

The Swanage School  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**  
 Tuesday 2 February 2016, 5.30pm

Present: Carl Styants (Acting Chair), Geoff Atkinson, Tristram Hobson, William Knight, Stephen Parker  
 In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Katy Kerr (Business Manager)

Item	Action	Lead	Date
STF 2.1 <b>Apologies</b> No apologies were received.			
STF 2.2 <b>Declarations</b> There were no declarations of interest or conflict arising from any agenda item.			
STF 2.3 <b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 13 October 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.			
STF 2.4 <b>Matters Arising and Actions</b>  <u>STF 1.6.2 Staff Governor Vacancy</u> TH had emailed all staff regarding the two staff governor vacancies. Several governors had been available at lunchtime on 1 February 2016 and had spoken to a number of staff regarding the role and how the governing body might facilitate all staff having an opportunity to contribute to discussions and decision-making.  TH reported that he hoped to include an opportunity for governors to present to staff on the work that governors do at the end of the INSET day in April. This could be followed by a social event for all.  <b>AGREED that meeting agendas would be circulated to all staff, except where confidential items were listed, to offer them the chance of contributing to discussion items by email.</b>  <u>STF 1.6.3 20 Questions Exercise</u> It was noted that this exercise has not yet been repeated, but would be scheduled for late February or March.  <u>STF 1.7.1.iv Headteacher's Appraisal</u> The Chair confirmed that the appraisal had taken place and had been reported to the full board of governors at their meeting on 9 December 2015. TH reported that he had been in touch with the			
	INSET day	TH	Feb 2016
	Circulate agendas to staff	Clerk	Ongoing
	Schedule	Clerk	Feb 2016

<p>Dorset School Improvements Partnership Board with a view to seeking a new school improvement partner and potentially offering support to other schools.</p> <p><u>STF 1.7.2 Appraisal &amp; Performance Management</u></p> <p>TH outlined the appraisal and performance management process, informing the committee that in conjunction with their line manager each member of staff sets objectives for the year. The majority of staff set three objectives although a number (e.g. middle or senior leaders) may have four or five, at least one of which would likely be related to leadership. Example objectives were discussed.</p> <p>Throughout the year, evidence of work towards these objectives is collected and recorded on the BlueSky management information system. TH had intended to demonstrate BlueSky, showing objectives, evidence and appraisal outcomes for a random sample of staff, so that governors could check the rigour of the appraisal process. However, access to the internet was down at the time of the meeting so this was not possible. Instead, several examples would be emailed to governors for scrutiny.</p> <p>Governors questioned the criteria used for setting objectives, the possible tension between achievable and aspirational goal setting, and to what extent objectives must be met in order for pay-progression to be triggered. For teaching staff, typically one objective would be related to student progress, for which the key evidence would be student results and lesson observations. A second would likely be related to some other aspect of teaching. TH confirmed that he prefers objectives to be aspirational, thereby setting high targets in order to encourage the highest possible outcomes, but noted that it was important therefore to use judgment in the process of the appraisal review to ensure that a member of staff was not penalised unfairly if the objective has not been fully met within the year or, for example, if they had failed to meet one but had met or exceeded expectations on others.</p> <p>Governors asked whether outstanding performance might be rewarded with a double increment in pay, to acknowledge differing levels of performance and give extra weight to excellence. It was recognised this is counter to educational culture, where it is traditional for a single increment each year if performance merits it, but noted that as a Free School there is scope to do so. The senior leadership team would give this some further consideration, with TH feeling that he would like to arrive at a whole-school view by involving all staff in a discussion.</p> <p>TH and KK reported that they had checked the Appraisal &amp; Capability Policy and were happy that it was current. Governors' review of this policy would be moved onto a one-year review cycle as the current three-year review cycle is inconsistent with the Governors' Scheme of Delegation.</p>	<p>Circulate examples</p> <p>Staff discussion</p>	<p>TH</p> <p>TH</p>	<p>Feb 2016</p> <p>Jun 2016</p>
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STF 2.5	<p><b>Reports</b> TH presented a staffing update, highlighting in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Starters and leavers</u> Two members of teaching staff had left the school at the end of the Autumn Term (31 December 2015). One post (humanities teacher) had been replaced by a permanent appointment, the other (mathematics teacher) by a long-term supply teacher on contract until the end of the academic year. In addition, an English teacher had been recruited to a vacant post and having this extra member of staff had created space in the timetable for most staff to be allocated one or two additional free periods each week. To make use of these slots, tasks had been allocated to staff that made best use of their experience and expertise, and furthered the school towards meeting the objectives of the School Development Plan (for example, primary school outreach, student intervention sessions and creation of practice exam papers).</li> <li>2. <u>Recruitment</u> Concerns were expressed in relation to the lack of continuity in the teaching of mathematics, and it was recognised as having been less than desirable. However, the recruitment of mathematics teachers was known to be a national problem and in the current recruitment round there had been no applicants. At least ten mathematics teaching positions had been advertised in Dorset and TH had contacted colleagues across the county for assistance. This had led to the referral of two potential applicants although one of these had since secured employment elsewhere.  Overall, the current recruitment round had been considered disappointing in terms of the number of applicants. Interviews for a humanities teacher, a science teacher and drama teacher (maternity cover) would be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016. A lunchtime supervisor and exams invigilator had been appointed and a position of safeguarding officer was being advertised.</li> <li>3. <u>Grievance and discipline</u> There are currently no disciplinary or capability issues.</li> <li>4. <u>Appraisal</u> For year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015, 100% of teaching and non-teaching staff had progressed on their pay scale following appraisals. See also minute STF 2.4 (“Appraisal and Performance Management”) above.</li> </ol>			
STF 2.6	<p><b>School Development Plan</b> The committee discussed with TH progress to date for the objectives in the School Development Plan falling under it’s remit:</p>			

