

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
2nd December 2024
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Robin Bradshaw, Eleanor Fagan, Emma Hill, Matt Hillier, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Bridget Taylor (Chair), Eugenie Teasley,
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Sara Bailey, Martine Chapman, Andrea Cumming, Adam Knott, Loretta Lloyd

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
	<p>Pre meeting Presentation /Discussion - JCQ Regulations Andrea Cumming and Martine Chapman provided an update on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations regards access arrangements and how the school manages the individual student access arrangements. A questions and answer session followed.</p> <p>5pm - Martine Chapman left the meeting</p>	
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome Emma Hill was welcomed to her first meeting as recently elected parent governor.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Sarah Bakhtiari and Emma Morey.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The annual collection of declarations from Governors had been completed with the register for 2024/5 included within the meeting papers. There were no declarations made relating to agenda items. The Chair signed the declaration forms where a declaration had been made.</p>	
2	<p>Last Meetings Dated 21st October 2024</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved seven pages of minutes from the meeting held on 21st October, the Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>b) Actions and Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda None</p>	

<p>3</p>	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>The Chair provided a verbal update on business conducted on behalf of the Governing Board since the last meeting and current issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission Arrangements - The Council had published the proposals for a consultation on admissions that would be going to cabinet later in the week. It was noted that a change to catchment area for Dorothy Stringer and Varndean was proposed alongside a reduction in the school's published admission numbers (PAN) from 330 to 300. As the timeline for responding to the consultation was quite short it was suggested that a small working group be formed to work on a respond to the consultation. <p>AGREEMENT /ACTION - Eugenie Teasley , Eleanor Fagan , Bridget Taylor and Matt Hillier were tasked as a group to draft a response to the council's consultation on secondary school admissions for approval by the Board in advance of the final submission date of 31st January 2025.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors and the Headteacher were meeting on 3rd December with representatives from al local parent group to discuss how the admission arrangements might affect the school and its community. The Headteacher provided Governors with the viewpoint from the parental group for discussion. A summary of this discussion is recorded within supplementary confidential minutes.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Head's Report /Update</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to Governors in the standard format on an assumed read basis following which Adam Knott , Assistant Headteacher to present on the Reset approach. Key issues for noting in the main Headteacher report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mock exams had taken place for year 11 , attainment for the group was looking strong. There would be no progress data as key stage 2 outcomes were not available. Every year group except for in year 11 the school was under its PAN, adversely affecting available school budget. The PFI contract for school buildings was scheduled to end in 2028. The school had a priority list of works for completion ahead of the contract end. The agreement between the PFI company was with the Local Authority. One retirement letter received with the staff member leaving in February, recruitment process underway. Lowest attendance in year groups 8 and 9. Overall the school was at national levels but not back to pre-covid levels. Children admitted to year 7 were lower than the level that had applied. Cardinal Newman having received an outstanding Ofsted judgement were now the school of choice within the city. Safeguarding data within the report, highlighted the year 8 as an area of higher prevalence. An additional safeguarding officer had been appointed to work in that area. Repeat offenders were being picked up by the Heads of Year to support with changing behaviours moving forward. <p><u>Comments and questions from Governors</u></p>	

- Varndean School were receiving more first preferences for admission than Dorothy Stringer, how long had that been going on as a trend?
- A Governors session to refocus the identity of the school might be beneficial.

Response to Governor comments and questions

- For the last three years Varndean had received more first preferences. The school had done a survey which revealed that the five-small school principal was popular and that being overall smaller Varndean could provide students with more physical space. Both schools were very popular with similar attainment levels.

Reset Approach

Adam Knott , the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for rewards and behaviour presented to Governors a revised approach to behaviour management working with students alongside a changing culture. The following key points were noted:

