

Colyton Grammar School

Minutes of the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee – Part One

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 2 March 2016

Venue: Headteacher's Office

Present:

Governors	Dr C Bastin, Mr G Davis, Rev H Dawson, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr A Eaton-Hart, , Mrs L Linnell, Mr R Scott, Mrs J Wainwright and Mrs V Wells
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Staff	None
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Visitors	None
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Secretary	Mr S Cook
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1. Disclosure of Interest

Mr Davis, Lt Col Dyer and Mrs Wells, as parents of Year 9 students, declared an interest in Item 9.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs S Burns-Price, Mrs S Hopkins and Mr B Merrett.

3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 4 November 2015

These were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 25 February 2016

These were approved and signed.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Final Report on Admissions Round for September 2016 Entry

Mrs Wainwright reported that, following National Allocation Day on 1 March, 124 applicants have been offered places. 140 applicants were placed on the eligible list but due partly to a number of applicants not placing Colyton on the application form, there are now only 5 applicants on the waiting list. In addition, it is not yet confirmed that all 124 who have been offered a place will take it up. The school has also received one application for late testing.

One appeal has already been lodged. Mrs Wainwright reported that as Mr Gregson is currently undertaking Independent Appeals training, he will act as the school's Presenting Officer, rather than Mr Evans as previously agreed.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mrs Wainwright indicated that CEM have confirmed that extending the eligible list to provide for 5 forms of entry from September 2017 will still mean that eligible applicants will be performing at Level 5.

8. Annual Review of KS3, KS4 and KS5 Structure and Provision

Mrs Wainwright indicated that this is a standing agenda item for this meeting, but in effect the major decisions taken at the Board meeting in December relating to the move to a two year sixth form, mean that the key issues have already been covered.

It was noted that issues relating to the Year 9 provision are covered in Item 9.

9. Year 9 Curriculum

Mr Davis, Lt Col Dyer and Mrs Wells, as parents of students in Year 9, declared an interest in this item.

Mrs Wainwright drew the attention of the Committee to the draft Year 9 Curriculum booklet which had been circulated at the beginning of the meeting. She focused in particular on the following issues:

- The indications of what the 6th form programme might contain will depend very much on developments led by Mr Harris next year
- The grade equivalents between the old A*-G and new 1-9 GCSE scoring system, and in particular the spreading of the current A* grade over the 8 and 9 levels
- The new Progress 8 measure which measures performance across 8 qualifications based on progression from KS2.

In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright confirmed that primary school pupils will know which level they have gained. Rev Dawson reminded the Committee that primary schools will no longer be using a uniform system of levels.

- The significance of GCSE grades for Higher Education applications.
- The course content summaries for each subject, although the final details for some course have yet to be confirmed.
- The pattern of exams for Year 9, 10 and 11.
- The Frequently Asked Questions section, based on enquiries and responses from some parents
- The benefit of the pressure being taken off some students, with possible time for self-study, a possible additional food, music or PE period to contrast with the challenging examination subjects.
- The continuing provision for employability skills and work-related learning, including the opportunity to increase the length of the Year 11 work experience placement to a full week.
- All years in the school are affected in some way by curriculum change.

Mrs Wainwright indicated that the booklet will be sent out within the next week.

Mrs Wainwright reported that following the general letter to all parents about the changes to the curriculum, the school had received a small number of responses from Year 9 parents with particular concerns. [POST MEETING NOTE: 6 such responses were received.] She had then written a further email to Year 9 parents addressing the issues that had been raised. [POST MEETING NOTE: Mr Stidwell met with one set of parents to discuss their concerns, and Mrs Wainwright and Mr Gregson either emailed or called these parents on the telephone.]

Following this a further three responses have been received from Year 9 parents with ongoing concerns. These responses were addressed to the Chair of Governors, who has replied in addition to a further response from Mrs Wainwright and Mr Gregson.

