2%) who had an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP / "statement"). DD tabled an example of a Pupil Information Map (PIM) which is produced for each student with SEND and shared with teachers. The PIM summarises key information and provides guidance on teaching strategies that may best help the student reach their potential. Where applicable, access arrangements for GCSE's are included. DD briefed the board on the school's tier system, which helps the school provide graduated intervention, noting that most students naturally fall into one tier or another. Tier 0 includes students with a historic record of support at primary school but who do not necessarily need continued support now. Tier 1 students will primarily be supported by teachers in lessons, whereas Tier 2, 3 and 4 will receive specific interventions, such as support from the Emotional & Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), Tier 4 being those with EHCPs. Movement between tiers is			

made when needed and, if progress or improvement is not seen, the school may involve external agencies where applicable.

In response to questions from governors, DD noted that:

- finite resources made budget conversations necessary and there was no "magic wand" to resolve the dilemmas created by budget constraints.
- most parents were extremely supportive of what the school offers and achieves, whereas others are inclined to seek support where it is not particularly required or have difficulty accepting the limits within which schools operate.
- access to external agencies is possible, some free and some paid for, and includes the community paediatrician, speech & language therapists, behavior support, educational psychologists, Special Educational Needs Specialist Service assessments (SENSS) and the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- the school has a higher than average number of students with SEND in Year 8 (27% on the SEND Register), with the other years being more in line with the national average (which is about 18%). Approximately 7-8% of those students with SEND are on the autism spectrum, compared to a national average of approximately 3%, it being noted that the small school status appeals to many parents who have children with SEND. It was felt to be important that the school continues to make clear that it is a mainstream school and not a special school, to manage expectations about the support that can be provided.
- additional teaching assistants would be valuable for improving learning outcomes, but was not possible within the current budget.
- information coming from primary schools has improved. Visits to primary schools and extra transition days for some SEND students helps. For students with high levels of SEND, a considerable amount of transition work is undertaken to ensure that staff and the student are prepared for their start in Year 7.
- the SEND Local Offer and Information Report reflect what happens in practice.
- volunteers can be a mixed blessing, with those who provide what is needed in the way the school requires it to be delivered being a useful resource, but with poor volunteers creating additional work for staff.
- the progress of SEND students compared to the whole cohort is good, a positive indication that SEND support is effective.

	- basic interventions in the classroom, integrated into teaching, can make a big difference to SEND students, and include teaching strategies that benefit the whole class. Staff training has been undertaken in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions.			
	2. <u>SEND Policy</u> **APPROVED the SEND Policy.**	Publish	Clerk	Apr '17
	3. <u>SEND Information Report</u> **APPROVED the SEND Information Report**, noting that this is published on the school's website.	Publish	Clerk	Apr '17
	4. <u>The Local Offer</u> **APPROVED the local offer**, noting that this is published by the Local Authority.	Submit	DD	Apr '17
	5. <u>The Impact of Cuts to High Needs Funding</u> TH outlined the proposed changes to the High Needs Funding allocated by the Local Authority, as had been discussed at the Finance & Premises Committee (15 March 2017). The impact on budgets for all Dorset schools will be significant. TH noted that the school will respond by using the current teaching assistant resource as efficiently as possible, but that additional teaching assistants was not an option. TH reported that the headteachers in the area are concerned about the impact on children with high levels of SEND in particular, and the idea of establishing a separate "alternative provision" free school had been mooted at a recent meeting of the Dorset Area School Heads (DASH). For the benefit of governors, TH clarified the distinction between special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision schools, noting that the latter would provide education for students with moderate behavioural and emotional needs who find mainstream school difficult to manage, but where the difficulties are not severe enough for a special school. He noted that students are funded at a higher level in an alternative provision school to pay for specialist intervention, funds that are not available to support the student in a mainstream school. Initial research on alternative provision schooling would continue. On the subject of school funding in general, it was generally felt it would be appropriate to write to parents to lobby the local member for parliament, but that the school should avoid seeking parental contributions. Thanks were given to Dave Dawson for his report. [Dave Dawson left the meeting]			

