



# OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

	<b>Present:</b>	Martin Ashman (MA), Brenda Brown (Vice-chair, BB), Julie Burgess (JB), Richard Carter (CRC), Rowena Chalk (Chair, RC), Carl Day (CD), James Horsman (JH), Pete Robinson (PR), Eddie Rodriguez (ERZ), Nicky Wastie (NW)
		Faye Hatchard (FHD)
	<b>Minutes:</b>	Alison Carter (Clerk to Governors, AC)
1	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
		Stewart Boyling (SB)
2	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
		None

3	<b>CDP STRAND 1 TEACHING &amp; LEARNING</b>	
	<p>FHD gave a presentation on teaching and learning, making reference to the report of a recent Strand 1 meeting with BB and JB (provided to the governors in advance). The questions put to FHD at the meeting were all generated from the CDP. FHD described a range of current and planned work programmes in teaching and learning, including wide-ranging CPL. She spoke about an initiative to reduce the gap between the management and data work that is the focus of heads of faculty, and the teaching focus of middle leaders. This is being achieved via more open conversations and discussion. PR agreed that a recent Faculty Leadership meeting was useful in this respect.</p> <p>FHD reported on QA approaches designed to target groups of students still underperforming e.g. boys and PP students. Consistent work in Science has produced pleasing results. Teachers use data to target a small number of students, inviting them to sessions on specific topics that they need to revisit. The science faculty has shared their practices in this area with other faculties. <b>MA asked about attendance at these sessions: are teachers giving extra time but seeing low take-up? He also wanted to know if students attend sessions in core subjects (perceiving them to be more important), so that their non-core subjects suffer?</b> FHD agreed that take-up can always be improved, but pointed out that refining the offer produces better results e.g. moving sessions to lunchtime (rather than after school), gradually introducing focussed sessions rather than 'opening</p>	

the floodgates' so that students don't feel overwhelmed, and asking students what their specific needs are. She agreed that non-core subjects do fall behind in this respect, but attempts are being made to remedy that. She said that parental engagement is crucial to attendance levels, and to this end staff phone the parents of students whose specific needs have been identified, rather than sending out blanket emails. This approach has been shown to give a better staff time to student attendance ratio. **MA queried the amount of time teachers spend making phone calls.** FHD replied that the task can be divided amongst subject staff. ERZ added that the number of students identified (filtered using data) was about 20 in the recent science initiative, so the workload was less than might be expected. FHD and ERZ agreed that to make personal contact with a larger number of families would be impossible. CD agreed that, as a parent, he would always take serious notice of a phone call over a generic email. MA said that, as long as the process is efficient and produces results in exchange for workload, the method is a good one. **CD asked about the challenge of engaging hard-to-reach parents.** FHD reminded the governors of the recent transition summer schools for Year 7s: parents who often had negative experiences in their own schooldays spent time at Oathall being offered a more positive view.

**MA asked if students experience a psychological change as they enter KS4, feeling that school life is 'downhill from here'? Do students feel pressure as Yr 10 begins, he asked, understanding that they must give up more free time and tackle a much larger body of work?** FHD agreed that the engaging and 'fun learning' aspects of DIRT practice that are typical of KS3 classrooms could be used more widely at KS4. She added that MA's perception of students' mind-set can indeed be seen in the differences between KS3 and KS4 survey results. CD added that the language used in teaching can sometimes have an impact: high-achieving students see GCSEs and other qualifications as a 'stepping stone' to life and therefore engage, while some middle-ability students respond less well to requests to 'concentrate' or 'get your head down'. They can become nervous about the consequences of failure. BB said that she witnessed good practice in this area on recent classrooms visits to KS4. A history teacher used DIRT, she said, to engage effectively. Notably a student who had not done well was seen to 'bounce back' and decide to do better next time. BB and JB reported that students had the confidence to ask for help as a result of their positive learning experience. JB singled out effective use of student-on-student mentoring in a science lesson. BB reported that there is some inconsistency; she mentioned a lower set English lesson in which students appeared to lack aspiration. FHD said that the new head of faculty is providing appropriate training with regard to this.

