



The Vineyard School Governing Board

Minutes of Full Governing Body meeting held on 20th June 2019 at 6pm at the school

Governors Present:	Graham Stewart (GS) – Chair Simon Williams (SW) Amy Salem (AS) Anke Monestel (AM) James Lane (JL) Kirsty MacEachen (KM) Antony Cook (AC) Emma Sutton (ES) Melanie Bywell (MB) Lynne Woolley (LW) (not present at the start of the meeting) Ruth Whymark (RW)
In Attendance:	Jan Liebmann (JLiebmann) Richard Rosewell (Associate Member) (RR) Anna Mantle (Clerk)
Absent:	Fern Carter

Meeting started at 6pm.

Item	Action
1. <u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies received and accepted from Fern Carter. Lynne Woolley had sent apologies because she late and was not present at the start of the meeting.	
2. <u>Governors' Declaration of Interests</u> No direct or indirect pecuniary interests were declared.	
3. <u>Minutes of last meeting (28th February 2019) and extra meeting (2 April 2019) and matters arising</u> Part I and Part II minutes from 28th February FGB meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and filed accordingly. It was agreed to make a minor amendment to the Part II minutes from the extra FGB held on 2 April 2019 in order to ensure clarity of a discussion point. Governors agreed these minutes with the amendment and a copy was signed and filed subsequent to the meeting. Matters arising had all been dealt with.	
4. <u>Constitution</u>	

	<p>Current vacancies: there are currently two co-opted governor vacancies on the board. It was agreed that one of these vacancies would be made available for Antony Cook (Vice Chair) to move into when his term of office as parent governor expires next term, recognising the significant contribution he makes to the governing board. Meetings had been held during the week of 10 June with two prospective candidates for the other vacancy. Next steps are to arrange school visits. This will be completed by the end of term.</p> <p>It was agreed to appoint the Headteacher's performance review panel at the first FGB in September.</p> <p>Emma Sutton is leaving the school at the end of the academic year to take on a new role. Governors thanked her for a significant contribution to the school and to the governing body as staff governor. She explained that she felt the opportunity to be involved as a governor had helped her to secure her new role and that the insights gained from being involved in governance are invaluable for teaching staff keen to develop in their careers. The governing body will start the process of advertising for a new staff governor in the September term.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
5.	<p><u>Chair's Emergency Actions</u> The Chair confirmed that no emergency actions had been taken on the governing body's behalf since the last meeting.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Policies (agenda item 15)</u> This item was moved to the start of the meeting in consideration of the non-governor staff member (JLiebmann) who was attending to provide background to the curriculum policy.</p> <p><u>Curriculum Policy</u> JLiebmann and ES provided the meeting with highlights from the presentation and discussion that had happened in detail at the School Development & Pupils (SD&P) Committee the preceding week (13 June). Following the discussion at SD&P governors had requested that, as well as setting out the body of knowledge that children will leave The Vineyard knowing, the policy should also set out the skills that the school is aiming for them to have acquired. The presentation provided at the committee meeting, along with sample curriculum maps were circulated with the papers, as well as an additional infographic detailing the 21st Century skills that the curriculum aims to establish. JLiebmann and ES had worked hard to unpick the relevant skills and to map them to stages in school, in order that the curriculum develops a progression of both knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Governors commented that it felt like the proposed structure looked like it would develop well rounded children, which has always been a key goal of The Vineyard.</p> <p>RW reminded governors that Ofsted focus on knowledge, based on well-grounded educational research. She urged governors to read the new Ofsted framework.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the school was confident that the proposed policy fulfilled all Ofsted's criteria and sought reassurance that it is ambitious enough to develop and stretch all Vineyard pupils.</p> <p>AS commented that the proposed curriculum would help to ensure consistency without taking away the teacher's autonomy regarding how to teach. RW added that it is essential in a school the size of The Vineyard that there is a rigorous curriculum, designed to provide stretch and challenge for all children.</p> <p>Governors commented that the context is important within the Ofsted framework. The school is high performing and the curriculum should be challenging and go above and beyond national expectations.</p>	