There have also been a significant number of positive responses [POST MEETING NOTE: 5] and a further group of neutral responses asking specific questions [POST MEETING NOTE: 3]. Replies have been sent to all of the latter group.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, it was confirmed that the Year 8 options programme is normally a Senior Leadership Team rather than governors' decision.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mrs Wainwright and Mr Davis confirmed that the new specifications are significantly more challenging, and that not all students will achieve to Level 9. Further in response to Dr Bastin, Mrs Wainwright indicated that universities are currently adjusting to the new grade system, and will be looking for at least 8 A or A*

equivalents (i.e. new levels 7-9) across a range of subjects. The universities have also indicated a strong preference for 3 strong A Levels and the EPQ.

In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright confirmed that the exam boards have given an undertaking that nationally students will not perform worse under the new system compared with current arrangements. Mr Davis indicated that while currently the existing C grade covers new grade 4 and 5, the DfE have given a strong indication that the C grade will move to level 5 in the future.

Further in response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright indicated that there is no indication that re-mark and appeal arrangements for GCSE will change.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Davis indicated that he is currently considering how extension work in Maths may be developed. He outlined the importance of the department ensuring that any plans are workable. Mrs Wainwright also indicated that some students may struggle to meet the challenge of the new GCSE specification and a higher level qualification would not be appropriate. Further in response to Lt Col Dyer, Mrs Wells indicated strongly that it is better for the school to formulate full detailed plans rather than offer a "half-baked" scheme. Mr Davis indicated that there are other options apart from the Further Maths course (which is too challenging for a Year 11 student), and that it is likely that a significant proportion of students will be involved in some form of extension work.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Davis agreed that a student with new Level 7 is likely to struggle to progress satisfactorily to an A Level course, but he emphasised that the proviso to this statement is that the new A Level Maths specification is not currently available.

Mrs Wells indicated that as a parent she is not so concerned whether her child is taking 10 or 11 GCSEs. Mrs Wainwright reported on a survey of SWAT schools which indicated that there is a spread of 9 to 11 GCSEs being offered.

Lt Col Dyer suggested that an additional FAQ on why RE has been increased to a full GCSE rather than another subject, should be included in the draft booklet.

In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright agreed that it would be useful to ensure that some of the new terminology related to the changes is included e.g. "Progress 8".

In response to Mrs Wells, Mrs Wainwright indicated that decisions about which accommodation is available to Year 11 for supported self-study will depend on wider resource issues in the light of the expansion to 5 forms of entry. Mr Davis reflected on the benefit of the existing 3 year sixth form in developing independent study skills as a key skill for A Level study, and it is hoped that it will be possible for an element of supported self-study to happen in Year 11.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mrs Wainwright indicated that it is unlikely that Year 12 will "relax" both because of the importance of Higher Education applications and because of the increased challenge of the new specifications.

Lt Col Dyer raised the issue of communicating the changes to the curriculum, which he suggested had first been raised in July but not communicated to parents until December. He asked why an options evening was not held for Year 9 similar to that provided for Year 8. It was noted that the Year 8 evening was included in the published calendar of meetings, forming part of the annual Year 8 options process. Year 9 had a similar meeting the previous year.

A number of governors indicated frustration at a growing number of complaints from a small number of parents and the impact on senior leaders and other staff. Mrs Wainwright indicated that a very large proportion of parents have been very supporting and positive.

Dr Bastin indicated that more regular communication from governors may assist in addressing these issues. It was also suggested that publicising the governors@colytongrammar.devon.sch.uk email address and ensuring parents know about governors attending parents' evenings would be helpful. Rev Dawson emphasised the

importance of parents recognising the difference between strategy and operational queries when communicating with the school.

Mrs Wainwright reflected on the benefit of a telephone or direct conversation rather than an email dialogue.

Mrs Wells indicated strongly that she felt the communication had been excellent and could not have been improved.

It was agreed that the draft booklet, with a number of minor corrections, should be sent out to Year 9 parents as soon as possible.

10. Data Report

Mr Scott drew attention to the Data Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the Inspection Dashboard and the full RaiseOnline report. He drew particular attention to the key questions for governors to consider on pages 5 to 9.

Recognising the importance of the Dashboard and related data, it was agreed that Mr Stidwell should be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting of the Board meeting in March, or if this was not possible to the next meeting of the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee.

