

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT COMMITTEE
 Wednesday 22 March 2017, 5.30pm

Present: Isobel Tooley (Chair), Nick Brady, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), John Lejeune, James Peacock, Al Stephens, Emily Wyer
 In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Jenny Maraspin (Deputy Headteacher), Lisa Gray (Curriculum Area Leader, item 4.3)

Item		Action	Lead	Date
STU 4.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Geoff Atkinson.			
STU 4.2	Declarations of Interest There were no new declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
STU 4.3	<p>Teaching & Learning: Curriculum Area Leader Presentation – Humanities & Art The committee welcomed Lisa Gray, Curriculum Area Leader for Humanities & Art.</p> <p>1. <u>Controlled Assessments</u> LG informed the committee that controlled assessment currently accounts for 25% of the GCSE in both history and geography, however this will be replaced with alternative methods of assessment in the next academic year. History students were currently working on their controlled assessment and in geography it has been completed and predicted results are a significant improvement on 2016. Examples of feedback received in 2016 from the awarding body, OCR (Oxford, Cambridge & RSA), was shared with the committee and LG outlined how issues raised are being addressed.</p> <p>In art, focus is currently on the final project which accounts for 40% of the marks. There have been some issues due to a combination of a change in staff and teaching style, timing of the project and student absence and behaviour. An experienced moderator is on board.</p> <p>2. <u>Academic Challenge</u> LG noted that differentiation and intervention are discussed at weekly department meetings, to agree ways in which to stretch and challenge students. Students who entered with Level 5 SATS and those on the C/D border were given as examples of groups who may be targeted for challenging interventions. A variety of after school clubs, one-to-one support, lunchtime catch-ups, homework support, mock papers, exemplar work, “work of the week” and site visits / trips were all used to challenge, differentiate and support. Work in assessment books is challenged by teachers, with students then re-writing and making improvements based on the feedback.</p>			

In response to questions, LG noted that:

- the mock exams have been a wake-up call for a number of students, who are now working harder. Interventions had started earlier and are tighter and better organised than last year.
- the new GCSE in history (to be taken by the current Year 10 and below) is demanding and there are plans to adjust the Year 9 teaching to ensure that the skills required are developed earlier.
- staff remain reticent to predict the highest grades and hence some marking is conservative, being unsure still of the new grade boundaries on the 9-1 scale.
- teachers and students understand and use the assessment framework.

3. In-school Variation of Students' Performance

A number of factors have been considered in relation to variation in performance, and LG outlined the following:

- staffing issues have disrupted all subjects in the department to some extent. There has been a completed period of maternity cover in history, sudden departure of a teacher in geography, a new teacher in art and maternity cover in philosophy & religious education (PRE).
- the maternity cover in history left some areas uncovered and the controlled assessment was not done. That is now nearing completion but there remains a deficit in teaching to make up. Extra lessons are taking place.
- variation in the number of lessons for PBL have been addressed. Some groups have had 3 or 4 different teachers and this has been disruptive.
- support from home varies widely. Homework clubs and allocated time at school to do homework are offered to provide additional support from the school where needed.
- attendance remains an issue for some children, and greatly impacts on performance in KS4. Staff do what they can, including making phone calls home, having meetings with students and parents and liaising with the Heads of House.
- students with lower levels of literacy find their work in humanities impacted. LG noted that there are plans to improve the schemes of work for project based learning (PBL) to introduce lessons with a specific literacy focus.
- PRE is not given a high profile or focused on by students and mock results were poor. Coupled with conservative marking by the new teacher, the expected grades for the GCSEs are low. The new (maternity cover) teacher has an open door policy to provide one-to-one support and the permanent post-holder will be running a number of revision sessions over the Easter holidays. Although not expecting the results to be as good as last year, there has been recent improvement in the focus and work of students.
- lesson observations will be undertaken for new staff who have experienced some behavioural issues in classes.

