

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 6pm in Room SB00, Marling School

**Present:** Chris Baldwin (Chair), Glen Balmer (Head), Ayo Jimmy, Jo Roberts, Becky Castledine, Nick Lythgoe & Alison Campbell-Black (virtually).

**Apologies:** Graham Ayre, Clare Steel, Rob May & Ian Townsend

**Absent:**

**In Attendance:** Hannah Kelly (clerk), Chris Williams (until 18:20), Louise Harris (from 19:05 to 19:20)

### 1. Apologies

Apologies have been received from GA, CS, IT & RM. These were accepted by all.

➤ *Item 17 was taken here, out of turn.*

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Whilst the 11+ is not an agenda item, Chris Baldwin declared that his son is sitting the entrance test this Saturday for September 24 entry. He will therefore not take part in any discussions regarding the entrance test, either in this meeting or any subsequent meetings this year.

### 3. Governor Resignations / Appointments

Owing to her recent appointment as AHT, Holly Bedford resigned as staff governor on 08.09.23.

HK to email all staff requesting nominations for the two staff governor vacancies (1x teaching and 1x support staff)

- **Action (SDB130):** HK

The only term of office which is due to expire this academic year is Becky Castledine (parent governor) on 17.12.23.

HK to start the process to request nominations at the start of December 23.

- **Action (SDB131):** HK

### 4. Action Point Checklist

The action Point checklist was reviewed and discussed:

SDB77b: ongoing

SDB95: ongoing

SDB96: replaced by SDB142

SDB108: ongoing

SDB119: ongoing

SDB121: ongoing

SDB124: ongoing

SDB125: replaced by SDB137

SDB126: completed

SDB127: completed

SDB128: completed

SDB129: completed

### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

## 6. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

### 6.1 Chair

CB had nominated himself for another term of office as Chair. There were no other nominations.

➤ *CB was proposed as SDB Chair for the next year by NL; this was seconded by AJ; and unanimously agreed.*

### 6.2 Vice-Chair

There had been no formal nominations for role of vice-chair. CB requested that committee members think about whether this is a role which might interest them. Governors to contact CB for further information.

ACB had volunteered for the role if there were no other nominations. CB to talk with ACB to discuss the role of vice-chair and the level of commitment which would be required to undertake it effectively.

- **Action (SDB132):** CB

## 7. Agree Roles and Responsibilities

GB explained that the SLT are grateful for the contribution of governors to school life. It is important that the SLT have the support, scrutiny and challenge of governors to ensure the effective leadership of the School.

This is also a key area for an Ofsted Inspection. As the SLT and the SDB are reasonably new teams, CBAT have commissioned an external review as a checkpoint of progress under the new Ofsted Framework. This review will include monitoring governance. Volunteers are required to support the review on 16 & 17 October 23. Governors to inform HK if they are available to support the review on these dates.

- **Action (SDB133):** HK

GB's thoughts on how he would like the link governor roles for 23/24 were shared. All governors should be linked with one 'area' and be a key contact for the SLT member responsible for this. The link governor would then have an in-depth knowledge of this and be able to support the SLT member when they present an update to the SDB.

HK to send a form to all governors requesting that they prioritise their areas of interest for the link governor responsibility this year. CB & HK to review responses, alongside skills audits returns and assign link governor roles.

- **Action (SDB134):** HK

Committee membership was discussed. HK to send a form out to all governors to ask whether they have a preference for which sub-committee they would like to join.

- **Action (SDB135):** HK

## 8. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the SDB and sub-committees was circulated prior to the meeting, these were discussed.

➤ *The 23/24 ToRs were proposed by CB; seconded by NL and unanimously approved.*

## 9. SDB self-evaluation checklist

The SDB self-evaluation checklist was circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were requested to complete and return by Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 23, so that responses can be collated and reviewed at next SDB meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

- **Action (SDB136):** All

## 10. Governor Skills Audit

Governor Skills Audit forms were circulated prior to the end of the summer term. All outstanding returns must be submitted to HK before Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 23, so that responses can be analysed and used to inform link governor roles, training and/or recruitment choices for the coming year.

