

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 29th June 2023
6pm in Room SB00, Marling School

Present: Chris Baldwin (Chair), Glen Balmer (Head), Holly Bedford, Ayo Jimmy, Jo Roberts, Graham Ayre, Becky Castledine (until 19:55) & Alison Campbell-Black (virtually).
Apologies: Clare Steel, Nick Lythgoe, Rob May & Ian Townsend
Absent:
In Attendance: Hannah Kelly (clerk), Chris Williams (until 18:47), Andy MacDonald (until 18:30), Louise Harris (until 19:08)

1. Apologies

Apologies have been received from CS, NL, IT, & RM. These were accepted by all.

- *Item 17 was taken here, out of turn.*
- *Item 13 was taken here, out of turn.*
- *Item 12 was taken here, out of turn.*
- *Item 15 was taken here, out of turn.*

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Governor resignations / appointments

4. Minutes of the last meeting dated 10th May 2023

➤ *The minutes for the meeting dated 10th May 2023 were proposed by CB; seconded by BC and unanimously agreed.*

CB signed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Action Point Checklist

SDB77b: Ongoing (CS to email safeguarding certificate to HK)

SDB95: Ongoing

SDB96: Ongoing (merge with action 110)

SDB108: Ongoing

SDB114: Completed

SDB118: Ongoing (to be linked with Action 124)

SDB119: Ongoing

SDB120: Completed

SDB121: Ongoing (to be part of next HT full report)

SDB122: Completed

SDB123: Completed

SDB124: Ongoing / Updated

HK to send out skills audits to all governors. These are to be returned by the end of term, so they can be collated and analysed before the next meeting in September.

- **Action (SDB125): HK**

6. Governor ratification of decisions by email between SDB meetings

The following decisions were ratified by governors between 11.05.23 and 28.06.23.

- Nomination of Jo Roberts & Ayo Jimmy as Governors (SDB) 12.06.23

7. Matters Arising

7.1 Trips

Following the item at the last SDB meeting regarding the new process for arranging the trips calendar, governors requested a copy of the draft plan. HK to circulate.

- **Action (SDB126):** HK

7.2 Staff Absence

Staff absence data had been circulated to the SDB prior to the meeting.

This information was compared to the School Inspection Data Summary Report (ISDR).

GB explained how work is being undertaken with the CBAT HR team to develop a new data set next year to allow for greater interrogation of patterns and reasons for staff absence. GB is also working collaboratively with Archway School regarding a monitoring system.

Marling's staff absence has increased since pre-Covid levels. As the overall trend has increased, HB is leading a project on staff wellbeing.

Q: Has wellbeing impacted the level of staff turn-over?

A: No. We are still very fortunate in that respect. A member of the IT team is leaving to work in the IT profession, which can offer a significantly higher salary and a better work/life balance. The other colleagues are leaving are going to promotional opportunities which we cannot currently offer them here. Recruitment for September '23 has been completed.

8. Risk Register

CB explained that as several experienced board members have left this year, and new members recruited, he would like to increase the risk regarding governor experience until skills audits have been completed and training opportunities identified and undertaken.

➤ *This was proposed by CB; seconded by GA and unanimously approved.*

9. Governor Visits

There have been no governor visits since the last SDB meeting in May. GB to review the governor visits process for 23/24.

10. Policies

The following policies were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting:

- Assessment
- First Aid
- Home School Agreement
- SEND

Governors questioned whether reference to Covid was still relevant. GB to check; if it is not necessary, then the governors agreed the reference can be removed from the policy.

- **Action (SDB127):** GB

Governors also ratified the SEND policy, however Clare Steel the SEND link governor was unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that CB would consult CS before the policy was officially ratified.

- **Action (SDB128):** CB

➤ *Subject to outcome of the above two actions, these four policies were proposed by CB; seconded by BC and unanimously approved.*

11. Joint Steering Group Update

The Marling/SHS Joint steering group met on 27th June 23.

GB & CB explained that it was a positive meeting as a long term, sustainable solution had been agreed about how to split the use of the 6th Form Centre.

This agreement will allow the committee to complete the Memorandum of Understanding, at which point it is hoped that the JSG could dissolve and be replaced by operational meetings between the two schools.

There is a joint safeguarding agreement between the two schools, which will require ongoing liaison between the schools; it is anticipated that the Safeguarding governors for each school will also be required to be involved with this aspect of partnership working.

12. Health & Safety Update (confidential paperwork)

CW circulated a summary of the 'accidents' data for May/June 23 prior to the meeting. A comparison with previous years was given.

CW explained that the exceptionally heavy rainfall experienced on the 14th June '23 had led to flooding in some classrooms. Dehumidifiers were put into affected classrooms and daily checks on damp ratings were undertaken. A review on whether there are any feasible preventative measures for future incidents is being undertaken.

➤ *Chris Williams left the meeting at 18.47.*

13. Finance Update (confidential paperwork)

13.1 May Outturn

CW explained the content of the May Outturn report and focused on areas that are significantly higher or lower than estimated, explaining why there was this variation.

Q: Where is the contribution to CBAT within the budget?

A: Under 'Governance & central costs'

13.2 Budget 23/26

The 23-24 budget looks healthy. There may be slight variances in future budgets depending on the number of students recruited in coming years which impacts the income.

Q: What are you basing your income on?

