Dorset Studio School

Meeting of the Full Board of Governors
THURSDAY 28 September 2024, 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; Mark Gibbens; Kaye Chittenden; Chris Biggs (Parent Governor); Rosie Pike (Parent Governor); Nicholas Spearing (Governor); Kerry Aston (Governor); David Humphreys (Staff Governor); Paul Green (Principal)
In attendance:	Andy Daw, Mark Gibbens, Nicholas Spearing, Kerry Aston, Paul Green, Nadine Hill (Acting Clerk), Archie Lasseter, David Humphreys

Item		Detail	
1.	Verbal	**Welcome** The Chair of Governors welcomed all. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** To **Note** any Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest noted	Chair
2.	Verbal	**APOLOGIES** To **Note** any apologies for absence The Clerk noted apologies from Chris Biggs and Tracey Richards	Chair
3.	Minutes	**MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 3rd July 2024** ▪ To **Approve** minutes as a correct record ▪ To **Approve** non-confidential minutes for website publication All minutes were confirmed as correct and **AGREED** with the amendment of the apologies being Nicholas Spearing, David Humphreys and Archie Lasseter, minutes will be amended to reflect this.	Chair

		No further matters arising.	
4.	Minutes	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** New Build Update – No update for this at this time	Chair
5	Verbal	**ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR** There were no nominations sent to the Clerk Prior to the meeting. The Chair Andy Daw and Vice Chair Mark Gibbens were re-elected for 2024/25. Nicholas Spearing was elected to Chair Audit & Finance Board, members of the board to be Mark Gibbens and Andy Daw also and to invite a new member. Kerry Aston was appointed Link Governor for safeguarding. It was agreed that Kerry would meet with Paul Chapman (DSL) All governors are to complete the skills audit on GVO.	Chair
6.	Paper	**RATIFICATION OF POLICIES** Child Protection Policy with the new KCSIE had been circulated prior to the meeting. PG to take a look at the Appendix noted and then circulate on GVO for ratification**.** **ACTION**	Chair
7.	Paper	**PRINCIPALS REPORT** Principals report was circulated on GVO prior to the meeting for discussion. **Headline measures** It was noted that there has been a slight fall in admissions at September, reflecting the biggest fall in the number of children aged eleven across the county in more than a decade. He pointed towards much work in this regard including developing a new website, a new Facebook page and visiting feeder schools presenting to hundreds of students. He also pointed towards the marketing strategy now in place and supported by the Governing body. With regards to the GCSE results it was noted that whilst there had been an improvement in GCSE grades in several subjects, that the overall progress score would be negatively affected by a range of factors not experienced by the school prior to this particular year. A detailed description of these factors was provided. They included: • The introduction of terminal assessment nationwide (meaning that the three vocational qualifications which were previously achieved in Year 10, now had to be taken in year 11) • The fact that this meant students were now taking seven subjects in year 11 as opposed to four the previous year – with the added workload that this involved	

- That this has an impact on timetabling, meaning less overall time for core GCSE subjects in order to incorporate other lessons
- That this added to the number of examinations taken in that year, increasing them from 16 to 19 – with the impact on revision time and workload
- The introduction this year (for first assessment) of BTEC TECH awards (as opposed to previous FIRST awards) with a new synoptic assessment regime – meaning that students' practical scores are now capped in line with their academic scores – being hugely disadvantageous to our cohort
- The synoptic assessment regime is also far more time consuming than the previous assessment regime, meaning more time in an examination hall and less time in the classroom. This had also impacted time for other subjects.
- That the students had continued with the legacy award Animal Care award, prior to being able to switch to the new award – thus meaning that the Animal Care grades would not count towards progress 8 this year.
- The Principal reminded Governors that the Senior Leadership team had also been operating at approximately 60% capacity for the academic year due to retirement and illness. He noted that he had now recruited an additional member of the team and that this has added to capacity meaning that one member of SLT can now carry out Maths interventions.

