



ST IVO SCHOOL
Minutes of the Governors' meeting
held on Wednesday, 26 February 2014

Present:

John Andrews
 Judith Barnes
 Sue Campbell
 Carol Darnell
 Charles Glanville
 Stuart Grey
 Joanna Grimmer

Chris Hillsdon
 Claire Lynn
 Martin McGarry
 Ingrid Morrison
 David Mead
 Jane Moore
 Frank Newton

Mark Patterson
 Tracy Roden
 Mark Sanderson
 Philip Speer
 Jim Stavrou
 Anthony Ward
 Duncan Woodall

	Main points discussed	Decisions taken and Action	When	By whom
1	<p>Apologies and Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Declaration of interest:</p>	<p>Grace O'Reilly, Robin King</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>		
2	<p>Minutes and matters arising from the Minutes of the Full Governors' Meeting held on 11 December 2013</p> <p>Agenda item 2:5: Exam results</p> <p>John reported that results had improved as a result of the entry of the current Year 11 cohort in the English Language GCSE examination in November 2013, with an approximate figure of 75% A* – C grades against entry, which when compared against the figure for summer 2013 at 63% A* – C grades was most favourable. This figure could rise still further in the summer when 90 students will be sitting the exam wishing to achieve higher grades. Some students who achieved higher than C/D grades are also resitting this exam. However, the data Ofsted will accept is that achieved on the first sitting, namely 75%.</p> <p>John stated that the department had had only four weeks to prepare the Year 11 students for this exam and to improve on the controlled assessments. Both the staff and the students had worked extremely hard.</p> <p>Sue thanked John and his team for this improved result.</p> <p>Agenda item 2: 7: Link Governors</p> <p>Sue enquired if the new governors, Claire and Charles had been linked with departments. Claire had been assigned Modern Foreign Languages and Gifted and Talented.</p>			