4. Numeracy in Humanities Subjects

	<p>LG noted that a numeracy audit has been completed. The teaching of numeracy within humanities subjects is developing, with staff having received some training and being aware to ask for help from mathematics colleagues when completing more complex tasks, to ensure that the way students have been taught is followed.</p> <p>5. <u>Assessment Framework</u> LG noted that the assessment framework is embedded in, and works well for, all humanities subjects, and a modified framework is used in art to suit the different skills and assessment types. Assessment sheets are used for all large pieces of assessed work. Most students use the assessment framework effectively and understand it well.</p> <p>6. <u>Homework</u> Following completion of a department audit, all staff in the department now use “Show My Homework” and homework set is purposeful. It may be used to provide exam practice, to assess knowledge and understanding, to encourage deeper or extended understanding or complete work that there was not time to cover in the lesson. Homework is not always marked but is usually referred to or used as a “starter” activity in the next lesson so that students are aware it has been completed for a reason. Choices of homework activity are given where possible, to suit different types of learner.</p> <p>7. <u>Departmental Development Plan</u> LG circulated the departmental plan and governors were able to see that it was modelled on the School Development Plan, thereby ensuring that the department objectives feed into the wider school objectives.</p> <p>The committee thanked Lisa Gray. [Lisa Gray left the meeting]</p>			
STU 4.4	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.</p>			
STU 4.5	<p>Matters Arising Where not elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p><u>STU 1.8 Celebration of Learning Awards</u> TH noted that he had not yet reviewed the awards, which take place at the end of the academic year. This would be revisited at the next meeting and TH would circulate a list of the current awards for consideration.</p>	Agenda	Clerk	May '17

STU 4.6	<p>Curriculum Model 2017</p> <p>The curriculum model for 2017 had been circulated and TH summarised the key points and explained how the teaching blocks worked. Three main issues were discussed:</p> <p>1. <u>Music</u></p> <p>Reporting that the music teacher was leaving at the end of the current academic year, TH noted that there was a need to take a pragmatic approach to the teaching of music going forward. This was in part due to not having found a suitable replacement, and in part due to budget constraints. The proposal in the curriculum model was to combine drama and music teaching by adopting the performing arts GCSE. This would play to the school's staffing strengths, given that there was a performing arts specialist in the current team. In response to questions raised by governors, he confirmed that having spoken to the head at Lytchett, whilst music GCSE is preferred, the performing arts GCSE is enough to go on to study music A-level if the student also has grade 5 or 6 in a musical instrument (which would be required in any event). He also confirmed that the five students taking music in the current Year 10 would continue to be taught for their music GCSE through the use of peripatetic music teachers. Seven students in the current Year 9 had selected music and would have to change to the performing arts GCSE. For six, TH considered that performing arts would be better suited to their skills and abilities. The other was a gifted musician who would already qualify for entry to music A-level given her instrument grade.</p> <p>2. <u>French</u></p> <p>The full-time French teacher had left in December 2016 and French teaching had been covered, since then, by the part-time, newly qualified teacher who had increased her hours. Recruitment for a new French teacher had not been successful. TH noted that they had planned to continue with the current arrangements, but the need to have three groups (rather than two) for the new Year 7 cohort starting in September 2017 due to an increased number of applicants had led to a rethink. Given the difficulties in recruitment for the post and given the budget constraints for the coming academic year, the school proposed changing from traditional French teaching in Year 7 and moving to an integrated learning approach through a project (in PBL) and Challenge Days, with the addition of trips and perhaps some drama.</p> <p>Governors expressed concerns over the dropping of traditional French teaching for Year 7, and it was acknowledged that there would be knock-on implications for learning in the older years. Concerns were also raised about the pressures on the remaining French teacher to be responsible for, and manage, the need for catch-up in Year 8 onwards, along with other demands created by the proposed integrated approach and through being a sole practitioner of the subject at the school. Further information about the planned PBL project and the potential benefits of this model in improving the students' sense of engagement in learning a foreign language was provided by the Deputy Headteacher and eased the concerns to some extent. The use of supply teachers and French-speaking students from Harrow House International School for short bursts of input and for conversational practice was also likely. The French teacher would work with the Deputy</p>			
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	<p>Headteacher, the drama teacher and the PBL team to plan and deliver the project and so would not be solely responsible. A governor suggested supplementing learning through use of e-learning programs and promoting French through multi-lingual signage throughout the school.</p> <p>Given the limited French staffing and accepting the need for a pragmatic approach to be taken, governors agreed that it was right to focus traditional French teaching on the upper years, and that there may be some benefits to the integrated approach in Year 7 so long as it is delivered well.</p> <p>3. <u>Personal, Social, Health & Education</u> Governors noted the proposal to drop PSHE as a separate subject and bring it into tutor time. TH confirmed that it was possible to reconfigure tutor groups (which are mixed age range) on occasions when age-sensitive topics are being taught.</p> <p>The committee approved the curriculum proposals.</p>			
STU 4.7	<p>Progress</p> <p>1. <u>GCSE Mock Results for Year 11</u> To address inconsistencies in the way “predicted” grades had been used by staff in the past, the presentation of data had been updated and now comprised “expected” grades (if the student stays on their current trajectory) and “potential” grades (a prediction of what could be achieved with extra effort and high motivation). Expected and potential grades may be the same, if the student is already motivated and working hard and considered to be performing to the top level of their ability. Mock exams grades were also provided to the committee. It was also noted that the “value added” measures for each subject were now based on a comparison with the top 50% of schools instead of the top 20% which had been used previously. The rationale for this is to show more clearly whether progress is above average, and to highlight more clearly which subjects needed more attention and which were doing very well. [Chair’s note - The school’s target of being in the top 20% nationally has not changed. The Chair and Headteacher had discussed and agreed the change before it had been implemented.]</p> <p>TH noted that the mock exam grades had been generally poor, however the expected grades for the final examinations were predicted to be better. With the exception of PRE, art and design & technology, the value added scores were expected to be positive. The overall expected Progress 8 score was negative, however, which was surprising given the positive value added scores. The conclusion drawn was that the Progress 8 score had been affected by the changes to the English and mathematics moving to a “9 to 1” grade structure and the national Progress 8 estimator matrix not yet having been adapted for this. The Headteacher thought</p>			

