

Colyton Grammar School

Minutes of the Governing Body – Part One

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 25 March 2015

Venue: Room 16

Present:

Governors	Mr P Anderson, Dr C Bastin, Mrs S Burns-Price, Mr G Davis, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr A Eaton-Hart, Mr P Evans, Mr G Hayne, Mrs L Linnell, Mr M R Marsh, Mr B Merrett, Mr B Salter, Mr R Scott, Mrs V Wells and Mrs F H Wilkinson
Staff	Mr M Smith (Item 1 only)
Visitors	None
Secretary	Mr S R Cook

1. **Curriculum Presentation: Changes to Science Specifications**

Mr M Smith gave a presentation on the changes to Science specifications – see the attached Powerpoint presentation. He focused on the following, bearing in mind particularly that teaching of the new A Level specifications has already begun:

- The selection of new A Level courses, including the delay in accrediting the Edexcel Chemistry course
- The loss of the AS as a “co-taught” qualification and the move to terminal exams
- Loss of examined practical assessment through coursework or practical exams, currently worth 20%
- Maths increase in all subjects, including 20% in Chemistry
- Increasing rigour in questions, including a Biology example focused on an animal cell
- Longer papers, alongside the loss of some topics for teaching and some additional elements
- The introduction of multiple choice questions

Mr Smith then outlined the proposed changes to practical assessment which will no longer be assessed as part of the exam board processes, but be included in the form of a “endorsement” based on 12 core practicals which will be assessed on a pass/fail basis by the school. The Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) are the same for all sciences. The “lab book” which students must produce will be assessed by a visiting moderator in the first half of Year 13. It is anticipated that 98% of students nationally will pass. Mr Smith outlined the various concerns which have been expressed by e.g. universities which have led to a delay in accrediting these practical assessment proposals. Colyton staff have been involved in a pilot practical assessment programme.

In response to Mr Davis, Mr Smith outlined possible reasons why students at Colyton tend to perform better in written exams compared with practicals. In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Smith confirmed that there is some overlap in the Maths elements across the three subjects. In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Smith indicated that the written examinations are not likely to change, but it is possible that a grading system may be introduced for the practical assessment. In response to Mr Marsh, Mr Smith suggested that students at Colyton are likely to benefit from the overall changes to the exams, although there are still unresolved issues with the practical assessment.

Dr Bastin thanked Mr Smith for his helpful and informative presentation.

2. Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rev H Dawson, Mrs S Hopkins and Mrs J Wainwright.

4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 11 December 2014

These were approved and signed.

5. Matters Arising

There were no other matters arising.

6. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 26 February 2015

These were approved and signed.

7. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

8. Headteacher's Report

Mr Evans drew the attention of the Board to the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Evans explained the background to the changes in the organisation of the Summer Fete.

In response to Mrs Linnell, Mr Evans updated the Board on the recent interview for a Head of Department for Modern Foreign Languages, and the appointment of Mr Sam Banks. As a result of Mr Banks' continuing responsibilities for Careers and High Education, a "second in department" will need to be appointed on a full time basis. An advert is likely to be placed after Easter.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Evans outlined Mr Gregson's new role in the administration of the entrance test.

9. School Futures Group Report

Mrs Wilkinson reported on the recent meeting of the School Futures Group, including the decision to advertise in the last part of the Autumn term with interviews at the end of January/beginning of February. An advert will also be placed around the half term holiday in the Autumn term to alert potential candidates to the advert in the new year, including an invitation to one of three Open Days. The Open Days will provide the opportunity for interested candidates to tour the school and to meet with governors, senior staff and students. Dr Bastin explained that the reason for delaying the interviews until January/February will enable sufficient time for the Acting Deputy Heads to gain appropriate experience. He also explained that Mr Sindall has been asked to actively identify strong potential candidates in the schools with which he has contact.

Mrs Wilkinson also outlined the results of the feedback forms completed by candidates, which rated most elements of the interview days, including the panels, highly. The opportunity to meet with support staff and students was less successful and so candidates will be asked to arrive by lunchtime on the first day, with opportunities to meet staff and students and to tour the school on the first day, and a less pressurised programme on the following two days.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Dr Bastin reflected on the challenges of advertising early should a very strong potential candidate be identified.

10. Governors' Succession Planning

Dr Bastin outlined the medium term advantages of the chair and vice-chairman changing. He indicated, however, that there is a need to provide for some stability over the next two years while there are significant changes at senior level with the appointment of a new headteacher and other changes within the Senior Leadership Team.

11. Funding Update

Mr Cook referred the Board to the detailed Minute under Item 6 of the Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 19 March 2015, following receipt of the funding allocation for 2015/16 from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

The main feature is the positive impact of the additional funding announced last year by David Laws for lower funded local authorities:

- Different rates for the KS3 and KS4 AWPU allocations (previously Devon had chosen to use the same amount for each Key Stage, even though there are clearly higher costs for KS4).
- Significantly higher amount allocated through the pupil driven AWPU factor – up from £3,974 per pupil last year to £4,005.77 for KS3 and £4,631.77 for KS4 this year.
- Just over £600 on IDACI Band 4 deprivation funding (just over £1 per student) – only a small amount but reflects an important change in principle here as previously Devon allocated no funds through this element of the formula.
- £1,136 funding for English as an Additional Language.

