

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9th December 2019 at 6pm in LCR

Present: Muir Mathieson (Chair), Stuart Wilson, Alison Campbell-Black (from 18:15), Chris Baldwin, John Gilbert (until 19:05), Eilis Cope (from 18:07), Andrew Wilson & Graham Ayre.

Apologies: Amanda Arrowsmith & Nigel Riglar

In Attendance: Emma Gray, Glen Balmer, Steve Farr (until 18:40), Rob Reid (until 19:00), Andy MacDonald (until 19:47) & Hannah Kelly (Clerk)

- *Item 18 was taken here out of turn*
- *Item 19 was taken here out of turn*
- *Item 21 was taken here out of turn*
- *Item 22 was taken here out of turn*
- *Item 25 was taken here out of turn*

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Amanda Arrowsmith & Nigel Riglar. These were accepted by all.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest at the start of the meeting.

ACB made a declaration of interest in Item 20 during a discussion regarding building work.

3. Governor Resignations / Appointments

Ian Mudge has resigned as a Co-opted governor, with immediate effect, owing to family commitments. IM was the SEN and Safeguarding link governor. Both these roles are extremely important and need a governor with experience in these areas or a willingness to be trained up.

Parent governor elections are underway – there are five candidates. A parent governor will be appointed by the end of term.

Following the appointment of a parent governor, SDB to agree a SEN and Safeguarding link governor.

- **Action (SDB15):** All

4. Minutes of the last meeting dated 4th November 2019

- *These were proposed for approval by GA; seconded by AW; agreed unanimously and signed by the Chair.*

5. Action Point Checklist

LGB60: Ongoing
LGB62: Ongoing
LGB63: Ongoing
LGB64: Ongoing
LGB66: Completed
LGB67: Ongoing
SDB1: Completed
SDB5: Completed
SDB6: Completed
SDB10: Completed
SDB11: Ongoing

SDB12: Completed

SDB13: Completed

SDB14: Completed

6. Governor Ratification of Email Decisions between SDB meetings

The following trips had been agreed by email:

- Y8/9 Science Trip to Orlando – February 2021
- Ski Trip to Italy – April 2021
- Y8/9 Residential Rugby Trip to Cardiff – March 2020

7. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

8. Joint Steering Group Update

The Joint Steering Group with SHS met on 8th October 2019. JG updated the committee on the meeting, which was predominantly initial discussions regarding what an agreement might look like around the use of the joint buildings.

9. Agree Roles and Responsibilities

The CBAT trustees met on 27th November. SW explained that their bid for the Primary School in Stonehouse was not successful; CBAT were second of nine applicants. A further application has been submitted for a school in Gloucester and they are working with the Gloucester Diocese to be able to sponsor CofE schools. Other than that, focus is on the schools within the Trust and supporting their progress.

10. Health & Safety

EG updated the committee: Earlier in the term, a student suffered concussion during a rugby match, after which the parents asked about what processes the school had in place for such incidents. The staff followed the process appropriately; there was nothing that should have been done differently. EG met with the parents to discuss the incident and as a result agreed to include an extra paragraph in the First Aid policy:

- *Assess whether it is necessary, appropriate and safe to move the patient to Sick Bay for their own comfort while waiting for collection. This will depend on the circumstances of injury, symptoms, and estimated time of collection. A wheelchair is available for this movement. Under no circumstances should the patient be moved if a spinal injury is suspected or if there is a danger that movement will exacerbate the injury.*

➤ *The amended First Aid policy was proposed by GA; seconded by ACB; and unanimously approved.*

11. Wellbeing

To be discussed as part of Item 24: Staffing

12. GDPR

There has been one minor breach since the last meeting. A report form has been completed and submitted. No further action is required.

Q: Was the data about students?

A: No. An email sent from one staff member to another from student account. The staff member had moved to a computer and not realised that they were logged in to a student account and not their own. The email deleted immediately, and the student is unaware of the incident.

Q: Did the email contain sensitive information?

