

The Swanage School  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**  
Held on Wednesday 21 June 2017, 5.30pm

Present: Carl Styants (Chair), Geoff Atkinson (from 6.30pm), Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), William Knight, Stephen Parker, Catherine Starmer-Howes  
In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Katy Kerr (Business Manager), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	By
STF 3.1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Mark Hatto.			
STF 3.2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no new declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
STF 3.3	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.			
STF 3.4	<b>Matters Arising</b>  <u>STF 3.8 (2015/16) Physical restraint</u> The Clerk had reminded the Business Manager of the decision to add a section on reasonable use of force (physical restraint) into the Staff Code of Conduct and/or Staff Handbook, cross-referencing to the Behaviour Policy.  <u>STF 2.8 Non-teaching staff pay-scale</u> KK confirmed this had been implemented.  <u>STF 2.9 Risk Register</u> The Clerk reported that updates for the Risk Register from all the committees had just been passed to the Business Manager.			
STF 3.5	<b>Headteacher's Staffing Report</b>  1) <u>Starters &amp; leavers</u> TH reported that three members of staff would be leaving at the end of the academic year. Two were relocating and one had been offered a promotion elsewhere. Recruitment for all three positions (art, music and physical education (PE)) had concluded and TH gave a brief overview of the appointees.			

	<p>The Chair raised concerns in relation to whether the stress of lone practice may have been a factor in these staff members deciding to move on, noting that all three were in a “department” of one teacher. However, it was noted that in a small school there is no way to overcome the issue of having lone practitioners and that this was the case for many of the subjects. Links to other schools for mentoring and networking were fostered as a means of mitigating the effects. It was not known if this was a factor for any of the current leavers, but exit interviews would hopefully identify if there were any such factors in the decisions made. Exit interviews were purposefully held by the Chair of Governors and not by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and the outcome would be reported back to the committee in due course. KK suggested that the SLT look at the questions raised in exit interviews with a view to adding a specific question on the particular pressures of lone practice.</p> <p>Recognising that one of the leavers had been at the school less than a year, and the others two years, questions were raised by a governor about longevity. However, it was generally agreed that longevity is not a good measure of successful recruitment, for it must be expected that the career path of many excellent teachers will see them move on, and that this may particularly be the case for younger, newly qualified teachers at the start of their career and/or for those who have flexibility to relocate for development opportunities elsewhere.</p> <p>2) <u>Recruitment</u>  Recruitment was underway for a post of cover supervisor, with interviews to take place in w/c 26 June 2017. This would be for a non-qualified teacher to cover lessons for short term absences created by illness, training and compassionate leave. TH explained that this would be lower cost than paying for qualified supply teachers on a day rate and had the added benefit of the post-holder being able to add value when not required for teaching by, for example, using their time to prepare or work with the head of department or in supporting other lessons. Governors asked questions relating to the experience of the candidates and probed whether lack of qualified teaching status would be an issue. TH and JM were confident that with the right person, trained well, a cover supervisor post can work well. They confirmed the postholder would be expected to attend all Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) sessions when not covering.</p> <p>In recognising that the school has an environment of high expectations which may cause stress for some staff members, governors noted that it was necessary to be open and clear about this prior to appointment. TH agreed and confirmed that high expectations were made very clear at interview, but information could also be included in the pre-interview literature to ensure that this information is available to potential candidates prior to application. He outlined recent changes to the recruitment process aimed at more deeply probing a</p>	Review exit interviews	SLT/CoG	Jul '17
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	<p>candidate's team work and pedagogy skills. He also noted the value of governor involvement in the recruitment process.</p> <p>Particular issues relating to challenges for PE were discussed, in relation to the goodwill required to support the teaching of PE through volunteer coaching and minibus driving (for pupils to take part in sporting fixtures offsite) and the marketing messages required to counter the perception that the sporting facilities and opportunities at the school are unable to match those offered elsewhere. The Chair suggested that recruiting an additional PE teacher might lead to attracting more children to the school, although it was noted that an additional 6 or 7 students would be required to cover the cost of an NQT and other things which are lower cost may have a greater effect of student numbers. The proximity of the school to the sea was considered an advantage that could be exploited to greater extent with further development of water sports such as kayaking and sailing.</p> <p>3) <u>Grievance &amp; discipline</u> There were no disciplinary or capability issues to report.</p> <p>4) <u>Staff absence</u> Attendance figures since the report at the last meeting were given for staff, broken down by teachers, learning support staff and support staff. KK noted that the attendance for support staff was low at 89.5% but two long term absences of 8 and 12 weeks had had a significant impact on this. It was noted that parameters for absence relating to child illness had been put in place. The benefits of a workplace being a supportive environment were noted.</p>			
STF 3.6	<p><b>School Development Plan: End of Year Review</b> [Geoff Atkinson joined the meeting] Governors discussed with the SLT the progress that had been made on the objective of leadership development for middle and senior leaders in the school.</p> <p>For middle leaders, there had been growth of professional and leadership skills for the Curriculum Area Leaders (CALs) through opportunities to lead and be involved in the internal management of the school, particularly in development of the curriculum model, and through leading projects in conjunction with Bournemouth University. TH reported that he had held one-to-one meetings with each Head of House (HOH), which he believed had been effective in developing their understanding of their role and in promoting self-development. Another staff member had been acting as an informal coach for the HOH although the effectiveness was uncertain. There had not been a great amount of external or formal leadership training. One CAL had taken advantage of some professional coaching which was said to have had a positive impact and one had attended a conference which had been useful.</p>			