- Common goals for young people in the city were that there were happy , grow and learn, feel heard, feel safe and secure and feel accepted.
- A trial proposed with students aimed at an overall improvement in their sense of belonging at school. This would include building connections between students and staff, recognition of efforts, opportunities to find peers wit shared interests and cohesion between school and home.
- Use of Stringer rewards to create a sense of success and pride at school. The achievement points would be based around the school values of creativity, reliance and respect.
- Looking at the data the number of achievement points over the years was similar despite a change in categories.
- Year group awards were being held twice a half term giving form tutors the opportunity to recognise students that had gone over and above or were making a solid effort around the three school values. They were rewarded with achievement points , a presentation in form time and an email to home. There had been a positive response from parents to receipt of the emails.
- Starting to look at departmental recognition and how students can be recognised at a department level.
- An overall aim was to make the school a more positive place where students feel a sense of belonging and want to be.
- The school team already used a lot of restorative conversations in their practice , the plan was to build on these having discussions with students about their mistakes and helping them learn from them. It's a relationship-based approach , recognising that every student is different and that everyone's voice is heard. A period of reflection takes place after an even. Staff are required to try and understand why the behaviour occurred.
- A number of students have a provision map which all teachers have access to. Students should be aware of what provisions they are allowed, be that as examples a timeout card, access to a learning mentor or teaching assistant support. The provision map comes into the new reset approach that the school were introducing from the new year.

- The main focus of reset was around keeping children in the classroom. Its about helping them understand their emotions and for staff to use language and behaviour that supports this.
- The first part of reset was to get staff to be more consistent with approaches that are used in the classroom based on relationships, emotional literacy and coaching and restorative conversations. Training for staff was lined up over the next few weeks.
- A defined route "from sanctions to regulations" would provide clear and consistent boundaries. Whilst the key aim was to keep a student in class if they were really struggling it was important to have consistency of approach and language using a three-stage process (examples provided).
- If a student was still disrupting learning after the three stages process they would be asked to take time in a reset room.
- The reset room was a space where students can reflect and reset their behaviour before returning to lessons helping to create a calmer and more purposeful learning environment.
- Reflections and actions would be more immediate with teachers holding a restorative conversation with students before their next lesson. This was an important part of the approach to building relationships. With those relationships students would want to come to school and go to lessons. Students want to be heard and to be listened to, restorative conversations allow this.
- The reset room is based on two lessons and one social time whilst a student is in the room. The teacher will have that time to go into the room to have the restorative discussion, the person running the room will be aware if the teacher has had that conversation and can provide the data for Heads of Year to follow up.
- Refection time is built into the time in reset and if the student has a key person they will go into the reset room to support them. There would also be work to complete based on and developing functional knowledge to ensure the student does not fall behind.
- Other schools with restorative practices were visited as part of the research , those visited had said that it was a very successful approach and had impacted really positively.

Comment and questions from Governors

- The connection back to school values is a good one. Parents can see all the achievement points but cannot see how they break down to resilience, creativity and respect. Is this something that students will be able to see?
- A few students will be rewarded but what about those nearly there, how will they be encouraged that they are doing well, seeing where their strengths align and understanding what they could try to do. This would help with conversations at home.
- Was it clear to students that if they changed their less positive habits and attitudes that there was an opportunity.
- Where do behaviour points come in with the rest approach?
- Is the reset approach already in place?

- Is it the teacher that has sent the student to the reset room that has to have the restorative conversation?
- How will restorative discussions be tracked?
- How many children are expected to go into the reset room?
- Does the teacher have to leave the classroom to have the restorative discussion?
- Students could be sitting up to two hours in reset wondering when the teacher was going to come in. Looking at the figures provided the numbers of detention were significant with a great deal of lost learning time over the year. It was difficult to see how this could be managed under the rest approach of restorative discussions.
- Do you have a profile of the detentions that can be shared? as it would be useful to understand how many SEND and/or pupil are premium and what are they being sent to detention for.
- The slides provided as pre-reading to Governors have data that raises questions around application of current processes and manageability in the new reset system.
- There appeared to be a bigger piece of work, with reference to the behaviour policy. Points made about relationships was vital as the school moves forward in managing behaviour in a changing society. But introducing reset approach in isolation is unlikely to have the required impact, it would also need to be built into school's policy. Rolling reset out in January is not possible without embedding it into policy. There was an opportunity to review in the round and look at it as part of the need to reset the culture in the school.
- What was attendance like of the children that had been in reset at the other schools visited?
- There would be challenges for teachers to be able to have timely restorative conversations.
- Had the school obtained student input into the reset proposals?
- Most teachers would have restorative conversations in the classroom setting already, the approach would not be a complete change for some teachers.
- Department of Education guidance was that the removal from a classroom should be considered as a serious sanction and only used once other behaviour strategies had been attempted, there should also be special considerations given to additional educational needs, contributing to the behaviours.
- Children might use the system to avoid going into certain lessons that they would like to avoid.
- Currently detentions seem to be coming in quick and large numbers are not attended.
- How long was the proposed trial of Reset approach and would it involve the whole school?
- Was there a way that a trial could run in a group alongside a control group on the existing system?
- Reassurance was needed in the form of data that behaviour issues were not as a result of traits of disability.

