



**SWANMEAD COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING  
HELD ON**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 5:30pm in Room 5**

**Present:** Mark Cook (MC); Marian Gamper (MG); Kate Murdoch (KM) from 17:36; Davyd Muxworthy (DM); Jesse Pattison (JP); Duncan Perks (DP) until 18:33; Mark Raven (MR); and Mark Walker (MW) (Headteacher).

**In attendance:** Natalie Wainwright (NW)- Clerk to the Governing Body; Sue Spurway (SS), School Finance and Office Manager and Guest Peter Elliott (PE), CEO of the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust until 18:45.

**19\_20/012 Apologies for absence\*** were received from Dean Aspinall (DA) and accepted by Governors.

**19\_20/013 No pecuniary interests\*** were declared in this meeting’s agenda items.

**19\_20/014 Minutes of the last meeting, held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019,** were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair of Governors.

*KM joined the meeting at 17:36*

**19\_20/015 Matters Arising\*** - actions not otherwise updated in the Actions Log.

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| <i>SCS465c</i>   | <i>The Pay and Performance Management Committee are to meet next week to determine staff pay awards. Plans are in place for committee members to meet with PE to conduct the Headteacher’s appraisal/objective setting for this term.</i>                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>SCS479f</i>   | <i>Further action required to a) Acquire the site - The Headteacher was advised to contact Charlie Field. A request would be made for the site to be included in a commercial transfer agreement from the Local Authority as the site been used by the school and for educational purposes within the last 20 years. And b) Secure the site and ensure the safety of staff and pupils.</i> |
| <i>19_20/009</i> | <i>The Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust’s Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) are due to be reviewed. Headteachers and Chairs of the Governing Bodies within the Trust are being consulted on possible revisions.</i>                                                                                                                        |

**19\_20/016 Finance and SFVS**

- a. The **Month 6 Report** had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The School Finance and Office Manager confirmed that the report included the previously identified anomaly and spend currently stands at 53%. Whilst some overspend can be noted for teaching, there is some income anticipated and minimal expenditure planned on buildings in the remaining two terms. Upon review of a possible discrepancy in the estimated balance on page 14, Governors were satisfied that this accurately reflected the current picture, with the deficit budget now standing at -£51,188. The Headteacher confirmed that there was some additional expenditure from the DFCG money for new staff computers to assist with them planning and working when at home and in school
- b. **SFVS Actions Update, including staff pecuniary interests** – The latter was circulated, accepted and signed by the Chair. The SFVS will no longer be relevant if Swanmead becomes an academy before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, but can be completed quickly if required.
- c. Governors had no comments or questions on the unofficial **School Funds Audit**.
- d. **Future of Pay and Performance Management Committee** – As per Matters Arising (item SCS465c), the existing committee will meet next week working to their existing

Signed as being a true record ..... Chair

Date:.....



Terms of Reference. Governors are mindful of the need to begin to adopt new ways of working, via the Trust's Growing Great Teachers initiative. Swanmead teachers have already completed their paperwork and established focus groups. In future, the Headteacher's performance review will be conducted by the LGB Chair and Trust CEO, who will meet to review performance during the year and determine a set of clear objectives for the forthcoming year, to be agreed with the Headteacher in a subsequent meeting.

PE explained that there would be no performance management of teaching staff based on numerical targets, but a focus on three areas that would help each individual to become a better teacher. So long as key standards are met, then pay will increase year on year for all staff and this has usually been above the recommended national pay award. This approach has shown to improve staff retention with significantly lower than average staff turnover rates within the Trust. A new three-point scale for support staff is also designed to support quicker progression. **Governors asked if responsibility for teacher achievement against the three focus areas lay with the Headteacher?** – PE explained that, as objectives are co-constructed, using some self-assessment, etc, teachers and the Headteacher are equally responsible and this is an ongoing process for regular review throughout the year. **Governors asked if this approach is similar to that previously applied at Swanmead?** Yes. Governors noted some staff concerns relating to possible loss of autonomy within the Trust, particularly with regard to the design of the curriculum. PE confirmed that, whilst the Trust will provide suggested good practice models, including some policies, such as an updated Relationship and Sex Education Policy, these could be applied and tailored to individual settings, again via co-construction.

#### **19\_20/017 Headteacher's Update**

- a. **Academisation Update** – A paper had been circulated with the agenda and most items covered in the discussions outlined above. In addition to regular meetings of the Headteachers within the emerging 'South Hub', the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust's central team had also visited Swanmead and met with staff as part of a fact-finding mission to understand how the school currently operates. The Trust is approximately 30-40% through their review. It was confirmed that, following Academisation, there would be a transition year, with any central changes likely to come into effect from September 2020. **Governors expressed concern that certain uniform proposals, i.e. blazers and ties, may not be appropriate for Year 5 pupils.** PE stressed that a uniform is about identity and belonging and the LGB will take the ultimate decision on any uniform changes. Governors were divided on the cost-benefit of a rebranding exercise. On the one hand this could support a refreshed image and new chapter for the school, on the other, it is money that could otherwise be spent on pupils. It was confirmed that the £25,000 available to Swanmead to support its transition to an academy, could not be spent on pupils however. Governors reflected that some parents had removed pupils from Swanmead in the past based on a perceived 'Secondary' focus. Uniforms that imply such a focus again may be problematic. It was generally agreed that the subject of uniform changes in schools is often quite an emotive and divisive subject, so the outcome of any pupil, staff and parent consultation would be critical.