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	<p>ACTION: Charles to be linked with a department.</p> <p>Agenda item 4: Terms of Reference for Student Welfare and Community Group Philip stated that he had chaired the meeting in February in Grace's absence and that following discussion, it was felt best to defer the terms of reference as this particular committee has two areas of interest, Student Welfare and Adult and Community Learning. Further consultation to take place.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed and taken as a true record of the meeting.</p>			
3	<p>Strategy Group Update Philip explained that this group, comprising chair, vice chair and chairs of sub committees, head and deputy heads, had met for the first time the previous evening. It had been agreed that the meeting should determine its terms of reference and discussion had taken place, suggestions being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>To prepare proposals on strategic issues for consideration by the Governing Body</i> 2. <i>To enable the school's committees to work in a more joined-up way, through regular meetings of committee chairs and key school leaders</i> 3. <i>To enable 'Blue-Sky' thinking and discussion on strategic issues that are still only half-formed ideas and questions and may not otherwise ever be aired by governors.</i> <p><i>These had been agreed and adopted by the strategy group.</i></p> <p>Philip explained the history behind the strategy group. In the past there had been such a group which had discussed particular strategic issues that the governing body needed to address and where it was felt more favourable to have a smaller working group to discuss ideas and then report back with suggestions and proposals to the full governing body. The concept of the terms of reference is to formalise the strategy group on a more permanent basis. However, the point was made by several governors of long standing that the governing body had always been a unified strength and worked well together in close harmony in carrying out its responsibilities within the school, and that they would not want to risk fragmenting the group. It was important to work as a whole governing body but it was acknowledged that there were occasions when smaller group discussion needs to take place.</p> <p>Comments from the floor were invited and Mark reiterated Philip's comments stating that he too perceived it was important to ensure that none of the sub committees were making decisions on behalf of the governing body without the consensus and approval of the full governing body.</p> <p>Judith stated it would be unfortunate if the body became a two tier system.</p> <p>ACTION: The governing body needed to propose the formalisation of the strategy group, this was proposed by Stuart and seconded by Mark Patterson, head.</p>			
4	<p>Headteacher's Report to the Governing Body Mark reminded governors that St Ivo was due for an Ofsted inspection sometime this year and that the call would come with barely half a day's notice. Mark's report in the format of, '<i>The School Improvement Plan</i>', which was the school's working document on its plan of action for improvement in areas for this academic year had been distributed with the agenda. The last column, '<i>How are we doing?</i>' would be updated from meeting to meeting and it was this column that the governors were advised by Mark, to become acquainted with as this would be the information on which the Ofsted inspectors would question them eg how well do you know your school?</p> <p>1A Improving Teaching Strategy SLT (Senior Leadership Team) were currently undertaking an audit of <i>Learning Intentions</i> and <i>Success Criteria</i> of all staff over the next two weeks and Mark reported that this was going very well. Mark had visited 15 lessons on Tuesday in English and maths and reported that he was extremely impressed with colleagues' use of <i>Learning Intentions</i>.</p>			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning Intentions: these describe what the students should be learning</i> • <i>Success Criteria: is a check list for students showing them how well they are progressing</i> <p>Question from Duncan: Ofsted are making so many changes to criteria at present, how are these conveyed to staff? For example: " <i>they should not criticise teacher talk for being overlong or bemoan a lack of opportunity for different activities in lessons unless there is unequivocal evidence that this is slowing learning over time</i>". Mark replied that the senior leader responsible for Ofsted was Dan Wilson and that he regularly informed staff of any updates.</p> <p>ACTION: Mark to check with Dan that he is aware of the above amendment reported by Duncan.</p> <p>Mark informed governors of another recent amendment, "<i>they will not be sharing gradings for any lessons with teachers</i>". They will still, however, be making a judgement on the lesson. Comment was made that due to the fact that inspectors rarely visit for a full lesson that this would be an unsound verdict.</p> <p>The self evaluation undertaken at St Ivo is graded and this does include looking at the standard of teaching in lessons. The overall consensus of opinion was that the grading was a very important aspect and staff needed to know how they were performing.</p> <p>Frank enquired whether feedback would be given to SLT, otherwise how could progression be made? Mark replied the framework did include feedback to SLT.</p> <p>Joanna enquired about the Teaching and Learning policy and whether this had been forwarded to parent governors. This had been sent to the seven parent governors prior to the February half term and included a 'home school agreement' document for governors' comments.</p> <p>ACTION: Jane to check with Dan whether this had been sent.</p> <p>1B Achievement</p> <p>For the current Year 9 cohort (summer exams in 2016) the benchmark will be changed from 5+ A* to C grades to new '<i>Attainment 8 and Progress 8</i>' measures which will take into account the 8 grades of the subjects on the curriculum (this will be the EBac subjects plus a number of high value subjects).</p> <p>Ingrid reported that St Ivo was researching possible curriculum changes to include the high value subjects within the Progress 8 subjects, this would enable an easy transition for the students into the sixth form. Only a small number of students would be exempt from the 8, those who had less timetabled subjects. The entry requirements for sixth form for the Year 9 cohort in 2016 will need to be reviewed. Mark commented that the school had a strong curriculum.</p> <p>2 Behaviour</p> <p>Mark reported that Clare Sherwood and David Varey had worked very hard on the implementation of the new Reflection Room and, although in the very early stages, it was perceived to be working well. They had been very supportive of staff and would soon be conducting a staff survey about the new systems. As with all new concepts there had been teething problems but these had been reviewed and necessary improvements made. It was acknowledged that in a large school like St Ivo there would always be potential behavioural issues but that the key component was to be persistent in the approach.</p> <p>Amanda Buttercase, the Reflection Room manager had been working consistently hard to ensure that students' time in the Reflection Room was used to a premium and had organised good quality work for them to complete. John praised Amanda and the work of the Reflection Room and stated that staff thought it was a good idea. He explained that the students are sent to this area for a 24 hour period in order to 'reflect' on their behaviour and to consider what their actions could lead to. He said the only disadvantage was when controlled assessments were taking place and that for Year 11 students this was difficult to co-ordinate. However, it has now been resolved and students will be allowed to defer their attendance at the Reflection Room to a later date.</p> <p>The school strived for 'outstanding behaviour' and acknowledged that this would be a long term project. With each year group it was hoped to see an improvement in behaviour with the knowledge that St Ivo would only tolerate</p>			