- **Action (SDB137):** ACB, NL, IT, RM

**11. Governor Code of Conduct**

The CBAT Conduct was circulated prior to the meeting. Governors discussed whether the Code of Conduct should be more prescriptive regarding minimum attendance levels at meetings.

GB to review examples from other governing bodies about attendance / commitment levels. This will be shared prior to the next meeting, for agreement on 10.10.23.

- **Action (SDB138):** GB

Q: In Item 10: Social Media, it states that Governors must not accept friend requests from pupils.' Some governors who are parents have social media links with their children's friends for logistical and safety purposes.

GB to discuss this element of the Code with Kim Wilson then feedback at the next meeting.

- **Action (SDB139):** GB

➤ *Item 18 was taken here, out of turn.*

**12. Annual Declaration of Interest**

Governors were asked to review and update their Declaration of Interest on GovernorHub (under their personal profile) before the next meeting on 10.10.23.

- **Action (SDB140):** All

**13. Governor Diversity Questionnaire**

Governing bodies are now required to evaluate diversity at board level to provide a strategic approach to diversifying the governing body. A diversity of thought, voices and perspectives is essential to good governance and the effective running of an organization. The questionnaires are voluntary. Governors who are willing to complete the questionnaire should do so by 01.10.23, so that responses can be collated and discussed at the next FGB on 10.10.23.

- **Action (SDB141):** All

**14. Policies**

Both policies and the KCSIE document (& summary of changes) were circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

**14.1 Marling School Uniform**

➤ *This item was taken out of turn.*

LH explained the minor amendment to the school uniform policy to ensure compliance with the Equality Act. The policy now states that students may wear 'items required for religious purposes.'

➤ *Subject to minor amendments regarding consistency of 'must have' items in bold, this policy was proposed by BC; seconded by CB and unanimously agreed.*

**14.2 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

It was explained that this policy has been taken from The Key to ensure that it is fully compliant with all aspects of safeguarding and child protection.

- *The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy was proposed by CB; seconded by BC and unanimously agreed.*

**14.3 Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 23)**

Governors were requested to read the document and respond via iAMcompliant and on GovernorHub to state they have read, understood and agreed to the contents. This is to be completed before the SDB meeting on 10.10.23.

- **Action (SDB 142):** All

**15. Governor Training Record**

Governors were requested to review their training record under their personal profile on GovernorHub. Any training which has not been recorded should be added, along with any certificates relating to training.

- **Action (SDB 143):** All

**16. SDB Meetings 23/24**

The meeting plan for 23/24 was shared with governors.

**17. Health & Safety**

➤ *This item was taken out of turn.*

**17.1 RAAC**

Two DT classrooms were shut only a few days before the return to school owing to RAAC being present in a beam in this block. Governors had requested an update on the situation. Chris Williams presented a timeline of events from 10<sup>th</sup> January 23.

Marling is currently waiting for the DfE to assign a case worker to advise of next steps; this is being chased.

Q: How are we choosing surveyors?

A: The original surveyors are 'Barker Surveyors'. They are CBAT appointed and we have used them for many years without issue. The GCC-appointed surveyors 'Six Property Consulting' are visiting all the schools in Gloucestershire.

Q: Are the DfE or GCC paying for modular buildings?

A: A case worker has not yet been appointed, so we don't know what's possible.

Q: What is being done regarding DT teaching?

A: There is one remaining workshop and a resource and technician's room. There should not be too much of an impact on KS4 and 5 as we work with what is available to us. We are reviewing whether the old canteen can be used as an overspill space for KS3. We are trying to manage the curriculum so that we can work with the space available to us. We are doing the best we can, we can cope, but it is having a significant impact on a small number of staff.

**17.2 Playtime injuries**

GB shared details on two separate playtime injuries which occurred that morning and expressed his gratitude to the staff members who dealt with the students. Rumours had spread outside school during the day, greatly exaggerating and falsely reporting the incidents. This had resulted in several phone calls from concerned parents. An accurate record of events was explained to the SDB for information.

**18. External Exam Analysis Confidential Paperwork****18.1 GCSE**

GB shared the GCSE exam results analysis.