**Referring to material in FHD's presentation, MA asked for a definition of 'teaching to the top'.** FHD explained that this approach aims to avoid students feeling negative about themselves, whatever their ability. Teachers use aspirational material with a view to changing mind-set. MA suggested that in reality students in low sets are, in fact, well aware of their position. **CRC further asked if the language used to describe sets compounds this.** FHD assured governors that there is no suggestion of school staff encouraging any such perception.

**JH asked if there is a prevailing perception among current students that they should be able to get ahead in life without hard work.** There was a discussion about expectations, and the GB largely agreed that academic expectations are higher, that students' workload is taxing and that standards in schools have not fallen.

Returning to FHD's report, MA suggested that a teacher's ability to build a meaningful relationship with a student is key to engagement and success. The GB agreed. BB and MA added that kindness is also crucial. There was a discussion on how to repair a damaged teacher-student relationship, and

	<p><b>CD asked how that is done at Oathall.</b> FHD described work in restorative justice: face-to-face meetings aim to resolve problems. ERZ added that work in restoring relationships is a defining feature of Oathall's methods: members of SLT drop in to lessons to get a picture of problems, and (in rare and more serious cases) intervene. JB added that the counterpart to kindness is respect. She described what she saw on a recent visit - staff encouraging respect by using effective discipline (e.g. skirt lengths, shirts tucked in, mobile phone use). Students took correction in good part, and good staff-student relationships were apparent.</p> <p>The governors further discussed under-achievement among boys. <b>CD asked if the students who talk negatively about 'swats' or 'keenos' tend to be boys.</b> FHD and ERZ reported that the current School Captain is undertaking a project studying this aspect of school culture with a view to finding ways to improve this situation.</p> <p><b>CRC suggested to FHD that the approach of 'teaching to the top' may take longer than a year to produce measurable changes in results.</b> He urged FHD to be patient if a dramatic impact is not immediately apparent. FHD agreed, and pointed out that the results of DIRT and the timing of its impact are similar to those of 'teaching to the top'. Benefits are starting to be felt: last year some students 'settled' for a grade 4 or 5, feeling that this was all they needed for their own progression; now, teaching encourages aspiration beyond that. ERZ added that, last year, post-16 providers were not helpful in encouraging aspiration, some giving the impression that students need only aim for minimum entry requirements. He has addressed this with providers.</p> <p><b>MA asked whether teaching staff are given praise from leaders and middle management for their day-to-day work.</b> He reminded the meeting that this is particularly necessary after any disappointment about exam results. PR agreed, but added that teachers are, in his experience, motivated independently to improve teaching and learning for the benefit of the students. BB reported that between one school visit and the next she has seen individual teachers raising their professional performance. RC concurred with MA that every employee has a right to feel valued. FHD agreed, and said that exams analysis meetings aimed to achieve this.</p> <p>The governors thanked FHD for her comprehensive report and she left the meeting.</p>	
4	<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b></p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2019 were tabled to the meeting and approved as a true record with two minor changes. The clerk will make the necessary amendments and the Chair will sign after the meeting. Part Two minutes were tabled and the governors agreed them as a true record. They were duly signed by the Chair.</p>	AC
5	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b></p> <p><u>Year 11 exit interviews</u></p> <p>ERZ asked the GB what they hoped the school would gain from exit interviews. He reminded them that Laura Gyngell records Year 11 students talking about their experiences, and shares the material with Year 10s. As much data as possible about student destinations is collected via the Alumni Association (now about three years old) and from post-16 providers. Getting information beyond that is very difficult.</p>	