FGB 5.8	**Medical Conditions & Managing Medicines** Deferred to the next meeting.	On agenda	Clerk	May '17
FGB 5.9	**Safeguarding Audit** JM noted that each year the school uses a self-audit tool to reflect on safeguarding practices, which is submitted to the Dorset Safeguarding Board. Whilst there will always be areas to improve, this year the school felt confident to grade itself as "outstanding", having everything in place. JM noted that the addition of the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer to the school's staff had been very valuable, both in terms of her experience and the fact that the role meant there was a dedicated staff member focusing solely on such issues.			
FGB 5.10	**Reports from Committees** 1. <u>Admission Panel (20 February 2017)</u> It was noted that the Governors' Admission Panel had admitted an additional student into Year 8, which had already reached its PAN. Year 8 was now considered to be at capacity. 2. <u>Staffing Committee (8 March 2017)</u> The Staffing Committee had discussed staff turnover, recruitment practices and development of staff. Governors had received the minutes, on which there were no questions. 3. <u>Finance & Premises Committee (15 March 2017)</u> WK noted that without new sources of funding or increased student numbers, several factors will combine to create a challenging financial situation for the school in the mid-term future. For example, changes to the Fairer Funding Formula would not be as beneficial as hoped and cuts are expected to the Higher Needs Funding. He noted that the Business Manager and Headteacher would be considering what medium-term actions might be put in place to alleviate pressure on the budget. 4. <u>Student Committee (22 March 2017)</u> IT noted that the Student Committee had received a presentation from the Curriculum Area Leader for humanities and it was clear that the department was on top of the strategic objectives for the year. The curriculum changes (noted above under FGB 5.5) had been discussed at some length, as had attendance, progress and likely outcomes for the Year 11 GCSE cohort. A policy for mental health is being developed and an early draft had been discussed. The annual report on Looked After Children had been considered.			

FGB 5.11	**Reports from Link Governors** 1. <u>Safeguarding & Looked After Children</u> AS was not in attendance to give a report. 2. <u>Parent Link</u> JL noted that several conversations with parents of Year 5 children at primary school indicated they would be looking closely at this year's GCSE results for signs of continuity before deciding whether to apply to the school. TH agreed that achieving good results, and proving the 2016 progress score was not a one-off, was an important factor in student recruitment. 3. <u>New Governors' Mentor</u> WK reported that he had met with several of the newer governors and that none had expressed any regrets about standing as a governor. One issue that had arisen was the possibility of on-line training in place of Dorset County Council courses which were often difficult to attend, timing and distance-wise. It was noted that the National Governors' Association would be launching their on-line training in the summer, and hoped this may provide a good alternative.			
FGB 5.12	**Governor Monitoring, Development & Training** 1. <u>Monitoring Visits & Activities at the School</u> - IT had met with JM (Deputy Headteacher) - EW had met with the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer - NN had accompanied staff and students on the ski trip - SP, in his role as Responsible Officer, had met several times with the Business Manager to conduct a review of personnel and payroll functions - CS had accompanied students and staff to Paulton's Park - AR had been involved in numerous sports activities and events 2. <u>Feedback on Training Courses</u> No governors had attended any training since the last meeting. 3. <u>Current Training Needs</u> See FGB 5.11.3 above.			

FGB 5.13	**Any Other Business** There was none.			
FGB 5.14	**Confidentiality** No item would require confidential minutes.			
FGB 5.15	**Clerk's Report** Next meeting dates: Community & Engagement Committee – Wednesday 3 May 2017 Finance & Premises Committee – Wednesday 10 May 2017 Student Committee – Wednesday 17 May 2017 Full Governing Body – Wednesday 24 May 2017			
	The meeting closed at 8.30pm.			