It was noted that, due to a small drop in Year 11 numbers, the school qualified for the second year running for £100,000 via the sparsity factor. The school is, however, only 0.4 of a student below the threshold of 120 per year group, so this is very likely to disappear next year.

Due to the above changes, the school has moved out of the Minimum Funding Guarantee, although there would have been a small element if the allocation had not included the sparsity element.

Overall the figure is £85,621 above the predicted figures used in last year's budget, and is likely to lead to a revenue budget surplus in the region of £40k for 2015/16. It was also noted that the post-16 large programme funding which starts in 2016/17 is likely to produce in the region of £50k to £80k additional funding.

12. Alumni Relations and Fund Raising

Dr Bastin indicated that he had written to the organisers of the Big Colyton Art Show thanking them for the outstanding success of the Art Show which had raised in the region of £10,000.

Mr Cook presented a paper outlining proposals for bringing together the alumni database and the Friends of Colyton Grammar School scheme in order to provide an integrated approach to maintaining contact with former students and their families as well as staff and others. The proposals include a specific dedicated website based on the alumni website already maintained by Mr Evans and which has attracted high levels of interest.

Mr Evans suggested it might be possible to employ a former student to undertake development work on the database over the summer break.

Mr Evans then drew the attention of the Board to the revised letter and application form for the Friends of Colyton Grammar School scheme, including the new suggested levels of donations. In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Evans agreed to add an option for a lump sum payment. In response to Mr Eaton-Hart, the advantages and disadvantages of putting a "Friends of Colyton Grammar School" donation on ParentPay were discussed. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to include comparative suggested donation levels for other schools.

13. Link Governors' Report

Reports were received as follows from Link Governors:

(a) **Business and Enterprise (Mrs L Linnell)**

Mrs Linnell reported on her meeting with Mrs Rew when they discussed with the numbers opting for GCSE and A Level courses. It was noted that the change to a Business and Economics A Level appears to have led to increased numbers, and larger numbers continuing to Higher Education courses. Mrs Rew also discussed preparation for the new exam specifications.

Mrs Linnell outlined recent successes in national competitions. Finally she indicated that there are a number of events taking place in the summer, and governor involvement would be welcomed.

(b) **Creative and Expressive Arts (Mrs V Wells)**

Mrs Wells reported on the department's concerns about the significant fall in the numbers opting for GCSE Art. She suggested that it would be beneficial for the Year 8 Parents' Evening to be held prior to the Year 8 options process. She also suggested that it might be beneficial for the Year 8 Options Evening to provide a greater opportunity for optional subjects to explain the nature of the GCSE courses in their subjects.

Mr Evans reported on the highly charged comments at the recent Year 8 Options Evening regarding the high level of work involved in GCSE Art which had clearly had an impact on the numbers opting for the subject. He outlined the work which Mr Davis and he have undertaken to help the Art department to understand the student and parental perceptions of the pressures involved in studying Art at GCSE or A Level. He indicated that a significant number of students struggle with Art and managing their time effectively, particularly when most Colyton students are very conscientious and want always to achieve to the highest standard.

Mr Evans indicated that the drop in numbers may well indicate that those students who have opted for Art are those who are particularly gifted in this area and will succeed without excessive pressure.

(c) **English (Mr R Scott)**

Mr Scott reported on his attendance at an English department meeting shortly before half term when plans for the new specifications were discussed.

In addition, Mr Scott had spent a full day visiting all five teachers and commented on the variety and commitment he had observed in all lessons.

(d) **Humanities (Mrs S Hopkins)**

In the absence of Mrs Hopkins there was no report on Humanities.

(e) **IT (Lt Col T Dyer)**

Mr Cook reminded the Board that Lt Col has kindly agreed to take on the role of link governor for IT, which had previously been combined with Technology.

Lt Col Dyer reported on the live streaming of the F1 Challenge Final in Birmingham. Two teams participated in the competition and one team reached the final.

(f) **Maths and Science (Mr B Merrett)**

Mr Merrett reported on visits to a number of classes, but focused on the range of enrichment activities such as the visit to the Norman Lockyer laboratory, the Science Day in Bristol, the Magistrates Court Competition, the various Maths Challenges and the "Pi Day". He commented particularly on the opportunities for individual support including for a Year 7 student who arrived at the school with an A* in GCSE maths. He also reported on preparations for the new exam specifications.

(g) Modern Foreign Languages (Mr A Eaton-Hart)

Mr Eaton-Hart reported on contact with Mr Love and Mrs Dell, including concerns over the new specifications in Modern Foreign Languages. He outlined the introduction of the "Coly Euros" scheme, and also reported on the various exchange visits. Mr Eaton-Hart asked if any governors were willing to host a French visitor, and also to travel to France.

Mr Evans reported on a recent conversation with Year 8 students who had communicated clearly that they enjoy "learning French", but do not enjoy "learning how to pass a French exam".