It was noted that Mathematics grades were low. The Principal pointed towards the recruitment plan for a new Head of Mathematics, hopefully for a January start, as well as the intention to appoint other Maths' staff.

The Principal noted that the curriculum as it stands would not advantage our students and that a full curriculum review was already underway. It was also noted that BTEC registrations were down 30% nationally for next year, perhaps reflecting a national dissatisfaction with the changes to these awards.

Q – A governor asked why 68% of students were below a grade 4 in Maths?
A – In response to this the Principal noted that Maths grades had been declining, that despite support plans being in place for staff within the department, not enough had been done within the department to establish a mastery of essential numeracy and that the steps had already been taken in order to rebuild this team.

Q – A governor asked whether students could complete all of the paper or were they missing basic knowledge?
A – The Principal acknowledged that all but one school county-wide had a lower Maths pass rate than English and that, as aforementioned, basic numeracy needed to be a focus within the department.

Q – A governors suggested that may be a working committee involving parents to help understand how to excite students about Maths would be an idea
A – It was felt that any help that the Governors would seek to offer would be welcomed, but that there was not the inclination to involve parents at this point.

A governor suggested that a conference / presentation with a governor to share the importance of Maths could be useful, and also that ex pupils could share their experience of the importance of Maths.

The Principal advised that there is a recruitment plan live to recruit a new Head of Maths and an additional Maths teacher. Intervention was taking place with the previous Executive Principal for Maths currently along with the Assistant Principal who had been

		retimetabled solely to provide this intervention. The intervention will be monitored closely throughout this academic year. **Q – A governor suggested that, if needed, could we get external advice?** **A – This was agreed if required** **Attendance** Current attendance figures are at 93.6%. Q – A governor asked if results were impacted as a factor of lower attendance A – The Principal stated that attendance is improving and that it had been recognised by OFSTED that the school is doing all that can be reasonably be expected with respect to this. It was noted that the figures this year are already better than last. Governors were reminded that results at the school had always been strong but that there were a unique set of circumstances this year. **Safeguarding** It was reported that 18 safeguarding incidents had been reported since the start of the academic year. **Q – A governor asked if this was a concern with the number in a small amount of time?** **A – It was felt that this was not unusual and that the school used "My Concern" as a recording tool, therefore there is a robust efficient way of analysing the data.** **Admissions** Recruitment of students for September 2024 was now live through the Dorset County application. The school has worked hard with the new Facebook page, website and also using websites (MumsNet). **Q – A governor asked whether admission numbers were lower due to the price of the transport?** **A – It was acknowledged that though it was competitively priced, that this could be a factor. It is certainly cited as a factor with a small number of students who have left the school in the past.** The Principal informed governors, that with regards to the new student admissions for Sept 2025 it will be important to focus on the first choice offers, since (due to the fall in numbers county-wide) most students are getting their first choice and the school would be unlikely to bolster numbers through second choice applications. **Q – A Governors asked what proportion is first place and second place?** **A – Depending on the year, anywhere between 80—100% of places offered are first choice places.** **Behaviour** It was reported that there is currently 1 suspension to date	

		Subject Milestones The Chair would like to revisit this document at a further meeting **Destinations** The Director of Specialism reported that 30 % of students intended to pursue post 16 at Kingston Maurward College. A governor acknowledges that outcomes at Dorset Studio School are very good, particularly for SEN students.	
8	Verbal	**NEW BUILD / MAT UPDATE** Governors were informed that the new build is experiencing a delay in relation to an application for additional funding that has not been addressed as a result of the election. We have been told that we can expect an update towards the end of September, early October. **Q – A governor asked whether we have a more detailed timescale?** **A – Not at this time**	**Chair**
9	Verbal	**SAFEGUARDING** The Chair confirmed for all governors to read the Updated KCSIE 2024 which was circulated on GVO	**Chair**
10	Paper	**SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER UPDATE** The report was circulated prior to the meeting and all governors were asked to read this and report to the Business Manager if there are any questions on the report.	**Chair**