

Dorset Studio School

Minutes of the Governors meeting held on Thursday 1 October 2020, 4.00pm held virtually via Zoom due to Covid-19

Governors (GB)	*Kaye Chittenden; *Andy Daw; *Mark Gibbens (Chair); Avril Harrison; *Robert Lasseter; Joanne Manley (Parent Governor); *Annetta Minard (Principal); *Luke Rake (Member); *Jim Tirrell (Member); *Martha Vigar	
Other Attendees	*Vanessa Gifford (KMC Clerk); *Tom Barlow (Deputy Principal, Finance & Commercial Services KMC); *Tim Stephens (Member)	
* <i>Indicates actual presence at this meeting</i>		
AGENDA ITEM		Challenge and Action
1.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Representatives of Kingston Maurward College (KMC) and The Thomas Hardy School (THS) reaffirmed their standing declaration of interests in items relating to the financial / legal relationships between those sponsoring bodies and the Dorset Studio School (DSS).</p> <p>There were no further interests declared.</p>	
2.	<p>APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and noted from Joanne Manley.</p> <p>Tim Stephens, a Member of the Academy Trust, was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Principal and the staff for all the hard work with dealing with the inherited space issue and the pandemic.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 25 JUNE 2020</p> <p>The Governing Body (GB) APPROVED the minutes of 25 June 2020 as a true and accurate record and APPROVED the non-confidential minutes for website publication.</p>	
4.	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</p> <p>The following matters arising were NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Inspection Framework (EIF) had been uploaded to GVO. • Correspondence with local MPs would be undertaken later in the process • The Principal confirmed that the pastoral system was strong and working well, especially following lockdown where it was making a big difference. 	



<p>5.</p>	<p>ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR</p> <p>Andy Daw was nominated and AGREED as Chair to the Governing Body for the academic year 2020/21.</p> <p>Luke Rake was nominated and AGREED as Vice Chair to the Governing Body for the academic year 2020/21.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED</p> <p>Andy Daw took the Chair and thanked Mark Gibbens for his contribution to the DSS and leading through some interesting years.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>RATIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC DECISIONS</p> <p>The following decisions were RATIFIED following electronic approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the Lease for the Courtyard Classrooms from KMC. The Principal confirmed that the lease had been signed and completed. 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>PRINCIPALS REPORT</p> <p>The following points were NOTED from the Principal's Report:</p> <p>KS4 Outcomes</p> <p>It was noted that the KS4 outcomes had been carried out by teacher assessment rather than examinations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Principal reported that there had been stringent assessment where past history had been analysed as well as the expected trajectory of results over time. However, schools were informed that the government would use algorithms to decide grades. This had led to confusion for students as there were now two potential sets of results; teacher assessment and government algorithms. The DSS had worked with the THS to moderate student work and eventually teacher grades were used. The day before results were due to be distributed schools were advised that BTEC results had been withdrawn.</p> <p>The Principal advised that results for the DSS were strong, as would be expected due to reduced anxiety for some students with students without the examinations. It was noted that most of the country had better results, however they were not being published. The Principal advised that the DSS students were on an upward trajectory in any case and were due to do better this year, however, it is difficult to compare past results as the potential outcome of examinations is an unknown. It was questioned whether there was much difference between the assessed grade and the algorithm and the Principal advised that 0.4 progress had been expected and the outcome was 0.6; this would have been unlikely if examinations had been taken. Some BTEC results had been higher after the grades for coursework were taken back as it was considered they had been under-marked. Eventually teacher assessment was the only assessment used.</p>	