Mr Eaton-Hart expressed Mr Love's concerns at the possibility of DBS or similar checks being required to be carried out on host families in both countries, which would effectively make exchanges impossible. Mr Cook confirmed that the school's procedures and guidance are being reviewed to ensure they are appropriate.

Mr Eaton-Hart then drew attention to the successful Goethe Institut visit covered in the Headteacher's Report (see Item 8) and to the success of two Year 12 students who have gained scholarships to travel to Germany

(h) Sport (Mr M Marsh)

Mr Marsh reported on a meeting with the PE staff and concerns over the condition of the All Weather Cricket Pitch, which had been discussed at the recent Finance and Resources Committee.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Anderson outlined the possibilities for repairing the pitch.

(i) Technology (Mr B Salter)

Mr Salter reported on a very positive lesson observation with Miss Carter on electronics. He commented particularly on the sophisticated management of a complex practical by the teacher.

He also reported on the need for further updates to the laser cutter.

14. Capital Projects Update

(a) Academies Capital Maintenance Fund (ACMF) Project: Cottrill Hall and Changing Rooms

Mr Cook and Mr Salter drew the attention of the Board to the Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 19 March 2015 when a detailed update on the current projects had been given. Following this meeting, Devon Contractors have been informed of the following:

1. The school will retain sufficient funds on all projects to ensure that there is more than enough to cover the cost of commissioning other firms to undertake this work in the event of Devon Contractor's demise or failure to complete
2. The urgency of establishing a clear and non-negotiable programme for the outstanding snagging works on all projects over the Easter break – school finishes on 27 March and term starts on 13 April)
3. The option for the school to commission some or all of the outstanding snagging works should DCL fail to complete them satisfactorily by 13 April

TFQ Architects have compiled an extraordinarily long list of snagging items, which has been passed to Devon Contractors, and a meeting has been arranged for 9.30am on Friday morning when Devon Contractors have been asked to provide firm evidence of the necessary arrangements being in place to undertake these works during the Easter break. The required works include not only the Cottrill Hall, but also the Sports Centre Changing Room and the remaining unfinished work on Take Five, the East Wing and Site Workshop.

Despite the very late handover of the Cottrill Hall, Site Staff worked extremely hard to get the hall ready for a number of events, including the first whole school assemblies of the academic year, a Year 13 charity event, the Higher Education Evening and in particular the Big Colyton Art Show. While there are clearly many outstanding issues to resolve, the hall is already proving to be a remarkable improvement on the previous building and has attracted many very positive comments.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Salter suggested that the school should take on as much of the snagging as possible, leaving the contractors to deal with the issues which the school is unable to deal with, and that this should be the focus of the meeting with Devon Contractors and TFQ on Friday of this week.

(b) Take Five and Site Workshop
See Item 14(a) above.

(c) Staff House
Mr Cook reported that a decision on the Condition Improvement Fund bid is still awaited.

15. Responsible Officer's Report

Mrs Wilkinson drew the attention of the Board to the report for the Spring Term which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She explained that Mrs Hopkins had paid particular attention to the new arrangements for payroll. It was noted that no concerns had been raised.

16. Financial Statements for Period Ending 28 February 2015

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Board to the Financial Statements for the period ending 28 February 2015, including the attached detailed narrative, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and had also been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 19 March 2015. The Board expressed satisfaction with the financial statements.

17. Committee Reports

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the minutes for the following Committee meetings which had all been circulated prior to the meeting.

(a) Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee

(b) Chairs' Committee

(c) Finance and Resources Committee

(d) Staffing Committee

18. Any Other Business

(a) Poly U Global Challenge

Mr Evans reported on the success of three Year 13 students winning a place in the semi-finals of the Poly U Challenge in Hong Kong, and drew the attention of the Board to the papers which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

He indicated that although the students are fully funded, the cost of the compulsory mentor is not included and the indications are that this could be in the region of £2,000.

He also reported on the contact with the Huddersfield school which has also won through to the semi-final.

Mr Evans drew the attention of the Board to the proposal of the group to raise between £500 and £800 to support the project.

Governors agreed that the Bradbeer Fund should underwrite the cost of the visit to a maximum of £1,500, but the group should be encouraged to raise as much of the cost as possible.

(b) Letter regarding land purchase on Coly Road

Dr Bastin reported on a letter recently received which outlines the proposal made some years ago to include a new access road from Coly Road to a new bus park opposite the Sports Centre/main car park entrance.

It was agreed that Mr Evans should write indicating the school's support for any proposal which will reduce traffic congestion and provide a safer solution to the bus issues without expressing any wider support.

(c) Senior Staff Succession Planning

Taken under Part Two Minutes.


(d) Residential Education

Mr Merrett drew the attention of the Board to an article outlining the possibility of providing residential accommodation for overseas fee paying students. It was agreed to seek further information.

There was no other business.

19. Next Meeting

Thursday 9 July 2015 at 6.30pm.

Signed:		(Chairman of Governors)
Date:	9. 7. 15	