

Minutes of the School Development Board Meeting
 held on Monday 3rd March 2025
 at 6:30pm at Marling School

- Present:-** Sandra Barber (SBa) (online)
 Simon Begbey (SBe) (joined meeting at 7.05 pm)
 Maria Fuente (MF)
 Jules Godfrey (JG, Principal)
 Jo Roberts (JR)
 Helen Tilly (HT)
 Will Gosling (WG)
- In Attendance:-** Rachel Jenkins (RJ, Clerk)
 Duncan Cook (DC, CEO at CBAT) (left meeting at 7.39 pm)
 Andy MacDonald (APM, Vice Principal)
- Apologies:-** Alice Bailey-Yip (ABY)
 Mwai Daka (MD)
 Martyn Hewett (MH)
 Maureen Shearman (MS)

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

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| Device Scheme |
| Premises |
| Careers Administration support |
| Policies still to be approved |
| Training still to be completed |
| Link Governors in place and Link Governor visits |
| Progression of the SDB |
| School attendance figures |

1. Welcome

JR welcomed everyone to the meeting. JR will chair this evening’s meeting and SBa will attend online.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from ABY, MD, MH, and MS 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 13th January 2025 have been circulated to the committee prior to this meeting.

- *The minutes were proposed by HT; seconded by WG and unanimously approved.*

5. Matters Arising and Action Points

5.1 Action Points

ISDB41: Ongoing
ISDB44: Ongoing
ISDB56: Ongoing
SDB6: Complete
SDB8: Complete
SDB9: Complete
SDB10: Ongoing
SDB13: Ongoing
SDB14: Ongoing
SDB16: Ongoing
SDB18: Complete
SDB19: Complete
SDB20: Complete
SDB21: Complete
SDB22: Complete
SDB23: Complete
SDB24: Complete
SDB25: Complete
SDB26: Ongoing
SDB27: Complete

6. CBAT Update

Confidential Minute

6.2 CBAT Central Services Structure

Document is in the meeting file and this details the centralised services structure.

7. Concero and IT Contract

Confidential Minute

8. SEND Update

SEND Update is included in the Principal's Report to Governors and is in the meeting file on GovHub. SEND staffing has been a considerable challenge since before JG joined the school. All student support, including SEND, is to be restructured around a Hub model with the Hubs representing key areas of student need.

9. Principal's Report to Governors

Principal's Report to Governor is in the meeting file on GovHub.

Chair asked if everyone had read this document and whether they had any queries or questions.

Chair had a couple of questions. In terms of grades for GCSEs and A levels it would be useful to have something to compare these to – either other grammar schools in the area or national figures.

JG confirmed that the figures provided were more about tracking but that in the autumn a full comparison would be produced. Tracking is lower than last year and JG and APM feel that grades are still being brought back in line since the pandemic.

* A governor made the point that disadvantaged persistent absence was very high.

** JG confirmed that this figure is skewed by one student. Adding numbers rather than just a percentage will give a more accurate figure.

* A governor asked about the numbers for Discovery Day.

** This is in the same range as last year.

* A governor asked about the reliability of clubs occurring and whether there is a clear commitment to them running.

** JG agreed that sports clubs are often likely to be cancelled, especially in the winter due to the weather, but that clubs are run regularly.

* A governor asked whether third parties support activities in school.

** APM confirmed that third parties are certainly used for some sports eg table tennis.

HT made the point that split lunchtimes makes lunchtime clubs a lot more challenging to run.

Chair commented that the trips list looks very exciting.

9.1 and 9.1 ADP Update

JG confirmed that ADP is presented to SLT every month or so to check that actions are being completed and that issues are making progress.

* A governor asked how appropriate it is not to have issues RAG rated red.

** JG confirmed that it wouldn't be helpful to have things that were impossible to achieve. Issues fluctuate through the RAG rating and some initiatives will be affected by the consultation so this will need monitoring.

10. Governor Training Update

Clerk to email all governors to include training links and remind them of training to be completed.

