

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 11th May at 2pm
using Google Meet

Present: Muir Mathieson (Chair), Stuart Wilson (Head), Alison Campbell-Black, John Gilbert, Nigel Riglar, Amanda Arrowsmith, Eilis Cope, Becky Castledine, Caryn Roberts, Andrew Wilson, Chris Baldwin, Graham Ayre.

Apologies:

In Attendance: Glen Balmer, Hannah Kelly (Clerk)

1. Apologies & Welcome

MM welcomed all the governors to the first virtual meeting and gave an update on what the NGA outlined as being the role of governors during this period. This has been reflected in a slightly different agenda to usual. This was understood and agreed by all.

There were no apologies - all governors were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Governor resignations / appointments

Caryn Roberts has been nominated onto the Board of Governors and the appointment has been formally approved by CBAT. Caryn's term of office will run from 24.04.20 to 23.04.24. MM and the board welcomed CR to her first meeting.

Eilis Cope's term of office ended on 01.05.20. She has offered to stand for re-nomination.

- *EC's reappointment was proposed by MM; seconded by JG; and unanimously agreed.*

HK to email the Clerk to CBAT board to propose EC's re-nomination for Trust approval.

Action (SDB28): HK

4. Minutes from the last meeting dated 3rd February 2020

There were two minor typographical amendments to be made to the minutes:

- *Subject to these amendments, the minutes were proposed for approval by MM ; seconded by EC; agreed unanimously and signed by the Chair.*

5. Action Point Checklist

LGB60	Ongoing
LGB62	Ongoing
SDB17	Ongoing
SDB20	Complete
SDB21	Complete
SDB23	Ongoing
SDB24	Ongoing
SDB25	Ongoing
SDB26	Ongoing
SDB27	Ongoing

It was understood that these items were all actions that were agreed prior to lockdown and so many hadn't been actioned due to the rapid change in circumstances. These are to be carried forward until an appropriate time.

6. Matters Arising

- Q: We were going to have a working party to look at the Ofsted Handbook in relation to governance - should we wait until after the summer holidays to start this, or do we need to press on?
- A: The Government have not changed the law yet regarding 'Outstanding' schools, and there has been no update on when routine inspections will resume. We should probably pick up the working party in the next academic year, when governor meetings resume.

Governors to prepare for Ofsted visit; a working party to be convened in next academic year.

Action (SDB29): MM

- Q: When we get closer to the event, can governors and trustees have some practice Ofsted interviews so we know what to expect.

SW to arrange for an inspector to run a practice interview session for governors and trustees.

Action (SDB30): SW

7. Vulnerable children and Safeguarding update

Confidential paperwork

A written report had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. All governors had read the report. Safeguarding is high on the list of priorities. The DSL has been in touch with Social Services throughout. JD has been working families whose children have an EHCP.

Risk assessments have been written for vulnerable students regarding home learning and a joint decision was made with the LA about whether they were safe to be at home. As a result, all students have been deemed safe to be at home.

Numbers in school have been very low. Nine students were signed up; there are usually 2-3 students in school on any given day. The school is sending returns to the DfE and LA every day and completing all the statutory forms

- Q: Have the students got access to the internet and computers at home?

A: Our understanding is yes. We had one request from a parent who has borrowed a school laptop, but we have had no further requests. The government are funding equipment for vulnerable children - Marling has been allocated 2 laptops for Y10 and one 4G router. We are still waiting to have our order confirmed. Once we get them we will contact the Y10 pupil premium students to see whether they need them, but we expect it to be at least 2 more weeks.

- Q: Regarding the mental health of all students - how are we keeping an eye on everyone?

A: There are different levels - social services, police radar, CAMS (mental health services); we have been working throughout with those students we are aware may need additional support. It is harder to help the students who haven't had previous issues, or who haven't contacted us for support. The Heads of Years and Key Stages are constantly asking if people need help through regular emails and some telephone contact. We look for trends in those students who are not engaging with school work and offering practical advice or signposting them to where they can get support. We are doing everything we can to promote the services we offer and trying to spot trends that suggest people are having difficulties.

- Q: Is there a hotline for the boys to call if they are struggling?

A: The students are encouraged to contact the student support email address. We send regular emails home to promote that. There were live assemblies to KS3 last week, in which we talked

about where they can get support. We spoke about resilience and some of that is about asking for help.

A parent governor confirmed that this was the case and was very effective.

Every family is different, though there are some trends - there was a dip in week 2 this term when a lot of families who had been fine, began to struggle. Every family has different stresses and pressures; some who we thought might struggle have thrived and vice versa. KS3 work is being reviewed as they will not be in school before September and are becoming more isolated - anecdotally they seem to be using social media platforms less now, than they did when they were at school.

Q: Are there any students who are shielding because of complicated health conditions and therefore might be in an isolated environment for a prolonged period of time (i.e. even after others in their year group are returning)?

