

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Tuesday 25th February 2025, 19:00 hours

PRESENT: Toby Houghton (TH) Head Teacher; Rowena Chalk (RC) Chair; Brenda Brown (BB); Nicky Wastie (NW); Carol MacTaggart (CM); Jon Parry (JP); Sarah Wild (SW)

In Attendance: Faye Hatchard (FH) Deputy Headteacher

Minutes: Helen Parry (HP) temporary Clerk to Governors)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Richard Carter, James Horsman and Vicky Cobb

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Taken at the appropriate point in the agenda for each individual business item, where necessary.

3. SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM PRESENTATION

FHD presented an update on the School's curriculum plans (see attached presentation pack). The following salient points were made:

The main goal of curriculum is to build up content of long term memory and the impact of the curriculum is to be improve the outcomes for students.

The Federation Teaching and Learning Group had recently explored the interconnections between four areas of Teaching and Learning, namely, curriculum, opportunities, relationships and long term memory. The focus of their discussions was on the **intent** (the 'what' is taught), the **implementation** (the 'how' it is taught) and the **impact** (the final assessment of how the lessons have been taught and how have they been assessed/evaluated i.e., the 'now what').

There followed a discussion on the plans to adjust the curriculum content (the **intent**), including the dropping of 3D Design and GCSE Engineering and the addition of GCSE – Resistant Materials and Cambridge National – Engineering, to replace the discontinued subjects. FHD and TDH explained the rationale behind the changes and stressed that the decisions taken were based on offering more flexibility and accessibility for students (particularly for the disadvantaged students), whilst leveraging off the existing teacher expertise. In addition, it was reported that the decision taken two years ago to offer Italian as a 3rd language from Y7 had not worked out as well as had been hoped. A disappointingly low number students had chosen to take the subject through to Y11 and therefore, the offer of Italian would be phased out over the next couple of years to allow the current Y9 students to sit the GCSE exam should they wish. The MFL offering would continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

FHD explained that 15 students had been selected from the School's vulnerability index with a view to offering those students additional English and Maths tuition with a view to helping those students achieving at least a grade 4 in these core subjects. This would involve replacing 5 option lessons with 2 extra lessons in each of English and Maths and a fifth lesson of either option course work or alternative education (e.g. Farm activity), depending on the specific needs

	<p>identified for each student. This would also reduce the exam load for these students.</p> <p>The Governors gave their full support to these changes, particularly recognising the benefits for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>This year's offer of options for the current Y9 cohort was shared with Governors, noting the upcoming Options Evening on 27th February and Y9 Parents Evening on 6th March.</p> <p>It was reported that the implementation of the curriculum was now well embedded in the staff body.</p> <p>FHD then highlighted the School's focus on how the curriculum was being delivered (the implementation). The approach taken by the English Faculty was given as an example, where there was a continuously fluid approach to the delivery of the teaching, an annual review of the curriculum and adjustments were to the learning map, where necessary.</p> <p>Quality assurance feedback and SLT deep dives have continued to provide a good measure of the impact of the teaching and has produced some very useful findings, including data suggesting that whilst most students are in a good place with their learning, there are not as many hitting the high grades, as expected. Also, it has become evident that better outcomes are achieved where teachers are teaching their specialisms. Student feedback was noted as being an important feature to the evaluation of teaching and learning and reinforcement of 'Every Lesson, Every Day (ELED)' was very much in evidence across the School as a whole.</p> <p>There are still many questions to answer, with the SLT, Heads of Faculty and Federation groups working together with a view to answering those questions and to continuing to striving for improvement.</p>
4.	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2025</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2025 were approved signed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>None.</p>
6.	<p>URGENT MATTERS</p> <p>a) Permanent exclusion hearings Governors were asked if any of their number would be available to sit on the panels for two, separate, upcoming permanent exclusion hearings scheduled to take place on 6th &/or 7th March 2025.</p> <p>b) Head of Year interviews Governors were also asked for their support for upcoming interviews for a Head of Year post, scheduled for 3rd March 2025 at 11am.</p>
7.	<p>BUSINESS/FINANCE REPORTS</p> <p>The business report for the period of January 2025 along with the budget monitoring report for the same period were provided to the governors.</p>