	<p>There was a discussion of how more data might be gathered from ex-students, and how alumni might have more of an input with the aim of encouraging aspiration. PR suggested a Year 11 'alumni assembly'. ERZ reminded the governors of the alumni profiles posted up around the school, and agreed that an attempt to increase these would be a good idea. It was agreed that methods of engagement are limited, and that FHD should continue to speak to Krista Ferros, careers advisor, about a push to get more Year 11s to sign up to the Alumni Association as they leave school. The governors will review this matter at the March FGB.</p> <p><u>Careers advice and work experience provision</u> BB said that she had real concerns about asking FHD to add this matter to her February FGB report because of her already very heavy workload. BB cited the volume of work that had, for instance, gone into FHD's October Strand meeting alone. The GB decided to defer this report until the February FGB as it did not feature in FHD's presentation to this meeting.</p> <p><u>Staff welfare survey</u> ERZ reported that this is in hand. FHD and JG manage the survey.</p>	
6	<p><b>URGENT MATTERS</b> None.</p>	
7	<p><b>POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES REVIEW</b> There were no policies presented for review.</p>	
8	<p><b>BUSINESS REPORT</b></p> <p><u>Personnel</u> <b>MA queried the impact of one assistant head of house remaining on long-term sick leave.</b> ERZ said that the member of staff is part of a job share. The work of two other members of staff is impacted, but the situation is manageable.</p> <p><u>Inclusion</u> <b>MA queried the cost of Fresh Start college courses for two students at risk of permanent exclusion (£5k each).</b> ERZ said that the payments do indeed leave the school out of pocket, but added that the cost of the course is similar to the costs involved in permanent exclusion. <b>MA asked if the courses are working.</b> ERZ replied that results were not encouraging. MA suggested that sending these students on the course was merely staving off inevitable permanent exclusion, and ERZ cautiously agreed. He reminded the governors that WS has increased its drive to avoid all permanent exclusions, and that Fresh Start is now one of the few options available once a student has passed through other local schools and attended an APC. ERZ said that reducing the number of permanent exclusions may be difficult in the case of these two Oathall students. <b>MA asked if arranging Fresh Start courses involves extra effort from staff,</b> and ERZ replied that the necessary work is no greater than with permanent exclusion.</p>	

	<p><u>Boilers</u>          ERZ shared aerial images of the college site showing the proposed siting of new gas pipes. Installation will involve closing the student entrance near Sue Watkins' office for three to four weeks. Routes around the college and fire safety are being reviewed and will be amended/implemented before the closure begins.</p> <p><u>Windows</u>          The majority of windows in the 1938 building are being replaced, along with some doors. Some work will have to be done in term-time. Compounds will be installed for contractors and student safety. Windows in the main turrets cannot be replaced when students are present, and this work is planned for February half term. Windows in DT classrooms will be replaced during October half term because disruption to learning is too great. <b>MA asked about noise implications.</b> ERZ replied that he has asked the contractors about this, and has received reassurance that noise will be well contained. <b>PR asked who will manage the project,</b> and ERZ said that this will be done by an external company with Oathall staff input as required.</p> <p><u>Staff Toilets</u>          BB commented on the excellent new facilities in the women's staff toilets.  <b>JH mentioned recent news stories about unisex toilets and asked if students dislike the SAM block's unisex provision.</b> ERZ replied that students express positive views on the SAM block toilets. Open and spacious, they were installed following consultation with other schools with a view to reducing the phenomenon of students (especially older students) using toilets as meeting places and making the space threatening for younger students. In addition, male and female students tend naturally to diverge within the space, boys using one side of the facility and girls the other.</p>	
9.	<p><b>ACADEMY/LOCALITY ISSUES</b>          RC reported that she met the Chair of Governors of Warden Park Secondary Academy on 19/09/19.</p>	
10	<p><b>CHAIR'S REPORT</b></p> <p><u>LA governor role</u>          RC reported that her application to take on the role of LA governor has been approved at LA level and now progresses to a committee of local councillors at a meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p><u>West Sussex Governors' Association</u>          RC will accompany ERZ to a meeting of the West Sussex Governors' Association with a focus on soft federations, on Wed November 6<sup>th</sup> at County Hall North, and will report back to the GB.          RC has agreed to join the West Sussex Governors' Association, and attended a recent meeting which was unfortunately inquorate.</p> <p><u>ECHPs</u>          RC has recently signed off on five ECHPs.</p>	
11	<p><b>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</b></p> <p><u>Inclusion</u></p>	

