

Minutes of the Interim School Development Board Meeting
 held on Monday 9th September 2024
 at 6:30pm at Marling School

Present:- Jane Exworthy (JE, Chair), Jules Godfrey (JG, HT),
 Alison Campbell-Black (ACB, Vice-Chair), Duncan Cook (DC),
 Sandra Barber (SB), Mwai Daka (MD), Martyn Hewett (MH),
 Victoria Loubeau (VL), Jo Roberts (JR)

In Attendance:- Rachel Jenkins (RJ, Clerk)

Apologies:- Katie Hughes (KH), Ayo Jimmy (AJ), Andy MacDonald (AMacD)

Key
*Governor support, questions, and challenge
**Responses

1. Welcome

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of the four new governors.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from KH, AJ and AMacD and these were accepted by all attendees. The meeting is quorate.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting dated 15th July 2024 have been circulated to the committee prior to this meeting.

➤ *The minutes were proposed by JR; seconded by ACB and unanimously approved.*

5. Matters Arising and Action Points

5.1 Action Points

ISDB27: Ongoing

ISDB41: Ongoing
ISDB44: Ongoing
ISDB45: Ongoing
ISDB48: Complete
ISDB56: Ongoing
ISDB57: Ongoing
ISDB58: Complete
ISDB60: Ongoing
ISDB62: Ongoing
ISDB65: Complete
ISDB66: Complete

6. In-Year Test Results

A discussion took place regarding the In-Year Test Results and the methodology of In-Year Admissions decision-making. HT confirmed that national guidance is followed with regard to In-Year Admissions decisions and that In-Year test results are marked externally.

*A governor asked how other grammar schools conduct their In-Year tests and do they sit exams at the same time.

** It was confirmed that all In-Year examinations are held at the same time.

ACB as Admissions Link Governor will email NB questions regarding the admissions process and report back to the meeting. It may be of value to invite NB to a future meeting for a question and answer session on the admissions process.

Action (ISDB67): ACB

7. Pay Panel

DC confirmed that a Pay Panel is required in Autumn term 2. This should include two governors (no parent governors) and the Headteacher. There is also a pay decision outstanding from last year that needs to be reviewed and this could be considered by the Headteacher at any point in the coming term. Clerk to source diary dates from HT and arrange a Pay Panel to include two non-parent governors for early November 2024.

Action (ISDB68): RJ

8. Admissions Arrangements 2026-2027

Further to the letter received from GCC dated 8th July 2024 regarding school admission policy arrangements for 2026-2027, it was confirmed that Marling School do not purchase the Annual Retainer for Traded Services.

The deadline for admissions arrangements for 2026-2027 should be determined by 28th February 2025 even if they have not changed. At present, Year 7 intake requirements will not change but the Sixth Form intake requirements are in the process of being discussed and ratified. These changes should be completed, signed off by the governors and sent to GCC by 15th March 2025 for publication

on the GCC website along with the school website. 15th May 2025 is the deadline for GCC to report back to the schools adjudicator on all admissions arrangements.

Action (ISDB69): Clerk

9. Exam Results

HT shared two reports on the Headline Figures for GCSE and A Level results. These documents will be added to GovHub and shared with new governors.

GCSE Results

GCSE results are encouraging. DC confirmed that the national trend for 2024 was for GCSE results to be down whilst Marling has gone up. It is important to remember that these student were impacted by Covid. Ebacc results are not so good and MFL results are not as good as other subjects although they hold their own compared to the rest of the UK.

* A governor made the point that languages are not compulsory and therefore figures are often low.

** There will be a new GCSE in 2026 and it will be interesting to see if this makes a difference to the uptake and results in language subjects.

* A governor asked whether the half GCSE in RE was still mandatory.

** This is still in place and as much as anything is felt to be a useful 'dry run' for GCSE students.

* A governor made the point that there are a lot of careers which require languages. It is important to promote languages as a career option.

Achievement overall has not increased but the number of students with needs has gone up. There has been an increase in EAL achievement but the profile of EAL students at Marling is different to that of EAL students in state schools. There has also been an increase in PP students and the performance of PP students is below that of the whole school.