A: There will be a small minority who won't return with the others. There are a small number of students with very serious underlying health conditions, or siblings with significant health issues and there may be a substantial number of parents who will worry about sending their children back. We will need to keep providing remote learning for these children for some time after the majority return.

Q: From a Marling point of view, those students will need to have a sense of how we will fulfil our duty of care to them. Will that have additional resource needs? They will need intensive support to help them on their journey.

A: We are starting to work on a risk analysis of what a return to school will look like - both those risk factors are included. When the document is completed (though will continue to be a work in progress) it will be shared with governors.

Q: Would it be possible to use one of the online platforms for a simple poll system: e.g 'smiley face' or 'thumbs up' to be a good or bad week indicator? So we can see if there is a pattern?

A: We are sending out a basic questionnaire to Y8 and have picked up a few issues as a result. We aren't doing that exactly, but we are doing similar.

8. Remote Learning

Students study to their normal timetables. They are expected to work for 45-60 minutes per lesson. Lessons are set on Edulink and Google classroom. We don't have a platform that every class is expected to use. Different subjects prefer to use different platforms depending on which are the most appropriate for their subject. Also, since closure has happened, other platforms have made themselves available for free, Some children found it difficult to get to grips with the number of platforms we are using, though seems to have settled now.

There is increasing live interaction with teachers and students. We are looking at how to get collaboration in a way that is manageable. Y10 & 12 have experienced some of that. We are looking at how we can bring that down to other years, particularly for Y9 in preparation for their GCSE course to start in September.

Q: Can we ensure consistency in teachers' feedback?

A: If there are any specific issues, these should be emailed to GB separately. We have avoided being very directive, as subjects are very different and we want middle leaders to be empowered to decide the best way to run their departments. Also, we need to think about our staff capabilities at this time - some are at home with their own children, and key worker partners. We need to be careful about what we can realistically ask staff to do. We are looking at how effective different subjects are. We are starting to establish a view of the characteristics of effective learning and they we can apply this more widely.

- Q: How are middle leaders monitoring and recording teaching and learning? Do they have a good evidence base?
- A: There are schemes of learning being applied across all the classes in a year group; for example, in English. We need to make work manageable, meaningful and motivating. Feedback from parents is that in the most important part it is achieving that, at the moment.
- Q: Assemblies - are they audio only? I understand that teachers in general have been advised not to use video links?
- A: The NEU have advised members not to video link. We are not making staff do them, but we have given advice about how to do this safely. The majority of teachers are confident with it, but some are not. There are safeguarding measures that can be put in place. AW explained that he has conducted live lessons. He sent an email out beforehand, invited parents too, and explained behaviour expectations. He warned students that it would be recorded. He could monitor behaviour throughout and mute or evict people if needed. AW remarked that he was surprised how many students had microphones and cameras off.
- Q: In respect of staff teaching and learning, does the school have the skills and support to help staff who are less able to use technology for remote learning?
- A: On the Monday after closure, all staff came in and training on the various platforms was offered. Most of the platforms we use and are intuitive and there have been no long term problems.
- Q: What about the infrastructure and people's internet connection - how do you account for that?
- A: We build that in to our expectations about when work is completed. It allows for poor internet connection and for people who have to work around other family members.
- Q: Regarding live video links, there was a marked difference in my son's morale afterward he had attended a live assembly, even though he didn't have his camera on. Can we increase the number of these?
- A: As pastoral leaders we can do that. We will be looking at having form group live sessions and other ways to increase live contact.
- C: I believe that the content is less important than the pastoral face to face element of the links; it is about increasing interaction and managing the social element of school life for all year groups in a manageable way.
- Q: What is happening about the students who are due to join us in Y7, in September?
- A: It feels unlikely that all students will be in school full time in September. It is also unlikely that the usual transition plans for Y6 before summer will happen this year. We are developing a transition pack, but are waiting to hear on government announcements for Y6 before we complete our plans.
- Q: Can you do some sort of video taster day?
- A: We are looking at how we can replace what we are doing with viable alternatives.

9. Monitoring engagement and pastoral support for pupils

It was agreed that pastoral support had been covered in detail in previous agenda items. However, the theme of pastoral care is important and should be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action (SDB31): HK

10. Processes and timescales for producing centre assessed grades for Ofqual

AMD provided a timeline based on research with Ofqual which builds in capacity for review and reflection.

The deadline is for the initial data to be gathered by today and then the analysis will start. We are following exam board's guidelines. The grades will not be used for any external assessment of the school and won't be published.

Q: Can parents challenge grades?

A: There will be an appeal process but we think that will be against the process rather than the final grade

11. SIP and SEF update

We have developed a new format for the SEF to keep it as a live document linked to ongoing development. The SIP will be reviewed but many areas will be on hold due to school closure.

