

Dorset Studio School

Meeting of the Full Board of Governors

THURSDAY 13 February 2025, 4.00pm, at Poundbury

Minutes

The Code of Conduct for Governors requires governors to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Governors must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a governor who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked * are those in which a majority of Governors may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Governors should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as governors and to act in the public interest.

Governors:	Andy Daw (Chair of Governors); Mark Gibbens (Vice Chair); Archie Lasseter (Governor); Chris Biggs (Parent Governor); Nicholas Spearing (Co-opted Governor); Kerry Aston (Co-opted Governor); David Humphreys (Staff Governor); Jason Malone (Interim Principal)
In attendance:	Andy Daw, Mark Gibbens, Nicholas Spearing, Kerry Aston, Jason Malone, Tracey Richards (Clerk), David Humphreys, Annetta Minard (Visitor)

Item		Detail	
1.	Verbal	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair of Governors welcomed all and Jason Malone as Interim Principal</p> <p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To Note any Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest noted</p>	Chair
2.	Verbal	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>To Note any apologies for absence</p> <p>The Clerk noted apologies from Archie Lasseter and Chris Biggs.</p>	Chair
3.	Minutes	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 19th December 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To Approve minutes as a correct record ▪ To Approve non confidential minutes for website publication <p>All minutes were confirmed as correct and AGREED</p>	Chair

4.	Minutes	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	Chair
5	Paper	<p>INTERIM PRINCIPALS REPORT / UPDATE</p> <p>The report was circulated to the board prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The principal advised the governors that he had laid out three key principals, which are highly important to all students, identifying the skills of the student at certain points, therefore introducing a curriculum pathway. Students are all expected to make good progress but this needs to be reflect in their learning pathways, which, identify the outcomes that they can achieve as well as reflecting the school’s specialism.</p> <p>By the end of KS4 students are able to reach their chosen destination. There is a need for a strong emphasis on English and Maths. English is currently heading in the right direction. The change in the examining board has been successful.</p> <p>Maths is a key priority for the school. The recent appointment of a new Head of Maths and an experienced Maths Teacher has increased the capacity of the Maths team. They both come with lots of experience and this is enabling more intervention groups within the KS4 lessons which will mean better outcomes in that subject area. AM is leading the higher Maths group, taking their intervention programme and monitoring their progress.</p> <p>The first set of mocks have shown that Maths is still behind English which is what will be addressed now with further interventions with the high end groups too.</p> <p>An English Tutor is attending one-day week to work with students at risk of not achieving in English, those students being ones that would underachieve due to the challenging circumstances that they have faced.</p> <p>Emphasis needs to remain on student’s aspirations, ensuring that they have the skills and qualifications to attain their destinations. We need to develop students with a strong character, being able to make social choices for themselves and for the greater good of society.</p> <p>A governor reiterated that this is a subtle and refocusing start for the school.</p> <p>Q- A governor asked what the secure pass in English and Maths is? A – English at level 4 is 46% and Maths is 17% which shows there is work for this to improve.</p> <p>Q – A governors asked how these results compare to last year? A – In terms of last year’s results, they are better than last year and we will know more after the mocks.</p> <p>Figures are based on the Autumn term mocks and another set will take place in March. The next Year 11 parents evening to take place 3rd April which will be face to face.</p> <p>Q – A governor asked about the new exam syllabus for the Maths? A – The school currently use Edexcel but are exploring other exam boards. Looking at what works for the student to ensure the school uses the board which fits the school curriculum pathways and students. It includes looking at the Welsh board. This would not change until the new academic year.</p> <p>Q – A governor asked as a benchmark what is the combined four plus English and Maths</p>	Chair