A: No.

13. Financial Update

The October budget and outturn for October 2019 was circulated prior to the meeting. EG explained the key figures, and added that there was nothing to flag or report at this time of the year.

Q: As part of a link governor visit, there were comments that some shared A Level resources (e.g. Kerboodle and Dynamic Learning) have become too expensive due to the split between Marling and SHS. Is there something we can do – for example link up with other schools to reduce the costs?

A: This is an operational issue. GB to discuss this further with Holly Bedford at the next meeting.

- **Action (SDB 16):** GB

14. Educational Visits

No further visits have been proposed following those signed off by email prior to this meeting.

15. Safeguarding

No further update since November's meeting

16. School Improvement Plan

The main elements from EC's link governor visit have been discussed in Items 13 & 25

ACB undertook a half day link governor visit on 3rd December, focussing on the Behaviour policy and consistency of application. It was agreed that ACB would complete the second half of her visit and report back to next SDB on 3rd February. ACB gave a brief overview of her findings from the visit.

ACB to complete the governor report using GB's report template and circulate (via clerk) before the next SDB

Action (SDB 17): ACB

17. Policies

17.1 The In-Year admissions Protocol had been approved by the Admissions Committee in November 2019 and had been circulated to the SDB for information.

17.2 The Finance Policy had been approved by CBAT in November 2019 and had been circulated to the SDB for information.

Additional Policies to those on the agenda:

Admissions Policy

The Admissions 2021 Policy had been discussed at committee level. SW explained the proposed changes to the policy; changing entry requirements for 6th Form. The policy will go out for consultation on the 12th December. Consultation will be completed at the end of January, when the policy will be brought back to governors.

Educational (Offsite) Visits Policy

This policy was not circulated in time for approval at this meeting. There are no major changes.

HK to circulate the revised policy for email approval.

- **Action (SDB 18):** HK

18. Student Leaders Update

Billy Arthur & Ben Williams gave a presentation on behalf of the outgoing leadership team.

- Ben Williams focused his work this year on mental health and student wellbeing.
- Billy Arthur has focused on extra-curricular and student opportunities
- Ciaran Sandhu focused on the School Council, Fundraising and Eco-Society
- Marc Boxader Riera – Focus on ISMUN and External Outreach

They explained their work in these areas in more detail.

The following representatives from the incoming leadership team attended the meeting:

- Joe Hollier – Head boy
- Katie Owen – Head girl
- Imogen Grover – Deputy Head Girl
- Mikolaj Metel – Deputy Head Boy

The recently appointed team explained that they had had their first meeting today to discuss what areas they would continue with next year. They gave an outline of their initial thoughts to the SDB.

Mr Farr thanked the outgoing leadership team, adding that they had been a great team to work with. The size of the leadership team had expanded this year because there are lots of exciting proposals to work on and it was felt that a larger team was needed to cover the potential workload.

Q: To the outgoing team: how did you find time to study?

A: We had to manage our time well, three of us are taking four A levels, but we enjoyed what we were doing so it didn't feel onerous.

Q: What advice would you give the incoming team?

A: Don't bite off more than you can chew, and do things you are passionate about, as then it isn't hard work.

Q: To the incoming team: will there be continuity between the projects or will you be making a fresh start?

A: There will be continuity – we are keen to work with outgoing team before they leave to see how they have worked and what they have done, but because we are bigger team we can also add new things on to that.

C: It would be nice to develop continuity through the OMA when you leave school and build up links this way. There are people within the OMA who might be able to help current students, but we need to develop this further.

Dr Wilson added that this year, Billy Arthur co-directed his own documentary for CBBC; he was nominated for a BAFTA. The SDB congratulated him on his achievements.

Q: New team: as governors we want to hear more of the student voice, if you are increasing you the number of student council sessions to 2 per term, could you feed this back to us?

A: Definitely.

The governors thanked the outgoing team for all their hard work and achievements and welcomed the incoming team.