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<p>outstanding or good behaviour.</p> <p>Governors enquired about the capacity of the Reflection Room and how many students usually attended on a daily basis. Answer: the capacity is 15 students and there are some days when only 3 or 4 students are present at one time. Comment was made that the gathering of the offenders in one room was far more favourable than being scattered around the school. The governors considered the creation of the Reflection Room a substantial benefit.</p> <p>Stuart queried whether there had been repeated visits by students to the Reflection Room. Mark answered saying that there were the core students who had returned and unfortunately, if this persisted for one or two of them, then there would be the normal exiting process put in place.</p> <p>Mark Sanderson queried the meaning of outstanding behaviour. This was detailed on the large posters that had been placed in all of the classrooms around the school prior to Christmas and available for every student to see. Duncan expressed his concern if an analysis was produced which would highlight a particular department's inability to respond to behavioural issues and the reaction of the staff concerned. Mark responded saying that this is discreetly handled by a senior member of staff who is available for support and guidance, where individual staff need it.</p> <p>Frank suggested that there could be the scenario where a particular student only behaved well in certain classes and in others their behaviour was unacceptable and that in some cases there could be an underlying reason for this. He enquired if there was something in place that could support them. Mark replied stating that the pastoral care at St Ivo was a great strength and Martin reminded governors about The Bridge, the very successful inclusion area of the school that looked after students who were in need of some support and advice if they were experiencing some traumatic times.</p> <p>3 Environment</p> <p>Tracy reported that the school was significantly cleaner with clutter around corridors etc being removed.</p> <p>The environment improvement plan: it had been hoped to be able to complete other projects, but having reforecast the budget recently, this plan would need to be put on hold due to budget restrictions and not being able to release as much funding as had been envisaged. This would relate to toilet and classroom refurbishments. Efforts to obtain capital funding will still be undertaken.</p> <p>At the end of April the decision whether the school has been successful in obtaining its bid for government funding for replacement windows and doors and the performing arts block will be known. If unsuccessful, then the school will try again.</p> <p>Sue stated that the governors might be approached about the performing arts block and the petition that is being set up by residents. There had been the suggestion to re-site the performing arts area on the lower playground area but the school has an agreement with One Leisure to use this as an overspill car park when the need arises. Tracy reported that both David and herself had attended a meeting of the Town Council at the Town Hall prior to half term and that this had been approved by them with the proviso that this was sound proofed. David reported that the objections will be taken into consideration by HDC (Hunts District Council). He informed governors that he had received a call yesterday from the planning officer who wished to discuss the plans further with him.</p> <p>Mark stated that as well as applying for capital bids from the DfE of two and a half million pounds, that the school are also bidding for capital funding through HDC. A meeting had been arranged with councillors from HDC at 4.15 after this governors' meeting and Philip, Chris and David, Tracy and himself would be in attendance. As the only school in the town and an ever increasing population it was felt justified in seeking revenue from this quarter. A visit had also been arranged to Cambridgeshire County Council next week to do more of the same.</p> <p>Sue expressed the staff's appreciation for hot and cold water in the staffrooms.</p> <p>Joanna made an enquiry about the litter around the school. Tracy stated that some days were good and some were bad. It was felt that students using the dining hall and who couldn't find seating were perhaps the main offenders. Tracy praised the two sixth form litter operatives who cleaned up after school.</p> <p>The governors acknowledged that this was an ongoing problem and one that needed to be pursued. There was a</p>			