Action (SDB28):- RJ

11. Governor Visit Reports

11.1 Health & Safety

Link Governor visit report is in the process of being written so MF confirmed the main points of her visit. RD joined Marling School a year or so ago and the compliance of the school has improved from 32% to 78% with the aim of getting to 80/90%.

RD has mentioned a part of Downfield Road which had been discussed with the local authority with a view to buying it. This would improve safeguarding and safety. JG has met with David Drew to see if the road could be purchased. There is a lot of fast nursery traffic in the mornings.

JG happy for MF to pursue this issue. SBe suggested that MF should write to the local MP and see what is possible.

Action (SDB29):- MF

RD had also asked about the possibility of monetising the solar panels. Chair confirmed that she has already emailed HC about this and is hopeful that this can be sorted out and possibly backdated.

* A governor expressed a concern about the age of the buildings and asbestos risk across the site.

** JG confirmed that this risk is mitigated by the legal requirement to have an annual asbestos survey by a professional company.

11.2 Safeguarding

Link Governor visit report is in the meeting file on GovHub. In MH's absence Chair asked whether all governors had read this report and whether they had any comments to make or questions to ask. JG confirmed that MH had made two visits now and had not raised any concerns.

12. Committee Update

12.1 Finance & Premises

This has been covered by information provided by DC earlier in the meeting.

13. Safeguarding Update

Safeguarding Update is in the meeting file on GovHub.

There has been one suspension and attendance is really high. Chair commented that given the distance children travel to get to school this is impressive. The SDB felt that attendance also reflected the good work the attendance officers are doing. JG confirmed that Sixth Form attendance is harder to monitor as pupils do not always register but that lesson attendance is very good.

* A governor queried whether the change in policy around term time absence for holidays and fining has made a difference.

** This didn't seem to have had an effect.

14. Policies

Policies have been sent to owners for final amendments but have not been returned to the meeting for ratification. Clerk to email policy owners for final policies and these are to be re-circulated and ratified by email.

Action (SDB30):- RJ

APM has revised Plagiarism Policy and RR and JG are finalising School Uniform Policy subject to query with Batemans.

* A governor queried whether Plagiarism Policy covered AI.

** APM confirmed that it did.

Clerk to chase final amendments to Attendance Policy and Educational (Offsite) Visits Policies with KH and copy JG.

Action (SDB31):- RJ

15. Careers Update and TDT Update

WG advised the SDB that he has had a brief introductory meeting with HB to introduce himself and conduct an initial overview of Careers information in the school.

At present there are no pressing issues and the Ofsted report was very positive. However, WG feels that there will be a lot of work to do to keep the careers programme up to date and HB, whilst having done a great job with a limit on her time, has not got the capacity to do much more despite a wealth of ideas. WG considers it surprising for a school of Marling's size that it does not have careers administrative support but not given the current situation. WG and HB discussed possible options around administrative support ranging from apprenticeships and/or volunteers. The school is currently in a good position but it will not remain in this state.

HB was unable to attend the meeting to give a TDT Update. TDT Update agenda item and report to be moved to next meeting.

16. RAG Rating

RAG rating from this meeting was discussed, agreed and added to the beginning of these minutes.

17. Any Other Business

Chair commented that a common theme from this meeting is that Marling School is lacking an identified person to connect with third parties to source resources and financial support. There is a lot of untapped potential. JG noted that she is reluctant to ask more of people who are shortly going to be asked to do more.

* A governor asked whether once a trust has been joined, is it possible to break away as a single entity.

** It was confirmed that this is not possible.

Chair notified the meeting that there are two Co-opted governor vacancies and an advert for these vacancies will go out shortly along with information to this effect on the Marlingtonian Facebook page and in the school newsletter. These governor vacancies should not be filled by parents to ensure a balance of governors on the SDB.

Clerk relayed information from SBa and asked the meeting to take note of the sterling job that MD has done is getting DofE Certification paperwork up to date.

JG will ask Concero to the next SDB meeting on Monday 28th April.

Action (SDB32):- JG

HC will provide a conditions survey of the school site to the next SDB meeting.

Action (SDB33):- HC

18. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 28th April 2025 at 6:30 pm, LCR in Marling School.

➤ *The meeting ended at 8:35 pm.*