English results were discussed, along with a decision to change exam boards for English Language next year.

Q: There is a small percentage of students who did not achieve a 4 in English. What measures have been put in place to support these pupils?

A: Interventions are undertaken with these students. More generally, there is not one particular 'group' of students who are performing lower than average. Some students with social/emotional/behavioural issues have lower than average performance, but not all. Simplistically, the common factor amongst students with the lowest progress were those who made the least effort. This pattern is not visible in the '24 cohort. We are reviewing academic support in pastoral support programmes.

Q: MFL have been at lower levels for some time?

A: A review of target grade data for languages is required. This is used to decide whether students take the foundation or higher tier exams. The language A Level results are the best they've ever had.

GB to request a small report from the languages HoD to outline the action plan for GCSE '24 and explain what the progress for next year's cohort looks like

- **Action (SDB 144):** GB

### 18.2 A-Level

GB shared the A-Level exam results analysis. Governors discussed the difficulties in measure progress against previous cohorts due to teacher assessed grades from a wide range of schools along with an increased number of external students.

Q: Can we see how Marling compares to the other local grammar schools?

A: We can share that information once the Progress 8 data has been released.

- **Action (SDB145):** GB

➤ *LH Joined the meeting at 19.05*

## 19. **Communications Action Pan**

➤ *This item was taken out of turn.*

LH shared a copy of the 23/24 Marketing & PR plan prior to the meeting. LH explained the strategic rationale for the choices which have been made.

Q: What is the main objective for this work. Why do we need to advertise if we are over-subscribed?

A: Only the 6<sup>th</sup> Form is over-subscribed. We need to retain our profile otherwise numbers will drop off over the next few years. We need to raise awareness among a different target audience each year, which is why we need to maintain our presence on social media. We need to ensure that we have good awareness amongst potential students so that we are in the mix when they are choosing their 6<sup>th</sup> form destination. For those looking to join us in Year 7, the seven grammar schools would still fill if we did nothing. However, we need to raise our profile so that we are high up in the ranking. We want potential students to understand what Marling can offer them so they can make an informed decision. It also reaches families who, traditionally, might not have felt that a grammar school was a possible choice for their child's secondary school education.

➤ *LH left the meeting at 19:20*

## 20. **External Review**

The external review was discussed as part of Item 7 (Agree Roles & Responsibilities). Volunteers from the SDB are required to support this activity if available.

**21. Deputy Headteacher recruitment**

An advert has been placed to increase SLT capacity and recruit a second DHT to work alongside Andy MacDonald. GB requested support from governors in the recruitment process on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October. HK to ask governors for their availability.

**Action (SDB146):** HK

**22. AOB****22.1 Former pupil court case**

GB informed the SDB that a trial is currently running in Winchester Crown Court involving a former pupil on terrorism.

The offences occurred in 2021 and from that point the School maintained close contact with Wiltshire Police and Counter Terrorism Police. At no point during the investigation was there any evidence indicating a risk to the school, its students, or the local community.

Staff and governors have been asked not to discuss any details relating to the case. The school will make press releases as and when appropriate.

➤ *ACB left the meeting at 20:07*

**22.2 IT issues**

Q: There seem to have been some issues with communications to parents this term – can you explain what has happened and what is being done to resolve this issue?

A: The Trust has recently employed a company called 'Concero' to manage all IT within the Trust. The handover has resulted in some significant IT issues which has been impacted on the day to day running of the school, and on communications to parents/carers. The majority of the issues have now been resolved and student log-ins and fingerprints should be completed tomorrow. It has been very frustrating for staff at a critical time in the school calendar, so I am grateful to them for their patience. Also, particular praise must be given to the Admissions team for all their hard work in ensuring the smooth running of the entrance test this Saturday.

**22.3 Trip Approval Request**

Governors have been sent a trip approval for the annual Cern Physics Y12/13 trip.

A response is required from all governors as a matter of urgency so that this can be booked.

- **Action (SDB 147):** All

The meeting ended at 20:20

The next SDB meeting will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 5:15pm using GoogleMeet.