- The data provided in the slides not meant for Governors showed that 60% of detentions were not being attended and that 50% of students had received a detention. What the school were doing was an attempt to go back and start again.
- Asking teachers to take on a new kind of language and for that to become consistent takes a while to embed, as it does for children to understand a new system, unpicking it after a six-week trial might not be difficult.

Response to Governor comment and questions

- When speaking with teachers there had been an emphasis to pick up those students that they could see were trying with a focus around students that were getting free school meals or attendance hadn't been good despite their efforts. Recognition of those that had maybe been struggling but were trying their best was encouraged.
- Heads of Year go round to all form groups to present and have those discussions about what can be done to improve behaviour , it informs the discussions held during form time. There had been an increase in achievement points for student's attending school five days in a row as attendance was such a priority for the school.
- Behaviour points would be allocated at the reset point after they have been asked to leave the classroom. Students will be given a chance.
- The plan is to bring reset and use of the room into place in January 2025.
- It is the teacher that asks the student to go to reset that has to have the restorative conversation.
- Tracking will be through the SLG , a whole school system was being set up.
- Staff do not have to leave class to go to reset, they can go at a more appropriate time.
- The number of detentions are from a variety of things. Further information can be provided outside of the meeting.
- In the schools visited there had been around thirty students in reset room for the first four weeks reducing to around five 12 weeks on. These were schools of a similar size to Dorothy Stringer.
- The Headteacher at a school visited was very impressed with the way that things had improved both for students and staff , there was no specific comment about attendance.
- The aim was for the teachers to have the conversations whilst the student was still in the reset room, other schools had commented that the majority of teachers had been able to do that. An alternative would be to speak to the student in tutor time or as a last resort if it had not been possible to meet would be as the student came into the next lesson.
- There had been a student voice exercise as part of the research.
- The other schools had not experienced any misuse of the system to avoid attending particular lessons.
- The benefit of reset is that it would be an immediate sanction, unlike detentions.
- The whole school would be part of the Reset trial for consistency, every day and week the process would be under review , it was likely to last six weeks.

	<p>The Chair summarised the position following the discussion on the proposed reset approach. It was noted that there was an intention to roll reset out as a trial in January, however Governors felt that it had not been positioned well as part of a wider behaviour management review . Together with the incorrect slides being provided as pre reading it had created difficulty for Governors to comment in a meaningful way. Governors felt unable to resolve the issues that they had with reset whilst acknowledging that there was a desire to move away from a system that was not working well. There was a suggestion for the school to undertake a true trial in the new year and for a review to come back to the Governing Board. This was not acceptable to all Governors with comments that more problems might be caused by Reset , and that without any analysis of what students were currently receiving sanctions there was no confidence that Reset would work where detentions had not. Further comments were made about allowing the leadership and teaching staff to use their expertise and experience together with the findings from their research to inform next steps.</p> <p>AGREEMENT/ACTION - In conclusion Governors felt that what had been presented was aspirational but was too general for Governors to conclude on. The proposed approach needed more work with a strategic case being made to Governors backed by actual data at the February meeting.</p> <p>ACTION - Governors to raise questions about Reset approach by email to school leaders.</p> <p>6.12pm - Adam Knott left the meeting</p>	<p>MH AK</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>School Development Priority - Attendance</p> <p>Loretta Lloyd Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance gave a presentation to Governors to update them on progress with this key school development priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attendance to date during the academic year had been benchmarked with data available from the Fischer family Trust (FFT) group of school. Currently the school was running at 91.4% attendance compared to 92.5% for FFT schools. • Comparative data was available by year groups revealing that year 7, 10 and 11 were tracking the FFT data but both year 8 and 9 were below. • Student group data was also available highlighting that girls attendance was slightly lower than boys and free school meals student attendance was more significantly lower at the school than the national picture. Students with education and health care plans were also a concern though it was noted that the number of students in that cohort was relatively small compared to other groups. • An analysis of attendance by post code had been completed following a survey of 820 students, revealing that generally the further away from school students lived away from school the worse their attendance was. Additionally those areas where attendance was lowest included a higher percentage of disadvantaged students. • A transport and bus forum had been held on 27th November which Loretta Lloyd had attended on behalf of the school. The forum had been chaired by young people and had been a very useful conversation, highlighting issues for both the 	