➤ *The senior leadership teams left the meeting at 18:25*

19. Marling Diamond Programme

Louise Harris gave a presentation to the SDB about the Marling Diamond Programme for 6th Form which is a way of bringing together a range of extra-curricular activities under one umbrella.

Q: How is it monitored?

A: There are tracking meetings with tutors throughout the year where the programme is discussed.

➤ *Steve Farr & Louise Harris left the meeting at 18:40*

20. Headteacher's Summary Update (including curriculum)

Confidential Summary Report

Many items have been covered off elsewhere on the agenda.

Q: Are the GCC top slicing the special needs budget this year?

A: No, they were given additional funding for this year. They are running a deficit budget for high needs but so are many other authorities around the country.

A discussion was had about soundproofing in the History Department, at which time ACB declared an interest.

ACB to meet with EG to look at the rooms to advise on how soundproofing could be done, and what costs may be for this type of project.

- **Action (SDB 19):** ACB & EG

21. Tracking Outcomes

Confidential Paperwork.

RR gave a presentation of predicted tracking outcomes now that one third of the school year has been completed.

Year 11:

Last year of four form entry and old KS2 levels, which effects how FFT predict likely grades. It is hard to compare year on year for this year, owing to the grading variations, but this should become easier after this year.

RR explained the tracking scores compared to the previous cohort, both final grades and predictions at this point in the year.

Year 13:

More possibilities to compare grades with previous years. Current predictions are looking positive.

Departments

RR explained the data for the key departments for last year and expected outcomes for this current year. Talked around the data for the key areas of focus for GCSE and A Levels.

The current data analysis indicated that students are broadly where they should be and at points, the data is slightly favourable. There will be another tracking point after Christmas and then mock exams. RR will return to the SDB in March to share data results from the Mock Exams.

➤ *RR left the meeting at 19:00*

22. Curriculum Change – GCSE

The SLT are proposing to reduce the number of GCSE subjects for the current Year 9 and beyond. Andy MacDonald gave a presentation to the SDB regarding research which has been undertaken to analyse whether this was the most appropriate option.

Progress 8 scores for the other local grammar schools were shared, with details of how many GCSE's their students take.

Q: Would 9 GCSE's stretch and challenge the most able students?

A: Yes, we have looked previous years' student results and what impact this decision would have had on these years. These details were shared.

Also considered were the requirements of the new Ofsted framework with respect to curriculum demands, longer mock exam periods, the number of enrichment trips affecting lessons in Year 10, and the impact of the removal of AS levels which means that the only 'hard' grades students have for UCAS to show their abilities are their GCSE grades.

Q: What do UCAS look for – a small range of high scores, or all the grades achieved?

A: I understand that for Oxford or Cambridge, they look for is seven or eight Grade 8-9's. Additional exams results are not required. The look for higher grades in fewer exams.

➤ *JG left the meeting at 19:05*

AMD explained what a 9 GCSE model would look like. He outlined the potential positive outcomes of the change and notes of caution were also outlined

Q: Why is there concern within some departments about this change?

A: Those subjects which might have been the fourth choice option may suffer from a reduction in student numbers, which might filter through to A Level choices, but we have to make a decision based on what is right for the students; their workload and wellbeing.

Q: The students currently take half a GCSE in RE in Y10, will that change?

A: No. We looked at different models, but we feel there is value in sitting a 'proper' exam in advance of GCSEs

Q: Is an MFL compulsory?

A: No, it is not compulsory, but we make students aware of the benefits of taking one.

Q: Will that preclude students applying from any universities because they don't have an MFL?

A: No, except for certain courses. The current governments are looking to increase E-Bacc the national average remains low.

Q: Do any other schools have to do a compulsory MFL for GCSE?

A: SHS might, but we don't think the other grammar schools do.

Q: Do you stream subjects?

A: Only in maths – there is an extension group which works beyond GCSE level.

Q: Is there a disadvantage to students studying Combined Science?