ERZ and head teachers of Mid Sussex secondary schools recently met Sarah Bideleux of the Access Inclusion Team to discuss the drive to reduce permanent exclusions. He reminded the governors that Oathall has made only one permanent exclusion in the past year. It was agreed at the head teachers' meeting that WS alternative provision is always full and is not working effectively, and that WS schools should work together to provide alternatives.

#### Post-exams meetings

All these faculty meetings are complete and went well. A focus for the coming year will be the use of minimum expected grades for each student.

#### Student Matters

There have been 17 'non-standard' entries to the college since September, six of these being EAL (English as an Additional Language) students. A few spoke no English on arrival. This has increased workload for the pastoral team. The college does not have the diverse language skills to support these students. **MA asked how EAL students are supported in their learning throughout the school day.** EAL students are paired up with another student where possible, and laptops are provided with simultaneous interpreting software, with headphones available. One member of support staff is assigned to their care. **MA asked if they are monitored for progress as a distinct group.** ERZ said that this is the case – Laura Gyngell administers this.

#### Year 10 exams evening

The evening, organised by Laura Gyngell, was a success, with parents given an understanding of the exams process.

#### Drugs in schools

ERZ met local Heads on 10/09/19 and co-wrote a letter to parents on this issue which was sent out on 07/10/19. The letter was based on one created by South Coast schools (see September FGB minutes). RC added that a consistent approach is helpful, particularly if students move schools.

**CD asked if there is a school policy on vaping,** and ERZ said that (in common with all schools) vaping is not allowed. It is treated in the same way as smoking. The possible contents and impact of e-cigarettes is unknown.

#### Safeguarding

ERZ is to meet heads of the federation schools with a view to schools pairing up for a Health and Safety audit, following new WS guidance on methodology. Emma Green, an assistant head of house, and BB, will attend.

#### Staffing

- Maths: ERZ was delighted to announce that a qualified Maths teacher has been appointed. Debs Weynberg is an experienced maths teacher starting in January and will be the numeracy lead. **CRC asked if the college had changed any recruitment practices that might have encouraged Debs to apply this time, after several**

**previous recruitment rounds were unsuccessful.** ERZ said that nothing had been changed.

- Maternity cover: NQT Gemma Blyth has been appointed to cover a maternity leave, and was chosen from a strong group of three candidates.
- Phased return to work: one member of staff is making a phased return after long-term sickness absence.

#### Pay increase

The increase this year will be 2.75%. The DofE will fund the .75% element. The matter is still under consideration at DofE level and will then pass to the LA which will formulate its pay policy. The pay increase will therefore not appear in salaries until December or January, but will be back-dated. West Sussex is likely to apply the 2.75% to all pay points.

#### Self-evaluation Form (SEF)

The last phase of the new SEF is well underway and it is likely to be published in the next few days.

#### College Development Plan (CDP) 2020-23

ERZ aims to bring the new CDP structure to the December FGB so that the GB can consider it in the spring term, ready for publication in the summer. The CDP will likely align the new OFSTED framework. Schools already inspected under the framework have seen a clear focus on curriculum, with a reduced interest in data sets provided in advance to inspectors. ERZ said that a school with an intricately planned and impressive curriculum could still have poor outcomes, as the new framework aims to 'deep dive' into classroom material. He wondered how OFSTED would grade such a school, as the process is more subjective. ERZ added that OFSTED reports are likely to be only about four sides of paper. It has been speculated that that it would now be more difficult to get an 'outstanding' because a school will be unable to succeed on 'data alone'. RC and BB reported that a recent inspection at St Peter's Ardingly was based on the new framework (though it was not yet in place at the time). The inspector seemed more understanding, and appeared to make fewer judgements before speaking to governors.