Mr Scott reported on feedback from the recent governors' Ofsted training that he and Mrs Linnell had attended, that Ofsted are making a particular focus on the performance of the most able Pupil Premium students in inspections in the South West area.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mrs Wainwright indicated that the school uses its own internal data to actively monitor progress and performance, and inform any necessary interventions. Consequently the data produced by the DfE should contain no surprises.

11. School Counsellor Annual Report

Mrs Wainwright drew the attention of the Committee to the School Counsellor Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting, focusing in particular on the following:

- The graph showing the usage by year, which emphasises that the transition points (e.g. Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11) tend to cause problems
- The graphs showing the range of issues which students have raised with the counsellor
- The more equal gender spread than in previous reports.

Dr Bastin reflected on the challenge for the school in responding to a growing incidence of mental health issues, particularly when external resources are so limited and stretched. He raised concerns about the expectation on teaching staff to provide unqualified counselling. These concerns were shared by other governors.

Rev Dawson reflected on her previous experience as a school chaplain when a greater proportion of her time was spent with staff rather than with students.

In response to Mrs Wells, Mrs Wainwright indicated that while Mrs Wilson has not made any CAMHS referrals this year, she has done so in the past. In addition, she will, on occasions, speak to another member of staff who will then initiate a referral.

In response to a suggestion from Mr Eaton-Hart, it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to seek funding from the PA for additional counselling time.

Mrs Wainwright commented very positively on the value of Mrs Wilson's contribution, and this was noted by governors.

It was agreed that Mrs Wainwright and Mr Cook should explore the cost of employing Mrs Wilson for additional hours, and also explore the possible provision of some lower level support.

12. Supported Department Self Review Report

Mr Scott drew the attention of the Committee to the Supported Department Self Review reports for Computing and Student Personal Development which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following issues were raised in discussion:

Computing

- In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright indicated that Mr Cronk has positively encouraged girls in Year 8 and this has resulted in 4 girls opting for Computing. The all-girl VEX Robotics Team has won the regional final and will be attending the final in Birmingham. It was agreed that Dr Bastin should write to the team, congratulating them on their achievement.

Student Personal Development

- In response to Mr Scott, Mrs Wainwright explained the constraints on access to IT rooms during PSHE sessions

13. Policies for Review

Proposed by Rev Dawson, seconded by Dr Bastin and unanimously agreed that the following policies which had been circulated prior to the meeting should be approved, subject to the changes noted below:

(a) Attendance Policy

Child, student, pupils...p1 unauthorised bullet pointlist "where"

(b) Work Experience Policy

p2 Generalisation – clarify/improve; p4 DBS 16-171 DBS/CRB

Add diversity and consultation to both

It was agreed that the Sex Education Policy and Statement review should be deferred again until the next meeting to enable the new Student Personal Learning Co-ordinator to revise the documents in line with recent guidance.

14. Approval of Residential Activities

Proposed by Mr Eaton-Hart, seconded by Dr Bastin and unanimously agreed that the following residential activities should be approved:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Teacher In Charge</i>	<i>Students Involved</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Oxford Open Day Visit	29/30 Jun 2016	Mr S Banks & Mrs A Orchard	Y12 students interested in applying to Oxford (34 to date)	Oxford	£35 to £45
ICAEW Competition	30 Jun to 1 Jul 2016	Mrs N Rew	6 Y12 students (regional champions)	Birmingham	TBC (ICAEW contribute £500)
Berlin German, History and Politics Visit	9-13 Feb 2017	Mr A Gregson	Y13 German, History and/or Politics students	Berlin	£450
VEX Robotics National Finals	17-19 Mar 2016	Mr M Cronk	5 Y11/12 students	Birmingham	TBC - c £280 with 50% Bradbeer grant and possible

					sponsorship
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It was also noted that members of the Committee had given approval by email to the Art Trip to Edinburgh in July 2016 (for 21 Year 11 and 12 Art students at a cost of £350 each), in order that a firm booking could be made.

15. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

16. Next Meeting

Wednesday 15 June 2016 at 6.30pm.

Signed:		(Chairman of Committee)
Date:	15.6.2016	