Governors had received a letter from PE outlining proposals for the new constitution of the Trust Board and inviting nominations for three trustee vacancies, which shall be filled by one representative of each of the school's in the South Hub. LGB Chairs will sit on the Board but not be a trustee. The Board currently meets seven times a year, one at the start of the academic year and then one each half term. There is significant reading

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Signed as being a true record ..... Chair

Date:.....



18:33 DP left the meeting

prior to each meeting and all documents are stored on an electronic portal to which trustees would have access. The Board has four committees – finance and resources, quality of education, audit/compliance and Search, which reviews skills and board effectiveness. Whilst Board meetings are conducted during the day LGBs can conduct their meetings as suits their membership. Trust Board meetings will be held in South Somerset Schools during the Spring term 2020.

Existing trust schools meet 3 times per year, as a minimum with some standardised agenda items followed by locally determined agenda items. Governors queried the Links Governor Role, which was confirmed as LGB determined.

18:45 PE left the meeting

PE was thanked for attending and contributing to the meeting.

Governors felt it important to retain some of the status quo and would prefer to meet more regularly than three times a year to feel fully engaged with the school. The Headteacher confirmed that he benefits and welcomes the current regularity of meetings as an opportunity to reflect, be challenged and supported by Governor. There may be potential to reduce to one meeting every half term, but this would be decided at a later date.

- b. **Confirmation of Staff Appraisal** – No further update. Covered by items above.

The Headteacher expressed his thanks to Governors who attended Swanmead’s recent Open Evening. The Governing Body wished to thank, and officially acknowledge, the work that Helen Ingram had put into organising the event, which had been very well received. **Governors’ one criticism was the absence of pupil work on show.** Governors reflected that, whilst the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) limited certain activity, the GDPR training had indicated some exceptions and approaches that could be adopted to enable pupil work to be displayed. This would be reviewed.

**19\_20/018 Safeguarding Update**

Annual self-declarations had now been completed by all staff.

All Governors present signed the declaration, confirming that they had read the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document. **Governors asked if there was a policy on school security?** Not exclusively, although security is referenced within the Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies. It was suggested that a note be included on the website regarding this.

**Action: Headteacher to request addition to the website confirming site security policy and/or procedure.**

**19\_20/019 SEND Update**

The Headteacher explained that, to receive support, children with SEND require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There is currently a backlog in the Local Authority processing applications for these and no new applications will be considered before January 2020. Without an EHCP, some pupils are unable to access the support and provision that they require to participate in learning. This has resulted in some schools making legal challenges.

**19\_20/020 Policy Review and Renewal**

- a. The **School Behaviour Policy**, which incorporates the Behaviour Principles Statement had been circulated prior to the meeting. MR updated Governors that Swanmead is

Signed as being a true record ..... Chair

Date:.....



trying to achieve Trauma Aware School status and, as such, requested that the Policy reflect the fact that the school is more trauma aware. Two amendments were proposed and accepted by Governors. A separate appendix may be incorporated in the future.

**Action: Clerk to incorporate changes and circulate revised policy to Governors.**  
**Action: Headteacher to demonstrate e-praise at future meeting.**

- b. The Teacher's Pay Policy was ratified.
- c. It was agreed that any updates to the Relationship and Sex Education Policy would be led by the Trust.

**19\_20/021 Governor Business**

- a. **Update on current Governor vacancies** – Governors agreed to progress with an appointment to one of the co-opted Governor vacancies. The preference was for an individual to be identified from the teaching staff.

**Action: Headteacher to invite nominations from staff.**

Governors agreed to await the review of the LGB before appointing to remaining vacancies.

- b. **Ensure the school website is compliant** The Clerk and Headteacher had met to work through the checklist for schools and agree priority actions to ensure compliance. Various outdated documents had now been removed and/or replaced.
- c. **Confirm any updates/changes to the Register of Governor Interests.** Governors had confirmed changes with the Clerk prior to the meeting and a revised document would be published to the school website.
- d. **Training and Professional Development undertaken, including Clerks and Chairs Briefings** - MC had attended a Governing Pay in your School training session and would apply learning to the next meeting of the Pay and Performance Committee. MG had also attended Safeguarding Training. Two documents were circulated for Governor information.
- e. **Link Visits** - MC had completed a Maths and Whole School Numeracy Link Visit – Numeracy Ninja, Mangahigh and the use of white boards appeared to be welcomed by pupils and led to high energy in class. Some resource costs were proving challenging to manage within budgets for Maths teaching.

**Date of Next Meeting Confirmed:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 5.30pm in Room 5.

*Meeting closed: 19:08*

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Signed as being a true record ..... Chair

Date:.....