



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

Thursday 25 March 2021 from 5.30p.m. using online Zoom Software

Present: Marian Gamper (MG) (Chairman); Jesse Pattison (JP); Vicki Stacey-Masters (VSM); Mark Cook (MC); Duncan Perks (DP); Kate Murdoch (KM); Davyd Muxworthy (DM) Andrew Whitfield (AW) and Mark Walker (MW) (Headteacher).

In attendance: Mel Hillman (MH), Independent Clerk to the Governing Body

2020_21/055 Apologies for absence were received and approved from*: Dean Aspinall.
The meeting was quorate.

2020_21/056 No pecuniary interests* were declared in this meeting's agenda items.

2020_21/057 Minutes of the last full Governors meeting, held on 25 February 2021* were agreed as an accurate record. These were signed by the Chair of Governors.

2020_21/058 Matters Arising* Item 049 (a) Paternity Cover. MW confirmed that full cover arrangements had been discussed by SLT and shared with staff. A copy had been given to the Chair of Governors. In anticipation of the possible absence of MW in early May, it was agreed to move the date of the next Governing Body to the 13 May 2021.

The Chairman indicated that the order of the agenda would be changed from this point with Governor Business being moved to the end of the meeting to allow time for discussion of the reorganisation item and ensuring other items were adequately covered beforehand.

2020_21/059 Headteacher's Reports and Updates

The Headteacher reported verbally on the following items:

- a) COVID19. The return to school from 8 March 2021 had been successful. Lateral Flow Testing had taken place for Year 7 pupils on 8 March and Year 8 on 9 March. Year 5 and 6 pupils all returned on 8 March. All pupils were back fully on 10th. There had been some early apprehension and nerves from some but with the same procedures around cleaning, storage of bags and one-way systems that been in place in the Autumn Term, most had settled in well.

The wearing of masks had been a national matter of debate. The school was encouraging everyone to wear masks as much as possible inside and outside the buildings. The overwhelming number of pupils had been wearing masks for most of the day including in classrooms.

All the testing had provided negative. The second and third tests had been conducted on-site. Year 7 & 8 pupils had been given boxes of 7 tests to be administered at home under parental supervision. This had worked well. The school had regained use of the gym, as it was no longer required to testing.



The lunchtime computer club had reopened.

There were still a few children from families where the adults were self-isolating. This impacted on siblings and it was known that Wadham School had large absences in years 9 and 10.

From Monday 19 April 2021, teachers would be back in their own classrooms with the pupils moving around school. This should benefit everyone. Preparations had begun in the current week. It was intended to restart lunchtime sports clubs after Easter.

There had been lessons learnt from remote learning and some of the positive benefits would be incorporated into future delivery of education.

The Catch-up plan had been distributed prior to the meeting and was displayed on-screen during the meeting. £11,734 had been allocated for this and SLT had undertaken some preliminary planning earlier in the week. This included Yoga sessions for all Year 5 and 6 pupils in two 5-week blocks on Tuesday mornings. On Wednesday mornings additional small group and 1:1 sessions would be run in four work groups. On Thursday mornings there would be additional maths sessions for 4 groups. PHSE sessions would include two focus days. Thought was being given on how to help Year 8 pupils before they left. It had been a difficult time for them. A Summer School Group had been formed to develop a summer school programme for the first two weeks of the summer holidays. Greatwood had been booked for a Year 7 trip from 5th to 9th July.

The Pupil Premium Plan had been published and would strike a balance between academic work and catering for pupil wellbeing. **How would the school identify the pupils to take part in these plans and how would progress and impact be monitored?** The latest data drop had been received and gave some indication of progress. The staff would consider all the facts accumulated over time. Some pupils had barely turned up, even for virtual lessons. The school would always be reviewing the impact using quantitative and qualitative evidence. KS3 Maths would be the first item, followed by KS2 Maths. VSM confirmed that staff had discussed the data and produced a list and placed the pupils into suitable working groups. There had been a lot of thought over this, so plans were ready for the start of next term. **What about those who had not engaged before attendance back in school?** This had been a mixed bag. Some had been very keen to get back. Some others had accepted that they had not fully engaged at home despite being given all the tools online. A few had been reluctant to return. A small number had been identified as needing extra support and encouragement. It was a case of balancing out whether it was anxiety or just not wanting to engage and seeing what the school could do to help. Staff had kept attendance lists from log on times so knew those affected. There had been two recent parent evenings to help staff and parents identify those issues. JP commented that the recent Parent's Evening had been very well organised and he had been impressed. **How many pupils would be invited to the catch-up provision?** In English it would be 30 to 40 pupils per week and the same for Maths. For Yoga it would be half the school. It was intended to run two workshops per week for the summer school with 24 pupils per week, totalling 48. The plans for September onwards would be formulated at a meeting in June but were expected to include school trips for year groups, PE and Sports sessions, speech