English Literature results were not as expected and this will be considered. DT results were good despite the disruption of the subject being sited in a RAAC building. In the business and economics department there was significant staff absence during the year due to illness but good results were achieved.

A level Results

The results for 2024 were better than for 2023. Overall it has been a good year for results despite a challenging year for staff. DC confirmed a positive picture.

*A governor asked whether there had been a conscious decision to reduce numbers into the Sixth Form.

** A reduction in student numbers is not the intention but there has been some uncertainty this year and this has effected Y11 decisions. It is not uncommon for numbers to vary year on year.

10. New Governor Induction/Training

DC advised that Hannah Kelly was appointed Head of Governance at the end of June/beginning of July. She will be overseeing new Governor induction to include safeguarding and other online training. DC asked HT whether it would be possible for new governors to spend some time in school. HT confirmed that it would be useful for the governors to do the Marling specific safeguarding training so that they are familiar with the school specific procedures. HT will also arrange for governors to have access to the National College for training resources. JR confirmed that she would send a link governor document to be shared with a view to doing a skills audit for all governors and linking governors to specific areas of interest and/or expertise.

Action (ISDB70): HT/JR

11. Questions for Governors (Ofsted)

This item has been covered under the Action Point Checklist.

12. Safeguarding Audit and Action Plan Update

There have been no new safeguarding referrals since the last meeting. KH has presented the annual safeguarding update to all staff and this has been very positively received. The continued and increased use of CPOMs is becoming part of normal practice. The SCR (Single Central Register – the key document of all staff and members of government) is being rigorously checked and updated where necessary.

*A governor asked whether those in safeguarding are located centrally within the school.

** HT confirmed that KH as DSL is based in school house so that she is easy to located when required.

*A governor enquired as to whether the school has any allocated Educational Psychologist time and what sort of pastoral provision is available.

** The school is allocated 12 hours of Educational Psychologist time across the whole year and the whole school. It is not possible to buy in additional time as there are so few Educational Psychologists available. The school counsellor resigned over the summer holidays and this position will be recruited for. Mental health support and pastoral care is given by all staff.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (which is in the meeting file on GovHub) needs to be read as a matter of urgency and all feedback comments to be given to KH as soon as possible.

Action (ISDB71): ALL

13. Policies

13.1 Communication (with Parents and Student) Policy

HT to re-share this document including track changes feature to indicate where amendments have been made. All feedback to be given to HT.

*A governor made the point about considering when there is an agreement for information not to be communicated.

** HT will look into this and see which policy this would be covered by or linked to. HT will check this element with solicitors.

Action (ISDB72): HT/ALL

*A governor queried whether it was reasonable for all queries to go through Reception.

** HT confirmed that this was by far the most efficient method of filtering messages to staff and ensuring that anything urgent isn't missed.

*A governor questioned how staff felt about responding to enquiries within 3 working days.

** HT confirmed that in many cases the response by staff is a lot quicker than 3 working days.

13.2 Mobile Phone Policy

This policy is to be reviewed in May 2025 and annually thereafter.

13.3 Update on Policies

SEND policy was due in June and is now overdue - HT will follow this up. Other policies due in September/October and Clerk will follow these up. Clerk to double check that all policies on school website and iAMCompliant are up to date.

Action (ISDB73): HT/RJ

14. Any Other Business

14.1 Stage 3 Complaint

Two Stage 3 complaints by parents of the same child. DC confirmed that this would be covered by one panel. Chair proposed that this should be comprised of non-parents. Chair and Clerk to organise a panel date with 15 day timeframe (ie 20th September).

Action (ISDB74): JE/RJ

14.2 School Trips

*A governor felt that Y11 had missed out on school trips over the course of their time at secondary school.

** HT confirmed that there is a range of trips over the year and this is dependant upon staff being able to accompany children on school trips.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 30th September at 6:30 pm, LCR in Marling School.

➤ *The meeting ended at 9:05 pm*