A: No. You can study double science and still go on to study a single science for A-level. Each student needs to make the right choice based on their interests and abilities – Combined science will be the right route for some but not for others.

SW explained that the SLT had been considering reducing the number of GCSEs to nine for three years, but wanted to ensure that they were making the right decision before proposing the change. The SLT are unanimous in the view that this is the right decision.

Q: Did you speak to parents and ask for their views?

A: Only to staff who are parents. There will be a diversity of opinions as there are a large number of parents, and some not agree. We need to work in the best interest of the student body as a whole.

ACB has met with GB for a detailed meeting on this subject; she agreed that having heard all the arguments, it made sense to reduce the number.

The only concern voiced within the committee was regarding the possible perception of parents when the decision is communicated, in case it is assumed to be a cost cutting or dumbing down exercise. It was agreed that communication must be carefully managed and presented as the positive decision it is.

- *The recommendation to reduce the number of GCSEs taken to nine rather than ten, from 2021 was proposed by EC; seconded by ACB and was unanimously approved.*

MM thanked AMD for his thorough work on this subject, and in particular for placing the emphasis of the decision on student welfare, rather than other influencing factors.

23. Destinations update Post 16 and Post 18

Confidential Paperwork

A summary of data of destinations was circulated prior to the meeting which SW explained.

Q: The Y11 students who went elsewhere, was that because they didn't reach the standard or because they chose to go elsewhere.

A: The vast majority didn't qualify to attend Marling 6th Form, but a few actively chose different schools, or alternative training opportunities: e.g. the forces.

24. Staffing

Confidential Paperwork

24.1 Staff changes

SW updated the SDB of staff changes since the last meeting.

The role of the senior caretaker is currently being recruited for; capacity will need to be built into this team due the expansion of the 6th Form.

It was not possible to fill upcoming Computer Science teacher vacancy, so this will be covered by existing staff for the interim.

24.2 Staff Absence

Staff absence can be one of many indicators for staff wellbeing. SW shared staff illness data this term; It is 17% higher compared to the previous year, but has been adversely effected by three long term staff absences. Excluding those three, the data is consistent.

Q: Do you offer the flu jab to staff?

A: We haven't done yet, but we will monitor the situation.

24.3 Teachers Appraisals

SW explained an analysis of the breakdown of objectives achieved. As a school we continue to set challenging objectives and recognise when staff make good progress towards them. Student progress

objectives for departments are agreed at SLT at the start of the year based on an analysis of current and previous performance. These are communicated through Heads of Department to teaching teams to ensure continuity of challenge. Objectives are then moderated by senior team. The fourth objective is limited usually to senior team and those teachers working in departments under joint review; in the latter the objective is a 6th form student progress objective common to both schools. We encourage staff to set objective 2 and 3 around suggested objectives linked to the School Improvement Plan. The staff questionnaire in 2018/19 illustrated that 90% of 70% of our teachers agree that their performance appraisal meeting was well managed and 95% agree that their appraisal objectives were clear and they know what to do to achieve them.

Q: For Objective 3 (professional development), four staff members had not met their targets. Why was this?

A: They were development opportunities which didn't happen for reasons out of ours and their control.

25. I.T.

This agenda item was borne out of a link governor visit made by EC. EC thanked GB for help with facilitating governor visits into school. She had enjoyed her visit and was encouraged that *all* the staff she spoke to loved working at Marling, but that each one had independently raised their frustrations with the ICT in school. EC explained that she felt, from her visit, that it is effecting staff morale and efficiency in the classroom. As a result, EC asked whether there is a problem with the IT. Is there something which needs to be done to resolve the situation? And finally, is the school sufficiently equipped for an 'Outstanding' school with a growing PAN?

In response Emma Gray explained that funding for IT has been limited and that spending has had to be prioritised. The advice from the IT department is that it is important to keep the infrastructure running at high standard, rather than spending money on front of hardware. It is acknowledged that there are issues, but from discussions with the IT team, it is felt that the actual level of downtime is less than the perception. Also, at the time of EC's visit, there were issues with the remote desktop which have now been resolved.