Signed as being a true record Chair

Date:.....



and language session and an extension to Forest School Activities. It would all focus on the 'right' children. **Can you flex things and have you factored in that there may be more than currently planned for?** That had not been considered. There would be a need for parents to trust the school in making these choices and decisions. **Do you need a policy on allocations in case some parents challenge the school as to why their child is not included?** This is something to consider. **ACTION: MW**

b) Staffing. There was nothing to report.

2020_21/060 Finance

- a) All Governors had returned the SFVS Skills Sheet. The submission date of the SFVS Return to the LA had been postponed to 31 May 2021. The final version would be brought to the next meeting on 13 May 2021 for approval and signing off. **ACTION: MW**
- b) The Budget figures for 2021/22 had been received with an increase of £161,301. This was a result of an increase in Pupil Premium numbers, COVID catch-up funding and fewer pupils leaving the school.

2020_21/061 Safeguarding

MG had checked the Single Central Register and would follow up in the Summer Term.

The Health and Safety walk through would take place in the Summer Term.

2020_21/061 SEND Update.

There was nothing to report for this meeting.

2020_21/062 Policy Review

There were no policies for review at this meeting.

2020_21/063 Governor Business

- a) Training: The Clerk had attended the Clerks' Briefing on 17 March 2021 and had circulated the papers to Governors. There were no questions. VSM had attended the first New Governor session.
- b) Link Visits: There had been no link visits.
- c) Forward Plan Review. With the pending reorganisation, there would be no Forward Plan to review.
- d) Reorganisation Update. MG reported on recent meetings following the decision by the SCC Cabinet in the previous week to proceed with the restructuring plans. These included reference to an arcane HR requirement over protected ring-fenced positions for staff. Possible Headteacher redundancy packages were also mentioned. MG felt there was nothing more the Governing Body could do to change the decision but could move forward in a positive and collaborative way to ensure the best outcome for the pupils. There was a parent group still fighting the decision. Comments were invited which included:
- Staff were concerned about their wellbeing and future careers. Many were 'shell-shocked'. The LA would be undertaking a skills audit after Easter. Some were seriously worried about what offers of employment would be made.



- The plans should be child focussed and a timeline produced as soon as possible so that choices could be made.
- The LA would need to give a governance steer to the school.
- Welfare of staff and certainty were vital and then the needs of the children
- There were concerns about the recruitment process of SLT staff for the new school. There was a need to ensure the LA was aware of the concerns.
- Governors felt for the welfare of staff in all this.

In a debate, it was acknowledged that the finality of the decision was under challenge by groups of parents in Misterton, Crewkerne & Ilminster. There was a very strong parent group fully opposed to the plans and this group was gaining strength. The group was using Facebook and was also raising funds for a legal challenge via 'Go to Funding'. Legal opinion had been obtained by the parents, although it remained confidential at this point. The LA would be given formal notice by the parents of this challenge. The detail would be more widely shared when appropriate. One Governor, although unhappy with the way the decision had been made, would not be able to support the challenge until sight of it had been made available to Governors. There was little point in wasting energy in pursuing the matter. Another Governor, who attended the Cabinet meeting, expressed concern at the lies presented at that meeting. He had been disappointed at the lack of empathy shown to the staff and children at the school in the advancement of vested interests. There were three probable major legal challenges to be made. These could slow down the restructuring process.

The Clerk intervened to remind Governors of the need to abide by the Code of Conduct and to remember that there is Collective Responsibility on all Governors to adhere to decisions of the Governing Body, even if the individual is against the decision. This could place Parent Governors in a difficult position.

MW thanked Governors for all of the contributions. The issue had taken a lot out of him. However, it would be important not to take a panic situation.

After a further short debate, it was unanimously agreed to approve the following statement:

'The Governing Body of Swanmead School wishes to express sympathy with the staff of Swanmead School over the current uncertainty. The Governing Body will continue to work constructively with others in the best interests of staff and children'.

2020_21/064 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Meeting closed: 7.20pm

Next meeting – As agreed earlier in the meeting, this would now be:

Thursday 13 May 2021 at 5.30 p.m. A decision would be taken nearer the time as to whether it would be held in school or online.