

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 29 January 2015

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), John Barker (JB), Fiona Bauermeister (FB), Balint Besze (BB), Gareth Chan (GC), Janet Felkin (JF), Peter Gerry (PG), Richard Goodsell (RG), Harry Hall (HH), Grace Richardson (GR), Nikki Slowey (NS), Andrew Wallace (AW)

In attendance: Mark Brunet (clerk), Ruth King (RK), Ashley Harrold (AH), Richard Chamberlain (RC)

Quorum: 7 – meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Apologies for Absence.

- 1.1. Addy Balogun (AB), Sally Hunt (SH), Kay Johnston (KJ) and Jenny Rusted (JR) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.
- 1.2. Martin Jones is suspended for 6 months from attending meetings.

2. Membership

- 2.1. Governors welcomed Gareth, Harry, Grace and Andrew and introduced themselves.

3. Urgent Business

- 3.1. There was no urgent business.

4. Declarations of interest

- 4.1. No governor had any pecuniary interest to declare in any item on the agenda.

5. Minutes

- 5.1. The minutes of the meetings held on 4 December 2014 and 12 January 2015 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

6. Matters arising

- 6.1. There were no actions from previous meetings outstanding nor any matters not on the agenda.

7. Headteacher's report

- 7.1. JF spoke to her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and, noting that the main theme for the meeting was RaiseOnline, asked AH to share insights into the information.
- 7.2. AH gave a commentary to the presentation on 2014 exam results (which had been previously circulated), highlighting the changing national context for 2014.
- 7.3. Although results historically have been good, students have not always made as much progress as others nationally (Value Added). In 2014, however, although results were down, the value added figure was positive, showing that students had made better

progress than expected.

- 7.4. AH highlighted the changes in cohort, in particular the high percentages of students with English as an additional language; of minority ethnic groups and students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Governors noted that there are variations between year groups (current Y7 is notably different from other years). Minority groups – for all except cohorts of a single student, all ethnic groups show a positive value added.
- 7.5. Noting that the students joining the school are on average above national average ability, governors noted that it should be expected that students achieve above national average at GCSE; they have done.
- 7.6. Governors explored some of the reasons around changes from year to year, and the average points scores for different cohorts. Lower ability students who are supported at school action plus, or are FSM, form the cohort which particularly under-perform.
- 7.7. Governors considered the EBacc situation, noting that entry levels are not high (the school does not insist on every student covering the full EBacc range) but, in general, the picture is positive.
- 7.8. There are still in-school gaps for some particular cohorts, although the gaps are not as wide as the national average; governors noted that the school is not allowing this fact to divert the significant on-going attention being given to addressing underachievement in particular groups.
- 7.9. The slides distributed showed similar analyses for all subjects.
- 7.10. Governors explored the basis of the Raise coloured blocks showing significant positive or negative variations from national averages, and noted that this refers to whether the difference is statistically significant. Governors discussed the relationships between gaps and absolute values, noting the complexity of this.
- 7.11. AH explained the salient points from the Relative Performance Indicators for subjects. Governors noted the value of the comparison to national figures in this context, and discussed some of the individual subjects and considered why students achieve different grades in different subjects.
- 7.12. AH explained that English has three entries on Raise – English, English language and English Literature. The first is a combined qualification sat by some lower-ability students and the other two are two separate GCSE's, both sat by the same students.
- 7.13. Turning to Progress, governors explored both the tabular representation and the transition matrices, noting how the latter showed clearly that High Ability Students do very well and that this is the reason why the school now targets intervention at Year 7 in particular, to close this gap.
- 7.14. Governors noted that all the various views from RAISE show the same gap group issues – school action and Pupil Premium in particular.
- 7.15. Governors asked how the higher achieving students might be able to support some of the lower achievers, and discovered that this is indeed already happening in some areas, including using Sixth Formers to support students lower down the school.
- 7.16. Governors asked how the results would affect the way in which pupil premium money is

spent, and discussed the importance of intervention in Year 7 and the way in which the effectiveness of this is not translated into exam results for five years; this is monitored internally and current indications are that Y11 gaps are closing significantly.