	<p>1. <u>SDP3.1 Quality of internal and external communication</u>  The quality of external communication was felt to have improved, but was said to remain hampered by time constraints.</p> <p>Written reports to parents on student progress and attainment were noted to have been significantly improved, and positive feedback had been received on the new style reports. The turnout at the Year 9 parents' evening had been 90% and it was felt that the giving out of reports at the start of the evening may have contributed to this high attendance. The same approach would be taken at the Year 7 and 8 evenings coming up, although it was recognised that there may be a small number of parents who would not have a chance to fully read and digest the report before speaking to teachers.</p> <p>It was noted that written reports should reflect what parents already know about about their child's progress, with any major concerns of coasting or under-performance having been pre-discussed by tutors.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the assessment scheme and high targets could be confusing for parents to understand and in some cases could be construed in a negative light (for example, a child who fails to meet a high target related to a benchmark of the top 20% of schools might be perceived more negatively than if they were considered to be excelling by being "above average" as would be the case at some other schools). The need to constantly nurture all forms of external communication, whether to parents, the community or press, to ensure an accurate, positive message is delivered was discussed. TH reported that the leadership team are currently considering whether to create a part-time post for press relations (PR) and marketing which, subject to clearly defining the role, governors expressed support for.</p> <p>2. <u>SDP 3.3 Leadership development for middle &amp; senior leaders</u>  TH informed the committee that the management structure had altered slightly such that he now managed the Heads of House (HoH), with the deputy headteacher managing the Curriculum Area Leaders (CALs). Some leadership training for the HoH had been undertaken but remained a work in progress. The CALs were a more experienced team in terms of leadership skills. By expanding the leadership team meetings to include the HoH on occasion, it was hoped to get CALs and HoH working more closely together and to embed the importance of middle leadership and their contribution to planning.</p>			
STF 2.7	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>1. <u>Pay Policy</u>  <b>APPROVED</b> subject to minor wording amendments which were passed to the Clerk.</p>	Update	Clerk	Feb 2016

	<p>2. <u>Maternity Policy</u>  <b>APPROVED</b> the policy after a short discussion on whether it should include paternity also. As this policy related to issues unique to the mother, i.e. maternity pay and rights relating to the pregnancy and birth, and as the statutory requirement for paternity leave is honoured, there was no need to include paternity or any particular reason to have a school Paternity Policy.</p>			
STF 2.8	<p><b>Any Other Business</b>  None.</p>			
STF 2.9	<p><b>Confidentiality</b>  No matters were considered confidential.</p>			
STF 2.10	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  Full Board of Governors – Wednesday 10 February 2016  Staffing Committee – Wednesday 15 June 2016</p>			
	<p>The meeting closed at 7pm.</p>			