	<p>It was emphasised that the DSS was a different school this year with the introduction of Years 7 and 8, there were new teaching teams and new structures. The Principal congratulated the staff for the way they had coped with all the issues with the results being a tangible set of outcomes for each child.</p> <p>It was noted that all students had a planned and meaningful destination into further education or employment. The Principal considered the students to be confident young adults with many doing well in life. It was agreed that destinations were important and the school was keeping in contact with each student to ensure they continued to carry out what was expected. It was noted that 42% had progressed to KMC.</p> <p>The teaching teams were thanked for coping with the speed of change during the summer.</p> <p>Numbers The Principal advised that the current school number was 360 with 7 new starters since the presented report. The Principal advised that there was no significant difference between males and females. It was noted that 340 were funded and that numbers for Years 7 and 8 were strong making numbers healthy.</p> <p>Attendance The Principal advised that if students showed any signs of a cold they tended to stay at home. The school carried out automatic temperature testing if any student showed signs of Covid-19 and if there was any concern the student was immediately sent home. It was noted that Covid non-attendance would not be counted in the attendance statistics. The current attendance percentage was 93.9 so there were no concerns. The Principal advised that this figure would go up and down and all absences were evidenced.</p> <p>The Staff Attendance Policy was shared with the GB for information and it was suggested that 'Staff' was included in the title. It was noted that there was no appeal process for attendance. It was agreed to share the Grievance Procedure with the GB for information in due course.</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>AM</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT PLAN</p> <p>The Principal advised that feedback had been received from the DfE with for one of the projects being identified for consideration. An options appraisal had been undertaken and Option 3 had been accepted to construct a health and hygiene unit outside the covered area. A survey would be completed by Mott McDonald to ensure it would fit in the available space. The Planning process was questioned and the Principal advised that the DfE would be responsible for feasibility and planning.</p> <p>The Principal KMC advised that this was the first time he had seen the drawings and would have expected formal notification of the works as the landowner, as additional work on utilities may be necessary, with the potential of overloading services. The lease stated that KMC had to be informed of any work and the Principal KMC would require full details of the work and to be included in any discussions. He had significant concerns that if there</p>	



	<p>were any planning issues it could affect the College Masterplan with the sensitivities of the estate. The Principal considered that it should be the DfE to inform KMC, however it was noted that the lease was with the DSS. The Principal also considered that this would give huge implications for any building as the College Masterplan would dominate. The Principal KMC advised that an extension to the current DSS building was included in the plan. It was agreed that the Chair and Clerk would check the lease, and would give formal notice to KMC of the work and agreed it was important for the two organisations to communicate as they were not in isolation of each other. The Principal stated that this formal notification would come from the DfE.</p> <p>The GB questioned that once this project was completed whether it would provide sufficient space for the PAN of the school. The Principal advised that it would not, this project was linked to health and hygiene.</p> <p>It was noted that there were other conversations being carried out in tandem with the DfE to provide acceptable space for the PAN to ensure the health and safety of students. The options under discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acquire the 'Coneygar' building from KMC however this was used by the Colleges biggest academic area, and provisions would have to be made for KMC. • A new school located in the dairy fields with KMC taking possession of the current building <p>Both options were being considered by the DfE and costs had been requested from KMC.</p> <p>The Principal also advised that during discussions the DfE had advised that there may be a caveat on any funding that the DSS should join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), but confirmation of this was awaited.</p> <p>The GB questioned where this left the school for entry in September 2021 as KMC was growing and would require the Courtyard classrooms back. The Principal KMC advised that he expected to give notice on the lease once KMC numbers were confirmed for 2020/21. A decision had to be made on whether the school could take further students in September 2021 by November 2020. The Principal advised that she had informed the DfE that a decision had to be made by November 2020 on how the over-crowding would be solved, but nobody at the DfE is taking responsibility for the discrepancy between the building size and agreed student numbers. The Principal advised that the issues had also been compounded by the pandemic as the school had nowhere for isolation.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for getting to this point in the negotiations having been advised of the agreement for the boot-room project since the papers had been circulated.</p>	<p>AD/VG</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021</p> <p>This had been covered in the previous item.</p>	