- 7.17. Governors also discussed the pastoral indicators for Pupil Premium students in particular, including attendance, and the way in which Pupil Premium students are receiving particular attention to address these issues.
- 7.18. Governors asked various questions about the English and maths results, and explored the trend data in particular, noting that these two subjects are the ones which are studied by the whole cohort.
- 7.19. Governors also explored how the different ability groups performing differently can lead to unexpected differences in different measures.
- 7.20. Governors asked about the projections in the report, noting that this was an able cohort, and particularly in the light of the difference between projections and final results last year, sought an understanding of the confidence about the accuracy of the current projections. AH explained the reasons for this confidence, including the nature of the cohort working in favour of better results, work being done with teachers to produce better predictions, triangulation against more data sources, including controlled assessments and mock exams, and work being done on work scrutiny and moderation within departments to ensure that there is consistency within departments between different teachers' views.
- 7.21. There is also less change in the context this year, governors noted.
- 7.22. Looking at KS5 figures, AH noted that the current analysis was not significantly different from the presentation which governors had discussed in September.
- 7.23. One thing which governors noted in particular was the success gained in vocational courses as measured by value added, and the poorer outcomes for more academic subjects, and noted that this reinforces the emphasis being placed on the former for the future.
- 7.24. Governors asked about the disparity between our high ability Y7 intake and the lower results at KS5; AH explained that the higher ability students tend to go to the Sixth Form colleges which focus particularly on academic subjects.
- 7.25. Governors asked what the predictions for 2015 look like, particularly for A levels; they noted that mock exams have just been completed and there is some variation in results between subjects – which vary year on year according to the options chosen by students. This makes comparison difficult, especially since mock exams are better indicators in some subjects than others, but have informed, in some cases, the way in which students' programmes of study are shaped. HH reported on his own experiences in this.
- 7.26. Governors discussed entry criteria for the Sixth Form and noted that the focus is on finding the best courses for the student; this means that some criteria are flexible. The student's approach to studying, life skills, study skills are all relevant also to a student's suitability for a course.
- 7.27. Governors explored in more detail the way in which changes of programmes of study can be undertaken in ways which maximise students' chances of success and the ways in which the school works with students to agree the way forward.

7.28. GR noted the value of giving students a taste of AS work in Y11, particularly a sample of the kind of exam papers set and the leadership team noted this as an excellent suggestion.

7.29. Governors noted the way in which Pupil Premium students are a group subject to a particular gap and asked that they receive a report on this, and what is being done, for the next meeting.

8. Recruitment

8.1. PS summarised the work done to date, asked governors to indicate the days on which they are able to attend and AGREED that the Recruitment Working Party should assign governors to activities.

8.2. Noting that there is a requirement that FGB ratifies any appointment and governors noted that there would be a meeting of FGB in the afternoon or early evening of 25 February.

9. Whistleblowing policy

9.1. MB explained that the paper had been reviewed by the LA legal team and outlined the key issues, noting that the proposal to include

9.2. Governors discussed the proposals at length made and AGREED that governors should be included in the confidential reporting (whistle blowing) policy, and the Clerk should prepare a draft revised document for governors, to include reference to the Code of Conduct.

10. Finance Committee Terms of Reference

10.1. After due consideration, Governors AGREED to adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance committee.

11. Areas of responsibility

11.1. Governors noted that finalising this has not yet been completed; JF was asked to extract key areas from the responsibility grid and the Clerk is to circulate this and gather indications of preference in order from all governors, with a week's deadline.

12. Policies

12.1. JF reported that the Pay Policy is based very closely on the model policy agreed between the Local Authority and the Trades Unions; it has also been discussed with the Trades Unions within the school and tailored to the particular circumstances here.

12.2. Governors discussed the way in which this version of the policy has evolved from previous versions, and the national (legal) context in which it has been prepared.

12.3. Governors sought, and gained, confirmation that the Trades Unions at the school are satisfied with this policy.

12.4. Governors also discussed the way in which appraisals are reflected in the policy.

12.5. Governors AGREED to adopt the Pay Policy for 2014 (Clerk to insert date on page 5).

12.6. Governors considered the "Supporting children with medical provisions" policy and

AGREED to adopt this.

13. Training

- 13.1. PG reported that NS has been attending her induction training at the LA, and NS reported that her employer also provides specific training for governors which she has taken advantage of and which she found of value.
- 13.2. Governors asked NS about her assessment of the LA training, noting that there were more primary governors there than secondary, and that NS had found the course useful.
- 13.3. Governors noted the value of the courses on offer; some governors are attending the conference on the coming Saturday, and PG again exhorted governors to take advantage of the training on offer.

14. Chair's Actions

- 14.1. The Chair reported that he had taken no actions on behalf of the governing body.