<p>Governors asked what the policy includes.</p> <p>They were informed that the curriculum maps and infographics circulated with the papers will form appendices to the policy.</p> <p>It was agreed that progress of the implementation of the policy will form part of the SD&P agenda next year. Subject leaders will be invited to attend the meeting. Governors discussed how they would evaluate the success of the policy, including addressing the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the curriculum altered for SEND needs and different learning capabilities? • Are standards being raised? • How much teaching time is provided? <p>It was agreed that a review of subject books would be undertaken as part of the evaluation.</p> <p>Governors thanked JLiebmann and ES for the huge amount of work they have done on the policy and also since the SD&P Committee meeting.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed the policy.</p>	<p>Clerk to add to annual planner</p>
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6.50pm Jan Liebmann leaves the meeting.

<p>6. <u>Policies (agenda item 15) continued.</u> <u>Bad Debt Policy:</u></p> <p>The policy had been reviewed and scrutinised in detail at the last Resources committee meeting and circulated in its revised format with the papers. Governors requested that a check be made to ensure that the Resources Committee is referenced and not Finance.</p> <p>Governors commented that the tone of communications is crucial and underlined the importance of maintaining a respectful tone at all times.</p>	<p>SS</p>
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6.55pm Lynne Woolley arrives and James Lane leaves.

<p>6. <u>Policies (agenda item 15) continued.</u> <u>Bad Debt Policy:</u></p> <p>There followed some discussion regarding other methods of requesting payment for meals and feedback on ScoPay and its limitations.</p> <p>Governors asked whether other schools had similar policies.</p> <p>They were reassured that they did. They felt that the requests for payment set out in the policy were not unreasonable.</p> <p>Governors praised the efforts of the team involved in chasing the debts.</p> <p>Governors unanimously approved the policy.</p> <p>Review frequency: 5 years</p> <p>Updates on the debt situation to be provided termly to the Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Attendance Policy:</u></p> <p>RW explained that under advice from the Educational Welfare Officer she had reviewed the attendance policy. Persistent absence is increasing. The proposed policy is based on DfE guidance. She drew governors' attention to particular appendices regarding teachers' duties to follow up from a safeguarding perspective, which were missing from the previous policy.</p> <p>There followed a detailed discussion about the process involved in following up children absent from school and how this is prioritised. RW reassured</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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	<p>governors that the process of calling parents/carers if their child is absent starts as soon as the register has been taken after the doors are closed and that Y5 and Y6 (where children could be arriving at school without supervision) are prioritised.</p> <p>Governors agreed that rigour in adhering to the policy is essential.</p> <p>They unanimously agreed the policy.</p> <p>Review frequency: 5 years</p> <p><u>Separated Parents' Policy:</u> RW explained that several circumstances had arisen where this policy is needed.</p> <p>Governors had received the policy in advance. It is based on a model policy because of the legal aspects it includes. They commented that it seemed very sensible and clearly sets out the school's position. RW explained that the policy maintains a child-centred focus.</p> <p>Governors asked whether it would form part of the Reception year welcome pack.</p> <p>RW confirmed it would.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed the policy.</p> <p>Review frequency: 5 years (unless legislative changes dictate earlier review).</p>	
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7.	<p><u>Budget (agenda item 9)</u> The budget had been reviewed and discussed in detail at the 5 June Resources Committee.</p> <p>GS commented that the budget becomes harder to balance each year. It will require regular monitoring (monthly by the school and termly by the governors at the Resources Committee). Opportunities to build in resilience will be sought, wherever possible.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the budget was based on final actual staff costs. SS confirmed it is.</p> <p>Governors asked whether catering and cleaning costs were expected to rise. SS explained that it was possible. School meal prices are due to rise. Both contracts will go out to tender next term.</p> <p>Governors asked about Brexit implications. There followed a discussion about the possible implications a No Deal Brexit could have on the school budget. There is no No Deal funding contingency. Governors considered whether a drop in school headcount due to families leaving the country could have an impact on funding and were reassured that the length of the waiting list and absence of primary schooling in central Richmond meant that a significant loss of NOR (numbers on roll) was not a significant threat. Other issues, such as a rise in food prices, can be factored into the tender process for the new catering contract.</p> <p>Governors thanked SS for all her hard work.</p> <p>Governors unanimously approved the budget and GS signed a hard copy.</p>	
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7.30pm Simon Williams leaves the meeting.