that the current Progress 8 estimate was likely to be under-predicting by about 0.2. If this is the case, the actual expected score would rise from -0.2 to 0, which is the average for Progress 8. Taking into account the impressions of staff, TH felt that the cohort may do better than the expected grades, but not as well as the “potential” grades, and therefore there is some optimism that the actual Progress 8 will be above 0.

The staff members on the committee felt that, as a cohort, there have been more issues with work ethic and independent learning among the students than would be typical in other year groups, but noted that the school is attempting to address these by extra sessions, including at weekends (for which attendance had been good), and other interventions.

2. Progress Year 10

TH noted that the Year 10 cohort are the first cohort to have been with the school from Year 7 and that they are an academically sound group with a good work ethic. There were few concerns about this cohort currently, reflected by the generally positive data.

3. Initiatives to Reduce In-school Variation

JM reported on initiatives in place in those subjects which underperformed in 2016.

- In physical education (PE), new line management has led to additional staff support and mentoring being available, and there has been a focus on the controlled assessments, working with a moderator.
- All data shows that music scores have improved and there are no particular concerns.
- In drama, there has been a focus on controlled assessment, with good results. Enhanced co-ordination between drama and English has been valuable, meaning that students are often working on the same text in both.
- French remains of some concern, and some students have been permitted to drop it. Time was allocated for the outgoing staff member to ensure that grades in controlled assessment improved. The current French teacher is receiving support from one of the Higher Level Teaching Assistants, who is fluent in French.

4. Predicted Grades for Students with Higher Level Entry

TH noted that there was not an easy answer to the question of why the data tends to show lower levels of progress for students who enter with higher level SATS. TH and JM were confident that teachers know how to teach to improve and stretch academically more able students, although proposed to undertake a learning walk focusing specifically on the Level 5 SATS students. They continue to believe that the data tends to reflect some tentativeness on the part of teachers in predicting the highest grades due to lack of confidence in where the grade boundaries will fall in the new 9-1 grading scheme.

