

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
5:15pm on GoogleMeet.

**Present:** Glen Balmer (Head), Chris Baldwin (Chair), Alison Campbell-Black (from 15:45), Holly Bedford, Clare Steel, & Nick Lythgoe (until 18.15).  
**Apologies:** Becky Castledine, Rob May & Ian Townsend  
**Absent:** David Hayward  
**In Attendance:** Hannah Kelly (clerk), Chris Williams (until 18:25), Jane Dale (18:00 to 18:25),

**1. Apologies**

Apologies have been received from BC & RM. These were accepted by all.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Governor resignations / appointments**

Amanda Arrowsmith resigned from the committee on 17.02.2023.

Clare Steel joined the committee on 28.02.2023. She introduced herself to the committee.

GB explained plans for expanding membership of the SDB in the next few months.

Holly Bedford, or staff governor was recently appointed Assistant Headteacher. HB will continue on the SDB for now but will need to be replaced in the longer term.

**4. Minutes of the last meeting dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

➤ *The minutes for the meeting dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were proposed by NL; seconded by HB and unanimously agreed.*

CB signed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

**5. Action Point Checklist**

SDB77b: Ongoing

SDB93: Completed

SDB94: Completed

SDB95: Ongoing

SDB96: Ongoing

SDB108: Ongoing

SDB109: Completed

SDB110: Ongoing

SDB111: Ongoing

SDB114: Ongoing

SDB115: Completed

SDB116: Completed

SDB117: Completed

SDB118: Ongoing

**6. Governor ratification of decisions by email between SDB meetings**

The following decisions were ratified by governors between 12.01.2023-22.03.23.

- Approval of In-Year Admissions (Y9) - Admissions – 16.02.23

**7. Matters Arising**

There were no further matters arising.

**8. Governor Visits**

An external consultant (Gill Hickling) visited Marling on the 11<sup>th</sup> January to review literacy and reading across the curriculum.

GB to forward the written report for discussion at the next meeting.

➤ **Action (SDB119):** GB

**9. Policies**

The Plagiarism policy was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

➤ *The policy was proposed by CB; seconded by HB and unanimously approved.*

Q: What is the effect of the Chat GTP AI bots on work. Is the School concerned?

A: It does make fraud more likely. There is an element within the policy which would cover it, but it is immensely difficult as the technology is really sophisticated. It needs to be done at an exam board level. There is work being done in school to try to address this; this will be shared with governors.

**10. Health & Safety Update (confidential paperwork)**

➤ *ACB joined the meeting at 17:45*

CW gave an H&S update showing comparative data on number of accidents, where injuries occur, hospital visits and year groups.

NL & CW to review H&S incidents, to feed back to governors and suggest whether any amendments need to be made to policies.

**11. Finance Update (confidential paperwork)**

The February outturn was shared with governors prior to the meeting. CW shared some of the key figures / anomalies.

Q: What have you done to reduce energy costs?

A: Reducing the flow temperatures; some of which were very high. Reprogrammed some of the timers. The West block has 4 large boilers. They were all running at all times. Now we have 1.5 running. There are still further improvements to be made.

Q: How do you manage the flow temps with the legionella risk?

A: The boiler keeps it at the correct temp, and we run a flushing programme to ensure there is no stagnant water.

Q: There is no budgeted income but we have capital costs coming out? Is this an oversight? CW to confirm the detail with EG and respond to CB.

➤ **Action (SDB120):** CW

**12. Literacy (confidential paperwork)**

➤ *Jane Dale joined the meeting at 18.00*

JD gave a report of literacy within the school. Data on reading and spelling against national statistics was shared, as well as how literacy is taught within school and an outline of enrichment opportunities.

➤ *NL left the meeting at 18:15*

Q: Is this the first time you have run the testing programme?

A: We have always tested the Y 7 cohort, but this is the first year we have also tested Y10 to see their progression.

Q: Does it take dyslexia etc. into account?

A: Yes, absolutely. The tests verify the diagnosis. But they are also springboard to identify several other students who do not have a diagnosis but would benefit from going back to phonics and those ways of learning.