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	<p>discussion on various schemes to adopt to encourage the students to use the bins. The meeting was informed that one or two schools in the area were significantly more litter free than St Ivo and were informed of the methodology they used to enforce this.</p> <p>Jane suggested that Amanda Crellin had produced some very useful PSHE work on litter and perhaps this could be presented again in assemblies. Tracy stated that Barbara Morey wished to do some more extensive work on 'recycling' and that perhaps we could do a powerful launch this way regarding litter and the environment.</p> <p>Jim arrived at 2.35pm.</p> <p>Mark stated that the school's litter problem could be greatly improved over time, this was encompassed under the heading of 'behaviour', and that there hadn't been a drive on this since September.</p> <p>Claire suggested it might be a good idea to introduce a tiered lunch time so that all students could be seated in the dining hall and therefore enjoy their lunch without the need to venture into the playground. Mark acknowledged that there was not enough space in the dining hall for one sitting and that in the future this was an area that needed to be addressed, namely the issue of lunchtime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • litter and • two tiered sitting <p>Sue thanked governors for their contributions in this discussion.</p> <p>4 Ethos: 'Fulfilling potential'</p> <p>Mark explained that this was an area that needed further consideration so that the big picture could be in place for September 2014. He had produced a paper detailing, '<i>Our Big Ideas</i>'. This had been discussed at an earlier SLT meeting. The <i>Big Ideas</i> needed to be consulted on by students, staff governors and parents/carers. The captions needed to be 'zappy' with straplines that perhaps would be embedded in students' minds for years to come! Remembering school as a 'cool' place to be! An enjoyable experience. Mark stated that in September he had delivered assemblies to every year group with the theme of '<i>practice makes permanent</i>'. Success can be developed through hard work and that this is only achieved through constant effort. Perhaps subject teachers could be asked to focus on a particular theme at any one time to embed this into a student's way of cognitive thinking. Similarly as when teaching a certain aspect of a subject eg maths, the key thing would be to return to this the next term so that students are reminded of the message. Mark would welcome comments from the governing body too. In September 2014 the school will have completed some extensive work to launch 'fulfilling potential'.</p> <p>A discussion took place, comments being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perhaps reduce the number of 'Big Ideas', quite a lot to remember • invite governors to the assemblies when the 'Big Ideas' are being launched • invite past students in to showcase the assemblies and promote how the school launched their careers • students to design the posters for various key positions in the school – a competition? • Include in students' planners? <p>The governors acknowledged this was a very exciting project, a vision for the school to aspire to.</p>			
5	<p>AOB</p> <p>SEF: School Self Evaluation Form</p> <p>Mark reported that the SEF, based on the current Ofsted handbook, described in particular the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school's strengths • key areas for improvement • and other information <p>It was felt to be a very comprehensive document detailing the information that governors would be expected to know if they were questioned by Ofsted inspectors. All members of SLT (Senior Leadership Team) had contributed to its production, and it will always be a work in progress.</p>			