Q: Do we have the equipment necessary to support our growing school?

A: The domain change which happened over summer was delayed due to an external power cut, over which we had no control. This delayed work by over a week, and work which would ordinarily have been completed in the summer holidays was delayed into September, which is why staff view this as a particularly difficult period. As the schools grows and starts to benefit from funding we need to invest in IT.

EG added that CBAT gave signed off on the budget for this year: All PCs will be replaced this year as last year the focus was on infrastructure.

Q: Across the seven teachers I spoke to, it was affecting morale. Do we need to sense check it across the school? How big an issue is it? We only have 2 support staff; is this enough?

A: Owing to the issues over the summer holidays, it was the worst possible time to talk to staff about IT in the last 5 years. IT is a perennial frustration in education as we rely on it so much to do the job with so little budget

Q: Is the problem software, hardware or availability of staff?

A: The servers are fine, classroom based hardware is being updated, but we are running a small technical team on a tight budget. The 190 students in Y12 will bring in more income which will allow us to invest more money in IT.

EC explained that she felt the purpose of visits is to make observations and obtain feedback. These were unprompted comments from staff so governors need to listen.

Q: If there is further investment planned, then shouldn't this be communicated to staff to help with morale?

A: This was agreed to be a good idea. EG to produce a short written update for about what is being planned for IT for the next SDB meeting on 3rd February 2020.

- **Action (SDB 20):** EG

➤ *AMD left the meeting at 19.47*

26. Risk Register

The risk register was discussed. EG explained that she is not proposing to change the level of any of the risks unless governors had concerns, but items to flag are:

- Risk 2.5: Sixth form growth is lag funded to 2021, but there is the need to spend the money this year (200k) to accommodate the increase.
- Risk 3.3: Loss key person: The Senior Caretaker has resigned, there will be a period of transition whilst a replacement is recruited and trained.
- Risk 3.8: Premises management: Due to loss of Senior Caretaker, experience of site team is reduced, there will be an increase in external provider dependence in the short term.
- Risk 5.1: Insufficient demand for student places – there is a high level of external applications to 6th Form expected in 2020.
- Risk 5.2: Competition from other schools – SLT are monitoring the effects of 6th Form changes.

Q: The likelihood of increase in demand is fairly low at 2. Is that because the high class intake is not expected until 2021. So it is a 2021 risk?

A: The risk is that there is insufficient interest because of the lag funding. Turbulent numbers are the risk. Financially, the ideal would be to have similar numbers year on year, rather than a bad year followed by a good year etc...

Q: Risk 3.2 is already a high risk. Are you happy that '9' reflects feedback from staff? It is the second joint highest risk in school.

A: Yes. It is good that anecdotal feedback is reflecting what is already on the risk register, and it is not a surprise.

Q: Risk 4.3 is the joint highest one – what are we doing for that one?

A: We have tried bidding to EFSA without success. The impact will always be extreme as it is concerning student safety. The day to day practices are good as are our culture and internal processes but our site does not have the security which other schools enjoy. It would need a large amount of funding (hundreds of thousands) to mitigate this. The best way to reduce this risk is to educate the students on their personal safety around school. The level of risk is relates to the impact rather than the likelihood.

27. Complaints and Compliments

There have been no complaints and compliments received recently.

28. Any other Business

Q: Did you received any feedback on why we have not been successful on CBAT bids?

A: Yes, for the first bid we were informed that it was because we had only been a trust for a couple of years and hadn't got the experience. For the recent bid, we were told we had a very

strong bid; there was nothing in the feedback that we could have done anything about – it was given to a primary school who had already opened free school; they had the experience.

Q: Does being a grammar work against us?

A: I don't think so.

The meeting ended at 20.49

Dates of the next meetings:

Strategy: Monday 13th January 2020 at 6pm

SDB: Monday 3rd February 2020 at 6pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M J M' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

3/2/20