#### Open Evening

ERZ thanked the governors who attended. He reported that very large numbers of parents came to the evening and school tours are still being delivered to many families. MA commented that staff at the open evening were outstanding – engaging and enthusiastic. ERZ confirmed this perception: feedback has included similar praise for staff.

#### Attendance

ERZ will report at the November FGB on the success of programmes designed to improve attendance. Attendance on the day of this meeting stood at 96.5%

#### Toshiba screens

CD offered to approach Toshiba, his previous employer, to ask for assistance following the

	arrival of an unexpected invoice for software costs after the first year. CD wondered if Toshiba has changed its software supplier (SignStix) who made the donation of ongoing software licencing.	CD
12	<b>OUTSIDE EDUCATIONAL VISITS</b> No report	
13	<b>SAFEGUARDING</b> BB reported that she met ERZ to discuss how the governor safeguarding role can be developed. She will meet Emma Green on 21/10/19.	
14	<b>PUPIL PREMIUM MATTERS</b> BB and RC intend to meet Emma Green to expand the governors' monitoring and oversight to include middle and low ability students, and boys. <b>BB said that the PP group was too small for consideration and the governors' concern should be wider. RC asked ERZ if there would be merit in their attending a relevant SLT meeting as they did last year.</b> ERZ suggested that an open discussion might be more productive, possibly with Emma Green and Toby Houghton. MA reminded the GB that PP alone is likely to be an OFSTED focus. BB and ERZ agreed, but added that other students are affected by PP funding and work. RC added that not all PP students underperform.	
15	<b>ATTENDANCE</b> No separate report.	
16	<b>GOVERNORS' VISITS &amp; INDIVIDUAL REPORTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BB and JB attended their Strand 1 meeting – its report has been shared with the GB.</li> <li>• CRC attended the post-16 evening and complimented the college on its high quality.</li> </ul>	
17	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BB acknowledged Oathall's contribution to the Lindfield Arts Festival and thanked the school.</li> <li>• MA pointed out that following the appointment of SB as Associate Governor, only he and PR are Strand 3 governors. RC said that two new governors should be appointed early next year, and can be assigned to Strand 3.</li> <li>• JH announced that he has now been appointed a governor of St Peter's, Ardingly. He will now be absent from FGB until the February meeting.</li> <li>• ERZ thanked PR and (by extension) Mercedes Calleja for the recent launch of the STEM Challenge, now in its third year. There is considerable extra effort required for this exciting project.</li> <li>• RC reported that she and BB will undertake ERZ's performance management before Christmas.</li> </ul>	



	<i>The meeting closed at 21:07 hrs</i>	
	<b>DATE &amp; VENUE OF NEXT MEETINGS</b> Autumn term: Nov 11th; Dec 9 <sup>th</sup> . CR1 at 19:00hrs	

Distribution: Governing Body, Leadership Team, Head's PA, WSCC

FGB meeting action log

Meeting at which action raised	Details	Who?	Timescale	Completed?
07.10.19	Approach Toshiba about screen software licencing.	CD	asap	
09.09.19	Staff Welfare Survey to be implemented (in hand 07.10.19)	RC/ERZ	asap	
<b>Longer term:</b>				
11.02.19	Consider exit interviews, six months after departure of employee.	ERZ	July '19	
11.02.19	CDP progress report to the whole GB (strand meetings to monitor during its development)	ERZ	Dec '19	
08.07.19	Research recommendations on governor terms and succession.	AC	By July FGB 2020	
09.09.19	Add a report on the current provision for careers advice and work experience to the S1 presentation for her next FGB (Feb '20)	FHD	Feb FGB	
<b>Completed actions</b>				
24.04.19	Discussion on exit interviews for Year 11s	ERZ		07.10.19