<p>10.</p>	<p>COVID-19 UPDATE</p> <p>The Principal advised that staff had a rota during lockdown to cover the vulnerable students and those of key workers. Other staff had been working from home on lesson plans and were regularly in touch with the students. The School had opened all the way through lock-down. The GB questioned whether the school had any 'looked after' students and the Principal advised that there were 2 from Jersey and the authority there was being kept informed. Individual risk assessments had been completed for the students that attended the school during this time.</p> <p>A Covid Action Plan had been produced and shared on GVO and this was a working document which was kept up to date to ensure that the students were as safe as they could be with rigour at all times. The GB questioned how parents had accepted the guidelines and the Principal advised that a few had made the decision that their children would not come to school during the pandemic but not many, with some undertaking home education. Zoom meetings had been utilised to inform parents, with public health information accessible on the website.</p> <p>The Principal advised that £20K had been received for catch up and a programme was being developed for implementation, and this was noted. A fresh review was being undertaken to assess the impact of students being out of school. It was noted that this was not 'new money' as funding that had been taken away from Year 7 catch up fund.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>ANNUAL LETTER TO THE TRUST'S ACCOUNTING OFFICER</p> <p>The Annual Letter to the Trust's Accounting Officer dated 16 July 2020 was NOTED, as well as the letter of 26 August 2020 regarding the submission of the 2019/20 financial statements and associated documents.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 JULY 2020</p> <p>The Management Accounts to 31 July 2020 were discussed and the following points NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accounts gave sight of the year end position subject to audit with a surplus forecast due to increased numbers and additional funding for SEN, with the Principal confirming that there were a lot of EHCP's and additional need. • Staffing costs had increased but was in line with the increased student numbers. • There was a non-pay variance which could worsen with the various end of year adjustments eg depreciation. • The forecast surplus was around £100K or better and was secure, and the Principal was pleased to be in this position, now having the ability to carry out some exciting projects. • The DPFCS advised that there would be some additional costs due to the lagged funding, however the Budget for 2020/21 also delivered a forecast a break even position or small surplus. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was confirmed that cashflow was strong and there was a year end cash balance of £500K. The Principal confirmed that the costs of the building project would be paid for by the DSS and claimed from the DfE with no cashflow implications. 	
13.	<p>WORK EXPERIENCE/EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>The Principal reported that Employer Engagement was problematic with the current pandemic. Year 10 currently had 3 lessons a week and this was undertaken on the campus, and Year 11's were 1 day a week off campus. The school had endeavoured to continue the work experience to get the students out of the school despite the continually changing government guidance.</p> <p>It was noted that a Careers Programme had been out in place so that the students could progress straight through from Year 11. Virtual responses had been received from employers on how they could support.</p>	
14.	<p>AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020 were NOTED, with the Committee agreeing that the financial position was good and appropriate processes followed.</p>	
15.	<p>ANNUAL REPORTS</p> <p>The Principal advised that Annual Reports were currently being worked on and these would be shared on GVO when available for discussion at the next meeting.</p>	AM
16.	<p>CORPORATE RISK REGISTER</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Register was NOTED, with additional risks detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of the current school building was a huge risk It was vital to keep the core identity of the school in any future decisions. It was agreed that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic should be higher. The strategic use of IT underpinned with remote learning playing a huge part of the learners' journey. The infrastructure required review to look at new styles of learning. It was agreed that Risk 11 should be reviewed regarding measures to re-enforce and promote the identity of the school to protect the brand. A further complexity to review was the DfE suggestion that the school should join a MAT to receive capital funding. It was agreed that if this occurred there could risk to the school identity, and this would be reviewed once a formal response was received from the DfE, and the implications of joining a MAT would be investigated. It was agreed that there no point in discussing this further until a response form the DfE had been received. 	AD/VG



<p>17.</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS FOR REPORT</p> <p>The following business was NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members agreed that it was time to talk to local MP's for support and the Principal KMC advised that he was trying to sort an appointment with the West Dorset MP and would take up the issues with him. • Information regarding Mental Health had been sent to the Principal for information and was helpful. The Principal advised that she would be discussing it with the unions to support staff mental health. Kay Chittenden offered to assist with sharing information with the SLT. • It was agreed that a vaccine for Covid-19 was still a long way off and the impact could worsen before getting any better, therefore there still had to be awareness with open spaces and outdoor working beneficial. • The Principal thanked Tim Stephens for joining the meeting and taking an interest in the school. He thanked the GB and added that a recent document that the Clerk had shared had clarified the role of Members as 'guardians of governance' and he now had the confidence that governance at the school was robust. • The Principal thanked the Clerk for work that was carried out in the background supporting the school. • The out-going Chair was again thanked for all his work from the beginning of the school's journey, and he added that it was down to the expert and passionate team at the school. 	
<p>18.</p>	<p>2020/21 MEETINGS</p> <p>The following meeting dates were NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 December 2020 • 11 February 2021 • 29 April 2021 • 17 June 2021 	
<p><i>The Meeting closed at 6.05pm with no further business</i></p>		

Chair Date