8.	<u>20/21 Term Dates (agenda item 17)</u>	
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	<p>Proposed term dates had been circulated ahead of the meeting. RW explained her rationale for setting out the terms as she proposed, including building in longer holidays in the Autumn term to prevent sickness and improve wellbeing (for both staff and pupils).</p> <p>RW also explained her rationale for proposing Twilight training sessions throughout the term rather than in the form of "INSET" days at the start and end of term.</p> <p>Governors questioned whether the part weeks were an efficient use of time.</p> <p>RW explained that this was proposed in cases where the term was long.</p> <p>Governors commented that the proposed calendar could help to prevent parents from taking children out of school missing the last few days of term.</p> <p>Governors asked whether Richmond implemented a fining regime for unauthorised absence on holiday.</p> <p>RW confirmed that they do not. She did explain that she had taken action to remove a child from roll (acting in conjunction with the Education Welfare Officer) when the child was absent from school for six weeks.</p> <p>Governors unanimously approved the term dates for 20/21.</p>	
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7.40pm Svetlana Sanders leaves the meeting.

9.	<p><u>Safeguarding (agenda item 10)</u> Details of a recent safeguarding audit (attended by AC – safeguarding lead) and an action plan had been circulated ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>RR provided governors with a brief highlight of the audit process and reassured them of the detail and rigour involved. Most schools receive more recommendations and the assessor commented that she was pleased with what she saw. The recommendations that have been received have been put into an action plan and many have been addressed in the interim between the audit and receiving the report.</p> <p>AC updated the meeting on his visit report (also circulated with the papers) to meet to review the Single Central Record. Progress is positive in this regard. AC commented that the next stage is testing and embedding safeguarding and that governors were encouraged to talk to members of the school community when they are in school to ask them about what they understand their role in safeguarding to be.</p> <p>Governors commented that the use of different coloured lanyards for DBS-checked visitors and non-DBS visitors was good and that they had noticed a culture shift to challenge visitors without passes.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Review effectiveness (agenda item 11)</u> A spreadsheet to evaluate the governing body's effectiveness will be circulated shortly and a report prepared for the September FGB.</p> <p>It was also agreed that governors will complete a short skills audit before the next FGB.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
11.	<p><u>Annual governance statement (agenda item 12)</u> GS had not had the opportunity to prepare this. It was agreed that a draft would be prepared and circulated for review electronically.</p>	GS
12.	<p><u>Review renewal of The Key subscription</u></p>	GS and Clerk

	It was discussed and agreed that Chair and Clerk would review the NGA information now available on their website in comparison to The Key and weigh up the cost implications of maintaining both subscriptions. Decision to be made by mid July when the subscription runs out.	
13.	<p><u>School email addresses for governors</u></p> <p>A short paper setting out the reasons for proposing governors use school email addresses was circulated by the Clerk with the meeting papers. There followed a discussion about the advantages of adopting the use of school email.</p> <p>Governors agreed that they would use school email when sending and receiving information about governor business.</p>	Clerk to organise
14.	<p><u>Head Teacher's Report (agenda item 6)</u></p> <p>Governors had reviewed the report ahead of the meeting. They asked for more detail about the exclusions. RW provided some background to the racist (1) and homophobic (1) incidents detailed in her report. She discussed the sanctions taken for each case. Governors asked whether the unacceptable behaviour had been picked up in the wider school environment. RW explained that she had ensured that school assemblies tied in with the school value of inclusion and that year groups and classes where the children involved were based focused on relevant themes in their lessons. She commented that the values based approach that the school takes, including assemblies addressing the school values, makes it easier to address issues in context.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about the importance of helping children to understand difference and the fine balance of recognising difference without making value judgements. RW gave some examples linked to the Relationships & Sex Education curriculum.</p> <p>Governors asked RW for more information about the school's approach to creating a mental health friendly school. They asked whether mental health should feature as a section in the parent survey to assess whether children feel supported at school etc. RW said that she would put this into the parent survey. She referenced Charlotte Axbey as designated mental health lead.</p> <p>Governors thanked RW for her report and had no further questions.</p>	
15.	<p><u>Spring School Improvement Partner (SIP) report</u></p> <p>The Spring SIP was circulated in advance with the papers. Governors had reviewed it and did not have any further questions. They await the Summer SIP report which was only available in draft at the time of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors discussed whether an external review would be beneficial to help support professional development for the school leadership team, particularly in the light of the new Ofsted framework. Governors agreed that an external review would be beneficial.</p> <p>Discussion moved onto feedback from the Governors' Engagement meeting which had taken place earlier in the term. Governors agreed that it was a good format to raise their profile and that they would collectively work to continue with this next year through a presence at Parent Engagement days, parent consultations and on the gate (where possible).</p> <p>Governors commented that they must not lose sight of the staff voice either and it was agreed that they would raise their profile in school through a rota to attend staff briefings once a term. (Friday mornings at 8.30am).</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
16.	<p><u>Action points from parent survey</u></p> <p>KM to circulate slides prepared for the Governor Engagement meeting to the FGB.</p> <p>AC to circulate notes from the meeting.</p>	<p>KM</p> <p>AC</p>