Q: How does it rank students; for example, does it show that they might be performing 'above average' considering they have dyslexia.

A: The first programme doesn't but the second one absolutely does. Following the first, general, test if we thought a student needed further assistance, they get passed on to the second programme. This one has been specifically designed for students with dyslexia which generates a programme that gives students the tailored support they need. It also helps with EAL students. The programme contains an element of phonics but unlike early years teaching (where phonics is a cornerstone for all) most of our students have high reading ages so the phonics is targeted at those students who will benefit.

Q: How are students encouraged to read as they progress through school?

A: There are reading lessons in KS3 and students also have opportunities to read around their subjects. In KS4, all departments provide wider reading texts. A tutor reading programme promotes reading in all Year groups too.

Q: Is reading monitored?

A: There are two tutor sessions per week for guided reading which allows tutors to check on reading. In the 6<sup>th</sup> form, students must complete a Google form to show what they have been reading.

➤ *Jane Dale and Chris Williams left the meeting at 18.25*

### 13. Pupil Premium (**confidential recording**)

A recorded update from Keiron Stephens was played to the committee.

GB explained there are only about 30 PP students within School. We therefore can develop individual support plans for each student. For most this is used to ensure they are well equipped and to promote social inclusion. The Marling Promise was developed recently for this purpose to allow a more targeted use of the money.

Q: Can we have a breakdown of PP students per year group?

GB to share this information with the SDB at the next meeting.

➤ **Action (SBD121):** GB

### 14. Headteacher's Report (**confidential paperwork**)

The report was circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

GB expanded on safeguarding, levels of suspensions, progression.

Q: What is the average length of a suspension?

A: They are mostly one-day suspensions. There are very few students with more than one suspension in the year. Suspensions of more than one day have each been for serious one-off incidents rather than persistent lower level issues.

Q: I was surprised to see the drop off in art – I thought we had a very strong art department?

A: We do. It is an excellent department, and they get great results. We believe the reduction in numbers is due to the rise in popularity of Design Technology. The DT department have made significant improvements in recent years. With an excellent KS3 experience. Many students will choose one of DT or Art at GCSE as their practical/creative choice. Now the KS3 experience in both subjects is excellent, that choice is much harder than it was.

Q: Are we comfortable with the level of support for teachers and students for the paper exams?

A: Current Y13 are not displaying the very high levels of anxiety of last year's cohort. While they did not do "real" GCSE exams this year's group did do rigorous assessments at the end of Year 11. This does seem to have supported their preparation for A level exams.

GB advised that it looks likely that there will be two further strike days in Term 5, though no detail is known yet. All efforts will be made to ensure continuity for the exam cohorts.

Q: Many boys feel they have missed out on trips because of Covid. Are we trying to plug that hole?

A: We are aware of this issue; the current Y9 have missed out the most as they missed their Y6 residential as well as opportunities since then. Clare Johnson has been developing a trip plan which will be presented to governors at the meeting in May.

Q: Regarding Ofsted and the recent press coverage, is there likely to be any change?

A: Not any time soon. The Shadow education secretary has talked of removal of single word judgements but any such change would be several years away.

**15. Report on Staff Absence**

This data is not currently available due to issues within the HR department. This action is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

**16. Complaints & Compliments**

No complaints or compliments have been received since the last meeting.

**17. Any other Business**

Following the CBAT Governance Conference last year and a discussion at a recent CBAT board meeting, the Trustees want to better understand the challenges that SDBs face in terms of recruitment and capacity to see how they can provide further support to governors.

Nicki Wadley, CBAT Trustee and Governance lead at another trust, has offered to lead a meeting of all the SDBs to discuss the role of governors and any challenges and barriers to success and how CBAT can help. Nicki will then report back to the board so a plan can be developed.

CB to email the SDB to find governor availability for a face-to-face meeting between 6pm to 8pm one evening.

➤ **Action (SDB122):** CB

The meeting ended at 19.10

The next School Development Board meeting is on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 6pm in School



10.05.2023