	<p>percentage? A – Quite low because of the Maths.</p> <p>Some good work is taking place with staff in terms of behaviour management to ensure consistencies and good behaviour. A CPD programme has been introduced to some staff to embed some of the work.</p> <p>A review of the curriculum offer within the land based qualification is taking place, identifying some students to take the level one qualification. The new model will give all students opportunities to take different routes.</p> <p>Project based synoptic projects will start in year 7 & 8, the first overarching title is providing food for the future, all subject will contribute to the project.</p> <p>Year 11 students will be identified for catch up sessions following the mock results.</p> <p>An Assistant Principal Katherine Young will be starting after Easter and will help identify intervention and early help. She will identify the KS3 students where performance has dipped, to reengage them.</p> <p>Behaviour and attitudes</p> <p>The suspension has increased however there are no areas of issues, currently 6.8% up from 4.5%. Poor behaviour is not being tolerated. All suspensions are proportionate and reasonable, and the school will continue to look at pathways for individuals.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>The school are expecting better GCSE results this summer due to the recent assessments which have taken place, which is due to the work that has taken place. Senior Leaders will continue to work with Maths to ensure the results are in line with English.</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Attendance is a good success story to date. However, it does show the most vulnerable group to be females, this is due to emotional based issues.</p> <p>Premises</p> <p>The outside student area will be revamped to invest in the students wellbeing at break times. A new play rubble will replace the wood chip.</p> <p>A room has been identified to support the females at break and lunch times.</p> <p>Appraisal</p> <p>A review of the staff appraisal system is under review, to focus on impact.</p> <p>SEN</p> <p>At the Heads briefing it was outlined that the number of EHCP's have nationally increased not just in Dorset, hence the numbers increasing in Dorset Studio School. However, the school takes from many more areas. This has a big impact on attendance, attainment and behaviour.</p>	
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6.	Paper	<p>RATIFICATION OF POLICIES</p> <p>The following policies for AGREED to be adopted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Policy • Code of Conduct • Admissions 2026/27 	Chair
8	Verbal	<p>NEW BUILD / MAT UPDATE</p> <p>The Acting Executive Principal advised the governors that to date there is no update with regards to the New Build project, as we are still waiting for update from the ministers regarding the funding.</p> <p>The Chair asked Governors to discuss the Wessex MAT due to the Trustees of the MAT advising us in July 2024 that they were no longer able to proceed with the transfer unless specific conditions could be met. To date these conditions have not been met. It has now been 7 months since this decision was made and consequently, it is appropriate to discuss whether it is still beneficial for the school to join a MAT, whether it is the Wessex Mat or another MAT. Governors were very disappointed to discover that when the school received such disappointing news about the building, Wessex MAT withdrew from the process, rather than offered support. AM noted that it was not unusual for MATs to temporarily withdraw from negotiations with a school when land difficulties are identified.</p> <p>A Governor noted, however, that Dorset Studio School is not part of Wessex MAT and the joining process has stopped. The current situation had nothing to do with Dorset Studio School and it had caused the school some difficulties, for example, staff pay slips, staff morale, audit and staff appointments.</p> <p>The Poundbury lease has been agreed for another 5 years between the DfE and landlords with a break clause of 2 years, this does mean that the split site is stable for this time.</p> <p>The Wessex MAT have invited the Chair of Governors and Acting Principal to attend a steering group meeting. However, as the school is currently not part of the MAT and the joining conditions have not been met, the purpose of the meeting is unclear.</p> <p>Q – A governor asked what the reason for a steering group would be?</p> <p>A – To keep lines of communication open and be the single point of contact for the DfE. However, it is not clear why the DfE would communicate through the Wessex MAT when they have withdrawn from the joining process and we are not part of it.</p> <p>A Governor noted that since due diligence took place a few years ago, the delay in joining means there have been many changes, both in the school and within the government. This is why the future of the school structure should be considered, including whether joining a MAT would still be beneficial to the school and provide best value, since it will cost £150,000 a year to join.</p>	Chair

		<p>The Governing Body was unanimous in agreeing not to re-engage in joining Wessex MAT, since the MAT have withdrawn from the process.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Chair would contact Mike Foley CEO of the Wessex MAT to discuss and confirm the situation. ACTION AD</p>	
9	Verbal	<p>GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT</p> <p>The Chair acknowledge the resignation of Kerry Aston and thanked her for her professional service.</p> <p>It was AGREED to recruit another Governor and to also send out interest for a Parent Governor ACTION TR</p>	Chair
10	Paper	<p>APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL SEPTEMBER 2025</p> <p>The Acting Principal was asked to leave the meeting to discuss the recruitment process of Principal (confidential minutes)</p>	Chair