bus companies and users of the service. Coming out of the forum there were a number of agreements including and exploration of the possibility of free bus passes for all FSM students and a review and extension of bus routes to increase direct routes to schools.

- The biggest barrier to student performance was attendance, which was why this was such a key focus for the school. The plans that had been out in place for the year were outlined. These included staff accountability for completing registers in good time, automatic advice to parents of absences and live record of attendance for each student.
- Automatic allocation of behaviour points related to internal truancy had been removed, instead the heads of year were advised so that they could deal with the students on an individual basis dependent on their needs.
- The Foster Centre provided a facility for those vulnerable students with severe absences to reintegrate into school.
- The SEND and attendance teams were working closely on attendance with an additional appointed staff member responsible for summarising the constant flow of information in a clear accessible format.
- There was a raised awareness in school of absence and the link to potential safeguarding issues, making it a high priority for staff.
- Attendance policy was currently under review following the release of an amended model policy.
- the school was involved in a social inequalities project with Sussex University where the psychological barriers to school attendance were being explored. Part of the investigation included a student survey the results of which were summarised. The difference between how disadvantaged students felt about school and how they felt they belonged was highlighted as an issue. An action plan had been developed with two phases being the creation of a more inclusive school and developing relationships with students , parents and carers.

Comment and questions from Governors

- There was another factor in addition to the distance from school of students' homes that affected attendance being the geographical location of disadvantaged students, Caution was urged on the assessment that distance from school was the key and only factor affecting attendance.
- Were the ideas coming from the transport and bus forum coming from the young people?
- Some parents have been talking about wanting to communicate why they children were refusing to attend school. Was there a way of reporting via study bugs when a child was unable to emotionally attend school?
- Being transparent about the subsidies available for disadvantaged attending school trips might be a driver for improving attendance.
- Was it possible to send text messages as a wake up message to children?
- Were there any plans to build a community or group of parents from the harder to reach families?

Response to Governor comment and questions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a combination of ideas coming from young people and the transport and school representatives. • The school were currently writing something for study bugs but legally the codes were limited and related to just two of the sessions during the day. • Texting children as a "wake up" had been done on a small scale. Other initiatives on an individual basis had been introduced following feedback from students. • Parents also had barriers preventing them from connecting with the school. Ideas were being developed about holding events in local communities. 	
6	<p>Business Group</p> <p>a) Meeting of 25th November 2024 Notes from the Business group meeting held on 25th November had been circulated to Governors as part of the meeting pack.</p> <p>b) Budget Monitoring Report The budget monitoring report for October 2024 as presented to Business Group along with the Business Manager's supporting notes were included within the meeting pack. There was a proposal to increase the Headteacher's limit for writing off debts to £2000.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed to increase the limit within the scheme of delegation for the Headteacher to write off bad debts to £2000.</p> <p>c) Terms of Reference for Group The terms of the refence for the Business Group remined unchanged.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the Business Group's terms of reference as presented.</p>	
7	<p>Other Reports and Recommendations</p> <p>a) Pay Panel The pay panel reported that the pay recommendations for teachers following the performance appraisal process had been reviewed and approved.</p>	
8	<p>School Policies</p> <p>a) Teachers Pay Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the pay policy as presented.</p> <p>b) Teachers Appraisal Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the teachers' appraisal policy as presented.</p> <p>c) Accessibility Plan</p>	

	<p>There was a request for an addition to the accessibility plan about the functionality of whiteboards to change the screen colour to make more dyslexia friendly.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - Subject to the addition of reference to whiteboard functionality in terms of screen colours the accessibility plan was approved.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Vote of Thanks</p> <p>Bronagh Shevlin was thanked for completing two terms of office as the Staff Governor.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.46pm Date of next meeting - 3rd February 2025</p>	

Minutes approved

Signature.....Date.....