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<p>Mark perceived that St Ivo would still receive a grade 3 (Requires Improvement formerly Satisfactory) if Ofsted were to come at the present time. The Abbey School at Ramsey and Hinchingsbrooke at Huntingdon had recently had inspections and had been graded at 3.</p> <p>David enquired that if Ofsted were to come how many governors would they wish to see? Mark stated that under the heading of 'Leadership and Management', this included the governing body, and therefore Ofsted would expect to have a discussion with the chair of the governing body and perhaps a representative group of governors, (4 or 5). Ofsted will ask the governors questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how good is the school? And how do you know? • what are the school's key priorities for improvement? • what is the school doing to achieve the priorities? • FSM (free school meals) – how many students and what is the school implementing to assist these pupils <p>Frank and Duncan agreed that Ofsted check to see that the governors have challenged the school in all areas and carried out their responsibilities in ensuring the academy is effectively and efficiently functioning one hundred per cent. They also said the areas of Pupil Premium and Intervention are very keen areas for investigation.</p> <p>ACTION: Claire suggested that it might be prudent to compile a Question and Answer paper on areas that typically could be included in the session to inform governors. It was thought this was a good suggestion and Mark is to produce a paper, one side.</p> <p>The meeting was reminded of the last Ofsted inspection, when the school received Satisfactory for its Safeguarding of Children, due in the main to the absence of fencing around the site. David reported today that this had been taken on board and many changes around the campus had been made accordingly. Tracy suggested that a risk assessment be conducted revealing that we share their concerns and pointing out that due to the large site it is both financially draining and difficult to contain the whole site.</p> <p>ACTION: The governing body agreed the risk assessment would be very beneficial and Tracy is to compile this.</p> <hr/> <p>SOUTH PACIFIC Sue thanked the governors for attending the production of South Pacific earlier in February. Everyone felt it had been an extremely good production. John Rhodes, a former head of the school had commented it had been the best ever production.</p> <p>ACTION: The governing body wished to express their thanks and congratulations to Amanda Crellin, producer and director of the show. Jane will action.</p> <hr/> <p>MUSIC CONCERT The whole school music concert will be held on Wednesday, 19 March at 7.00pm in the school hall.</p> <p>ACTION: Please let Jane know if you wish to attend.</p> <hr/> <p>TEACHING STAFF INTERVIEWS Science Interviews for a teacher of science will be taking place this Friday, 28 February. Sue suggested that the governor linked to a particular department/area should be approached first to be part of the panel. On this occasion, Joanna would be unable to do this, Judith had kindly volunteered.</p> <p>Sue informed the meeting that there would shortly be three more interview sessions in early March for English, Maths and Geography teachers. Link governors, Sue, Jim and Chris respectively.</p> <p>New staff: the English department had recently appointed two members of teaching staff.</p>			

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	<p>NUT STRIKE Sue informed governors that there is the possibility of a strike by NUT members on 26 March. This could affect 52 members of staff within the school and the representatives of the unions were under no obligation to inform headteachers if they intended to strike or how many teaching staff would be affected.</p> <p>If the number was large then the school would need to close for the day due to health and safety issues. Mark stated that recent research had proved that it was more beneficial to the students to close the school than to partially be open for business.</p> <p>ACTION: Mark to inform parents/carers of the possible threat of closure due to the NUT strike.</p> <hr/> <p>DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST Sue asked governors to complete the tabled form and return to Jane as soon as possible.</p> <hr/> <p>PTA (Parent Teachers' Association) The possibility of reforming the PTA had been discussed briefly at the last full governors meeting in December where it was suggested that perhaps parent governors would like to give this some thought. Joanna and Claire presented their ideas for the role of the PTA at today's meeting . They said they were envisaging an evening event to launch the scheme to parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily a social/community group • To be invited to become more involved in the school and its activities, using their skills and experience <p>It was not thought by Joanna and Claire to be a fund-raising group as its main function.</p> <p>Philip reported that he had seen the discussion paper and this had been discussed briefly at the Student Welfare Group meeting recently held. He stated that a PTA is an independent group, outside the remit of the governing body, but that anything involving parents/carers coming into school incurring processing procedures eg DBS checks, references, health and safety etc. would be under the umbrella of the governing body and SLT. Philip advised the parent governors that further clarification was needed to fully identify the area in which they wished to drive the PTA.</p> <p>Mark stated that he was in favour of involving the parents more in the school, but appreciated Philip's comments. He suggested that the 'ethos of the school' was a prime example where parents' involvement could be steered.</p> <p>ACTION: Joanna and Claire and other parent governors to discuss further and define the function of the PTA and the feasibility in reforming.</p>			
	The meeting ended at 3.30pm	Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 7 May 2014.		