	<p>TH went through each item shown in the business report (see attached copy). In particular, TH pointed out that following a change in the Farm operations, the School had exchanged the tractor (which was no longer required) for a new and smaller utility based vehicle. Governors were asked to approve the balance to pay on this deal, being approximately £3,000. This was approved unanimously.</p> <p>In addition, TH referred to a recent change in policy (at County level) with respect to Health & Safety/work at height and flat roof access. Following this change, School staff would no longer be permitted to work on the flat roofs of the premises without edge protection (fixed rails or similar). This had caused problems for all schools as it would now be necessary to use special equipment at great expense, to work on their flat roofs.</p> <p>No further questions were raised at this point.</p> <p>TH continued to explain that the School would be notified of the funding it will receive for the coming year and it was agreed that a Finance Committee meeting would be scheduled before the next full governors' meeting to discuss this.</p>
8.	<p>CHAIRS REPORT</p> <p>RC confirmed that only two 1:1 governor feedback sessions were outstanding. Once completed, RC and BB would meet with TH to discuss the findings. So far, feedback had been very informative and there was a common theme of asking for further training opportunities for governors.</p> <p>RC reported that she had attended a Governors' Association meeting on SEND and Inclusion recently. There were many, separate initiatives taking place across the county and it was planned to bring all these initiatives together under one, co-ordinated strategy. RC agreed to share a summary of the papers from this meeting with the rest of the board.</p> <p>At this point, RC invited the governors to suggest possible training topics. She explained that she had asked West Sussex (WS) if they would be able to provide some in-house finance training but this was not something WS would be willing to offer. TH suggested that governors might benefit from training on monitoring, questioning and challenging the School leaders. RC agreed to explore this further.</p> <p>Downlands (a Federation member school) would be recruiting a new Headteacher in the near future.</p> <p><u>Chair's action</u> – Since the last Full Governors' meeting, RC had been approached to approve a proposal requested by Zoe Froud (ZF), Assistant Headteacher, to adjust the School Uniform policy wording to make it clear that the wearing of jogging bottoms under trousers (where vapes are typically hidden) was not permitted and to restrict the amount of jewellery which could be worn.</p>
9.	<p>HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT</p> <p>TH said that there had been a notable increase in Elective Home Education (EHE) pupils returning to school; pupils would either be returning from EHE having previously attended Oathall or they would be returning from EHE having previously attended a different school. Equally, there had been a high number of pupils leaving school and electing for home education. The net change was relatively small and overall, the School was slightly under PAN, although Y7,8 and 9 were all at/over or very close to PAN.</p>

	<p>Y7 entry for next year will be full with accepted places at 270, and a waiting list of 34. Numbers could change as appeals were yet to be processed.</p> <p>The governors asked if this included EHCP pupil numbers and it was confirmed that this was the case.</p> <p>Attendance rates had not changed significantly from TH's last report to the governors. Oathall's attendance statistics sat above the national average although Y9 attendance was a concern as these pupils approach their crucial GCSE years. The SLT were considering increasing the number of classes in Y10 to reduce class sizes, which may help.</p> <p>TH provided brief details on the upcoming permanent exclusions and a summary of exclusions since the beginning of the school year (90 in total, most for short periods).</p> <p>TH also talked about an exciting project under which Oathall was to be considered as a possible venue for a cricket hub for Sussex Cricket. At this point, BB declared her interest as the VP of Lindfield Cricket Club. The proposal might possibly include an indoor/fully enclosed cricket net facility and the installation of nets in the School sport hall.</p> <p>The governors asked if the School had cricket coaches within the School staff. TH confirmed that there were and it was likely that other, coaches would also come in from external sources which would be of benefit to the pupils of the School.</p> <p>TH then updated the governors on his decision to increase his SL team to include an additional Assistant Headteacher.</p>
10.	<p>SAFEGUARDING</p> <p>BB reported that she and VC had met with Laura Gyngell (LCG, Assistant Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead) recently and that they were satisfied with the level of safeguarding in the School. The safeguarding records were complete and accurate and the speed and quality of response to safeguarding issues was excellent.</p> <p>TH confirmed that the supervision provision for staff involved in safeguarding in School continued to be of value and staff wellbeing was a high priority.</p>
11.	<p>DISADVANTAGED & PUPIL PREMIUM STUDENTS</p> <p>RC and TH had met with Laura Griffiths (LGS, Assistant Headteacher) and had received a full update on developments in this area.</p>
12.	<p>POLICIES & PROCEDURES REVIEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Career Teacher Policy 2025 – no change – approved. • Governors Expense Policy 2025 – no change – approved.
13.	<p>GOVERNOR VISITS/STRAND REPORTS</p> <p>There was a discussion about the plan to reconsider the strand parameters, how the groups are managed and the membership of each group. There had been some overlap and duplication in some instances. RC explained that she would be organising a brainstorming session, possibly at the next Full Governors' meeting, to work through this. At this point, she reminded governors that the focus of each strand group must be strategic and not operational.</p>

	<p>CMC suggested that it might help to consider the OFSTED approach to make sure that the strands are focused appropriately, pointing out that the approach is currently out for consultation and may not be available until September. It was agreed that plans should go ahead regardless and adjustments could be made later on, if necessary.</p> <p>SW and BB would be getting together with FHD shortly for their termly [Teaching & Learning?] strand meeting.</p>
14.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>BB reported that she was involved in a very complicated IRP at another large secondary school in WS.</p> <p>JP referred to his meeting with Jo Godbolt last year and in advance of the Governors Finance Committee meetings and asked if the rest of the Board would be happy for him to do so again this year. All agreed that this would be very helpful.</p> <p>BB, JP reported that they would not be available to attend the next Full Governors meeting and sent their apologies in advance.</p>
15.	<p>DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p><i>Monday 24th March 2025 at 19:00 hours.</i></p>