	<p>For senior leaders, again there had been no formal training. TH noted the benefit of support from colleagues at DASH (Dorset Association of Secondary Heads). A governor asked whether support had been received from the School Improvement Partner, with TH responding that he would have been happy to ask, but had not felt the need to do so. The intensity of the work required for the teaching school application and the scrutiny visit in relation to this had performed a similar role in terms of self-review. TH was also asked whether there was any help for the SLT in keeping up to date with Ofsted requirements and noted that this had been the focus of a talk at a recent conference attended by himself, the deputy headteacher and one of the CALs. Updates were also discussed at DASH meetings. JM, the deputy headteacher, was in the process of re-acquiring Ofsted Inspector status. She had also benefitted from professional mentoring from governor Isobel Tooley, meeting each half-term in challenging sessions aimed at role development and retaining an appropriate focus.</p>			
STF 3.7	<p><b>Review of Payroll and Personnel Systems</b></p> <p>The committee received for information a written report from Stephen Parker, the Responsible Officer, on his recent review of the payroll and personnel systems. The report had been considered at the meeting of the Finance &amp; Premises Committee held on 15 March 2017. SP noted that payroll is the single biggest expense for the school, at 67% of the total spend. He had reviewed the robustness of the system for preparing, calculating and checking the payroll, run by Poole Council, and for the holding of personnel information. All steps of the process had been found to be robust and effective.</p>			
STF 3.8	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>1) <u>Performance related pay</u></p> <p>Noting that governors must be satisfied that the system for performance-related pay is robust, the Chair asked the committee to reflect on how best it could do this. He was reminded that JM had presented to the committee at a previous meeting on how performance linked to appraisal and how objectives are monitored on the BlueSky management information system. It was thought that in some schools a committee is asked to consider pay progression of individual staff members, but the governors agreed with the SLT that this is an operational decision for educational professionals and therefore appropriately rests with the headteacher. It was agreed that so long as a report of progression decisions is made annually to the committee, along with examples to illustrate the effectiveness of the systems, this gave governors appropriate opportunity to scrutinise and meet their responsibilities. Governors did note, however, that the process whereby staff typically move up their pay scale if they meet their objectives does not necessarily reflect the excellence of their teaching. The educational context, where pay progression is typically expected, meant that other schemes were likely to be controversial and implementing a system of double-increments as reward for excellence would likely be prohibitive in cost.</p>			

	<p>2) <u>Staffing of French</u> The Chair raised questions on the staffing of French, to ensure that staffing was adequate for the timetabled sessions. It was noted that a very small number of French lessons are not taught by the regular French teacher who is on a 0.8 FTE contract and therefore is not in school one day a week. There were no particular issues currently, however, and French teaching in the curriculum for the coming academic year had been discussed at some length by the Student Committee.</p> <p>3) [Confidential minute]</p> <p>4) <u>Out of hours meetings</u> It was suggested that the full governing body discuss whether daytime meetings might be preferable going forward.</p>	FGB agenda	Clerk	Jul '17
STF 3.9	<b>Confidentiality</b> Item 3.8.3 to be confidential.			
STF 3.10	<b>Meeting Dates</b> Full Board of Governors – Wednesday 12 July 2017 Staffing Committee – tbc			
	The meeting closed at 7.10pm			