	<p>5. <u>Gender Disparity</u> It had been noted at the last meeting that boys were, generally, underperforming girls, and the new data gave the same picture. TH noted that this is not unique to the school, with boys underperforming girls by around 10% nationally in terms of pass rates. Girls were considered generally to be better at planning and forward thinking than boys and thus tend to be better prepared for revision and examinations. Tackling the issue was therefore difficult, but TH noted that the school is doing what it can to support all students.</p> <p>[John Lejeune left the meeting.]</p>			
STU 4.8	<p>Attendance TH reported that the headline percentage had dropped to 93.27%, which he felt was disappointing. Attendance letters had been sent out and meetings had taken place with students and parents, some with the Local Authority Attendance Officer. For some students, attendance had since improved. TH outlined the personal circumstances of those students with the worst attendance records to illustrate that there are individual stories and genuine reasons for poor attendance which are not reflected by looking at data alone. TH noted that there had been a gap in attendance meetings between October and February and that next year, attendance meetings would be held more regularly.</p>			
STU 4.9	<p>Policy Review</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>E-Safety/ICT Policy</u> Approved the updates and the withdrawal of the ICT Policy, key points from which had been incorporated into the E-Safety Policy. Noted that a section on school trips would be added. 2. <u>Attendance Policy</u> Approved, noting that there had been minor updates. 3. <u>Careers Information, Advice & Guidance Policy</u> Approved, noting that there had been minor updates. 4. <u>Policy for Looked After Children</u> Approved, noting that there had been no changes. 	Add section on school trips	TH/NB	'Jul 2017
STU 4.10	<p>Looked After Children Annual Report The committee received a report on the progress, attendance, needs and behaviour of the looked after children at the school, along with details of any social, emotional or academic interventions in place and pupil premium spend allocated. JM confirmed the school meets the Personal Education Plan (PEP) requirements and is pleased</p>			

	with the academic progress being made. She noted that the culture at the school is supportive and this helps the children feel accepted.			
STU 4.11	Risk Register This item was deferred until the next meeting.	Agenda	Clerk	May '17
STU 4.12	Reports 1. <u>Special Educational Needs (SEND)</u> AS reported that she had met with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and could report that: - access arrangements for the GCSEs are almost all in place - the SEND register is up to date - SEND annual reviews are upcoming and being prepared for - a spreadsheet of all students with medical needs has been compiled as a resource for staff - the SENCo is verifying that care plans are in place for all students with a medical condition SEND data would be considered at the full board of governors on 29 March 2017. 2. <u>Mental Health</u> EW noted that she had met with the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer and had circulated a draft Positive Mental Health Policy. The need to embed a culture of openness around mental health issues and to take steps to promote positive mental health for both staff and students was discussed. Governors suggested that the policy could usefully contain more detail of what the school does to promote and support positive mental health, in addition to identifying the signs of poor mental health, which were well covered. The need to include more reference to staff mental health was also discussed, which would require discussion by the leadership team. It was suggested that thought be given to how to support staff with, or who develop, mental health problems, ensuring that there is no discrimination on the basis of mental health. This would entail weighing up reasonable measures to support a staff member in their job against their capacity to continue to do that job. It was agreed that EW would meet with JM and the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer to take this forward. EW also noted that the plans to have PSHE in tutor time might work well in relation to all staff becoming more aware of, and involved in, the support of positive mental health and spotting the signs of mental health problems. Further external training was planned. 3. <u>E-safety</u> NB reported that he had received a report of logged e-safety incidents and whilst some, they were relatively small in number compared to other types of incident. There had been occasion for the school to contact the	Meet. Update draft policy.	EW/JM/MS	May '17

	Child Sexual Exploitation unit, indicating that appropriate referrals to outside agencies are made when required. "Chelsea's Choice", a play raising awareness of issues around child sexual exploitation, had been seen by the appropriate year groups.			
STU 4.13	Any Other Business None.			
STU 4.14	Confidentiality No item required confidential minutes. The written report on Looked After Children was highly confidential.			
	Next Meeting Wednesday 17 May 2017, 5.30pm To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum presentation: Sam Kerwood (CAL for Science) - Spring Term progress data (all years & Subjects) 			
	The meeting closed at 8.15pm			