The governor visit programme is on hold. The basic model for this was started last September and it was extremely useful. Once this programme can restart, we will continue to use and adapt this format. The governors offered 'virtual' support if this was useful - i.e. holding video meetings with staff.

12. Recruitment update

SW explained that virtual interviewing is challenging as you can't see an interviewee's interaction with students or their classroom control. However, the following decisions / appointments have been made:

- As it is a key appointment, it was decided to suspend the appointment of a Head of Music; an interim solution has been found for the next year by reviewing how to use existing staff members.
- A part time Spanish teacher has been appointed for September.
- An English teacher has been appointed to cover maternity leave, full time, until March.
- There is a requirement for a Maths teacher to cover maternity leave from October half term.
- Frank Gann is moving to a HEI post, so there is a vacancy for Head of Year in 6th form, which will be recruited internally.
- Johnny Zeal will be the DoE leader from September, replacing Andy Cook.

Q: How is the recruitment of 6th Form students progressing?

A: Out of 121 offers made to our Y11 students, to date 104 have accepted, 2 declined and 16 have not responded (of whom we believe most will go elsewhere)

There were 280 external candidates in total, 19 have declined. This gives us a total of 261 compared to 244 last year. There are 188 acceptances of conditional offers. The 6th form team working hard to stay in contact with candidates

For Year 7, there have been 149 places allocated, with about 22 appeals. The appeals process will be on zoom.

13. Current reflections on potential return to school

There have been no formal communications from Government. It is suspected that there will be some form of contact with Y10 and Y12 before the summer holidays and we have been working on a number of draft plans. We would probably have to stagger them to different days of the week. If social distancing measures are applied we can accommodate 8 students per a classroom in South Block and 10 in West Block.

Virtual learning would continue for Years 7, 8 and 9 and those who did not come into school.

We can manage social distancing in school, but the issue is regarding public transport - we can't control public buses and trains.

Q: If we have to furlough staff, where does it leave us in terms of budget?

A: We can't furlough staff; they maintain their pay as we expect the full General Annual Grant (GAG) based on numbers. Our main loss has been the lettings income, which we expect to be approximately £15k by the end of year. The annual lettings income is about £40k. The savings we have will predominantly be supply costs, although there might be some minor savings. We don't yet know if exam fees will be reduced, though we expect that they won't.

Q: Is there any spare capacity for staff?

A: EG is currently looking to see if support staff can return to a school based role as soon as it is viable. Staff are currently working their full hours; there is currently some capacity as Years 11 and 13 are not working, but staff are also trying to juggle their home life.

Q: Are there any additional costs, such as cleaning?

A: We might incur overtime on cleaning, PPE and additional cleaning materials. However, the Government are allowing us to claim for some of the PPE and cleaning costs.

Q: Will schools be different places going forward? For example, will the school day still be 9am to 3pm. Do we, as a trust do we have flexibility on how we operate?

A: There is nothing specific. It is possible that we could have a different school day/week. There might be an element of local decision making so we can use our judgement. There might be issues with public transport, social distancing measures which might result in a shorter day as students might not be able to travel until after 9am.

14. Communications

This agenda item was proposed as the current situation has shown how important communications are. It was felt that when things return to normal, there should be an SDB agenda item to discuss a longer term, more formal communications strategy in more detail; a 12 month rolling communications plan which underlines the SIP, could be developed.

It was proposed that a steering group be formed to review communications and how it could be done differently - whether the IT systems could be made more robust to help with a two-way flow of communications.

In the recent NGA magazine, there was an article about 'Making governance more visible' which was recommended for all governors to read. It is Governance visibility week between 6-12th June. Insight informs best practice, and insight comes from stakeholders. Therefore we need to capture that and use it to help us improve. This would also benefit the longer term governor work on Ofsted inspections.

15. Complaints and Compliments

15.1 Complaints

There has been nothing that would rank in a formal complaints process. There have been a few suggestions and questions on how things are working, but nothing that would be classed as a formal complaint.

15.2 Compliments

There has been a lot of communication from parents expressing gratitude for the work we have done so far. There has been a definite increase in communication from parents from the usual level. This is an entirely new situation for everyone, so there are inevitably things we want to improve as we learn, but overall communication has been very supportive throughout the whole community. Students, parents, teachers and support staff have been resilient and supportive and grateful for the work others are doing.

16. AOB

16.1 Next SDB meeting date

The next meeting will be held on 22nd June. If there is anything that governors need to know before that, then contact the clerk to governors and a quick interim meeting can be arranged if necessary.

16.2 Vote of Thanks

The governors extended their thanks for all the staff in Marling; they have made the best of a situation, even though they all have their own personal situations to focus on as well.

MM to send a message to all staff both teaching and support to thank them on behalf of the governing body.

Action (SDB 32): MM

The meeting ended at 4pm.

The next SDB meeting will be held on Monday 22nd June 2020.



22nd June 2020