8.30pm Anke Monestel leaves

<p>17.</p>	<p><u>Action points from parent survey continued</u> In summary the actions arising from the parent survey have been addressed as follows: One School One Voice – working on consistency in behaviour throughout the school with introduction and implementation of behaviour policy, with rigorous training. Stretch and Challenge for all – curriculum is being revised to ensure stretch and challenge. School Development & Pupils Committee to discuss in next meeting whether a “high attainer” policy is required. Fun but not rough – behaviour policy establishes clear expectations Transparency of pupil progress – reviewed communications strategy starting to take effect and actively being worked on. The parent consultation meetings are being reviewed. The school maintains its open-door policy.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about changing the timing of the parent survey to allow Reception parents time to establish themselves at the school, but not too late for Y6 parents to have a chance to provide valuable feedback. After discussion it was agreed keep the timing of the survey the same for the next year.</p> <p>There was a conversation about the requirement for continual engagement and the time taken for a culture to shift and change.</p>	
<p>18.</p>	<p><u>Committee Meeting Minutes</u> Governors received and acknowledged minutes from the following committees. There were no additional questions arising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part II Working Group Minutes• 7 Feb School Development & Pupil Committee Meeting Minutes• 15 May Resources Committee Meeting Minutes <p><i>Minutes from 5 June Resources Committee and 13 June School Development & Pupils Committee were circulated after the meeting.</i></p> <p>Visit reports were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22 March 2019 Safeguarding visit• 13-16 May SATs observation	
<p>19.</p>	<p><u>19/20 Planning and Hot Topic Update</u> A draft calendar of meeting dates for the upcoming year was circulated ahead of the meeting, along with a draft annual planner and updated policy tracker. Governors also received a process map setting out the new governor induction process, process for reviewing policies and a data retention schedule for governance documents.</p> <p>An update on recent clerks’ training on education hot topics of relevance for governance was circulated with the papers, along with sample questions in preparation for the new Ofsted framework (prepared by The Key).</p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> Exit interviews have been conducted with staff leaving the school. Governors involved in the process will document the themes arising and circulate these.</p>	

Meeting concluded: 8.55pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18th September, 6pm

Summary of action points:

Action point	Responsibility
Appointment of HT review panel to be set at September FGB	Clerk
Staff governor elections to take place in Autumn term	Clerk
Add check on progress of curriculum policy to Annual Planner for SD&P committee	Clerk
Update Bad Debt Policy with references to Resources committee	SS
Add update on debt situation to Resources committee Annual Planner	Clerk
Circulate effectiveness survey	Clerk/GS
Skills audit	Clerk and All
Review subscription to The Key	Clerk/GS
Set up school email addresses for governors	Clerk
External review	Clerk/GS
Establish rota for attendance at staff meetings on termly basis	Clerk
Circulate slides from parent/governor engagement evening	KM
Circulate notes from the event	AC
Circulate themes from exit interviews	AC/KM