A: Our long-term aspiration, which is an annual intake of 200 in 6th Form and 160 in Y7.

The budgets for 24/25 and 25/26 are forecast based on assumptions as there are so many variables; Government elections, unknown intake numbers, teacher pay rises, inflation pressures etc. It was explained that the School Resource Management Advisors (SRMA) have made a variety of recommendations on how to streamline costs. GB explained some areas where savings could be made if became necessary to avoid a deficit budget in future years.

14. SEND (confidential paperwork)

Due to her role as HT of Alderman Knight School, CS has undertaken external consultancy review of SEND at Marling School. Her report was circulated to governors with an action plan (with timescales) to address issues raised in the report.

The report and the action plan were circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

15. Student Voice (confidential recording)

Governors have been emailed 10 short videos recorded by the student leadership team. LH explained that they have been a good leadership team; changes have been made to the method of recruitment which have had a positive impact on the quality of the team's output when compared with previous years.

LH gave a brief overview of the role of the Student Leadership Team.

All governors were asked to watch the recordings and provide feedback to be shared with the students.

- **Action (SDB129):** All

➤ *LH left the meeting at 19.08*

16. **Headteacher's Summary Report (confidential paperwork)**

The HT summary report was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. GB highlighted key areas.

Q: What about the impact of the strikes – how do we compare to other schools in how we are managing this?

A: This is on the Risk Register. Our level of ability to open the school on strike days is fairly typical, but we have fared better than some. Most of our teaching staff are in the NEU so it does impact us. The school has been able to offer provision to Y11 and Y13 on strike days throughout the year, which will now be offered to Y10 & 12. A bigger risk is the potential for all the unions to co-ordinate strike action next year, which will mean that we would have to fully close the school.

Q: Is there an update regarding the sale of the canal field?

A: GB gave an overview of the project for new governors. Progress is slow but continuing.

17. **Quality of Education: Implementation (Teaching & Learning)**

This item was taken out of turn.

APM circulated a written report prior to the meeting. He highlighted the links to the SDP over the next 5 years. APM expanded on the written report.

Q: What are the financial benefits to the school?

A: We can start to decommission some of the IT suites – this will start in September. It has a significant financial benefit, not only the cost of equipping and updating the technology within the suite, but also as this will be used for an essential additional classroom, which we do not need to build elsewhere.

Q: There was discussion at the very start of this project about affordability for families. What proportion of the students have bought one?

A: Two students in Y8 borrow one from School during school hours. All Y7 have their own. Inclusivity was always a focus for us, so we balanced affordability against having the highest spec. All Pupil Premium students have a fully funded device through the Marling Promise. Approximately 70% of families chose to pay for the machine in one payment, up front. The remaining families have a payment plan, which is £24 per month.

Q: Have any concerns been raised by parents about this being another expense?

A: Not at all. We have had a few more requests to the hardship fund recently owing to the cost-of-living increase but we have not had any negative feedback, or concerns about payment.

Q: You have spoken about progression through the 'SAMR' scale of introduction to technology. Does this benefit the education of the pupils?

A: Absolutely. For example, I observed a Geography lesson when the teacher was using a powerpoint presentation. The students were on devices which allowed them to interact and respond. The teacher could see what the students were writing and so was able to

display exemplar answers on screen immediately to share with the class and was also able to respond to any issues a student might be having.

Q: What about cyber security and online safety?

A: We have a classroom monitoring device. Staff can see what students are accessing during lessons. Similarly, it is flagged if a student does anything inappropriate in their Marling account outside lessons, either at school or at home. However, the students own their devices and can use their own personal accounts, which we do not monitor. We have explained that this aspect of their use must be subject to parental, rather than school, responsibility.

Q: Do these devices deliver aspects of the curriculum that might be lost due to the future closure of school IT suites?

A: There is IT provision in school for more specialist curriculum needs such as for DT, IT and Art. Students will still be able to access what they need in order to access the curriculum for all subjects.

➤ *APM left at 18:30*

18. Personal Development (**confidential paperwork**)

This item was taken out of turn.

LH circulated a written report prior to the meeting detailing how tutor time is being used throughout school to deliver a personal development and inclusion programme. A key aim is to improve quality of content and ensure a consistent experience across the tutor groups: there are 25 in the lower school and 18 in the 6th Form.

Q: According to the graphs, students feel tutor time is not as well organised as it could be – do you know why this is?

A: The younger years (7-9) are generally happy with tutor time as they have had this structure since starting at Marling. In Y11 and to some extent in Y10, there have been differences in tutor delivery, but also there was a break with Covid and the older students are used to less structure in the morning.

Q: Are Chromebooks used during tutor time?

A: Not at the moment. It is only a short session so pen and paper is more convenient. Next year, there will be more debating and student presentation to build their recap and recall skills.

➤ *LH left at 19:00*

19. School Development Plan

The SDP was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

GB explained the format, and the longer term aims and aspirations.

Q: Do you have SMART objectives?

A: Yes, we have them for the 5-year plan. Some are quantitative, whereas others are more difficult to quantify.

20. Any other Business

20.1 Sports & Culture Week (03.07.23)

GB reminded the committee of the various events arranged for the following week to celebrate sports and culture. All governors were invited to attend.

The meeting ended at 20.15

The next School Development Board meeting is on Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 6pm in School.