

**Colyton Grammar School**

**Minutes of the Governing Body: Part One**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 8 December 2016**

**Venue: Room 16, Walker Building**

**Present:**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Governors | Dr C Bastin, Mrs Burns-Price, Mr G Davis, Rev H Dawson, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr A Eaton-Hart, Mr M Goscomb, Mr T Harris, Mrs L Linnell, Mr B Merrett, Mrs M Nickells, and Mr R Scott |
| Staff     | Mr S Cook, Mrs E Styles (Item 1)   |
| Visitors  | None   |
| Secretary | Mrs A Robinson   |

**1. Development Office Presentation**

Dr Emma Styles, a former student who left Colyton in 1998, was employed as Development Officer in July 2016. Dr Styles reported on the progress and activities of the Development Office since her employment, including:

- The growth of Linked In connections from 250 (with not many pre 2000) to over 600
- Meetings with key personnel, such as the Chair of the PA and a fortnightly meeting with Mr Cook. Dr Styles explained that her focus has been on speaking to as many people as possible to gain an understanding of how the school works and what can be done to better the school and the student experience
- Day to day work to reach out to more alumni encouraging them to join the Linked In group. Dr Styles explained that it is a legal requirement for the alumni to give written agreement to be contacted. During the process of signing up, alumni are encouraged to give as much history about their time at the school as possible, their current employment and their interests
- How, after the cancellation of the Bob Champion event, which had been booked prior to her employment, Dr Styles had surveyed the alumni to find out what sort of event they would like to attend, how much they would be prepared to pay and from what distance they would be prepared to travel. The alumni response indicated that a drinks reception or musical evening would be most appealing
- The 'Come Back and Inspire' programme. Dr Styles explained that alumni have been invited to speak to students about their progression after leaving Colyton and their subsequent careers. This relaxed 'career talk', open to all year groups, takes place monthly during the lunch break and is booked up from January for the next six months
- Two alumni speakers have been engaged for the Carol concert next week: Julie Hawker CEO of COSMIC, a digital marketing company, and Michael Parr, a higher education consultant
- An suitable member of the alumni is being identified to fulfil Mr Stidwell's request for a speaker at January's celebration evening
- How, an alumnus, now based in the USA, spoke to 10 sixth formers about his work in medical diagnostics, during a recent visit to the UK

- How a summer event for alumni in London is being researched. Dr Styles reported that a House of Commons drinks reception was investigated, with the support of local MP Neil Parrish, but this was found to be too expensive at this stage
- A World War 1 memorial concert is being planned for 2017. This will be open to the local community and was initiated by the nephew of a former Colyton student who had died
- The creation of a newsletter which will be sent, largely by email, to former students. This includes alumni memories of school and explains the Colyton Alumni network, the 'Come Back and Inspire' programme, how former students can help the school and how to make contact. This newsletter also highlights the Bradbeer fund and how this has now helped in the region of 1800 students
- The positive feedback from alumni on the increased and new engagement with them.

Dr Styles then reported on fundraising activities including:

- Applications for grants
- A £100 gift from a former student
- Local Colyton business approaches

Dr Styles explained that she is also working on improvements to the Alumni and Friends website.

In response to a query from Mr Scott, Dr Styles explained that she hopes to start training for an IDPE fundraising certificate in January and to attend an alumni relations conference in May. She also clarified, in response to a query from Mr Eaton Hart, that currently her objective is to build the alumni database and when this reaches a certain size, will start fundraising campaigns, with specific objectives. Mr Cook added that Dr Styles is liaising with Heads of Department to gain a better understanding of how their needs can be matched to the specific focus of various trusts who could be approached for grants.

Mr Merrett offered his assistance with an approach to 10 Downing Street as a potential venue for an alumni London reception as he had been successful in securing this previously.

Dr Styles works from 10am to 3pm, Monday to Wednesday and is based in the Admin Centre.

Dr Bastin extended the Committee's thanks to Dr Styles for an informative report and asked her for future updates.

## **2. Election of Chair**

Mrs Robinson reported that she had received one nomination for Dr Bastin as Chair. Dr Bastin left the room and Mrs Robinson read a statement that Dr Bastin had supplied, in which he explained: the importance of continuity with a new Head and Business Manager; his intention to resign in August 2017; his view that a special Board meeting should take place in early September 2017 to elect a new Chair and bring terms of office in line with the academic year, and his hope that the Board will move forward in a positive and productive fashion. Mr Goscomb added that continuity was also important during the implementation of the Governance Review.

Votes cast for Dr Bastin were as follows:

Yes – 10; No – 1; Abstentions – 0

Dr Bastin was accordingly elected as Chair of Governors until August 2017, and took over chairing the meeting.

On his return to the meeting, Dr Bastin reiterated his intention to resign in August. He suggested that anyone who might consider putting themselves forward as Chair next September, should contact him, so that he could involve them in his work over the next two terms and give them an understanding of the role. Mr Harris stated that he will require and does welcome a lot of support and critical advice from the Board.

**3. Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**4. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr B Salter and Mrs J Wainwright.

Mrs V Wells was absent.

**5. Election of Vice Chair**

Mrs Robinson reported that she had received one nomination for Mrs Linnell as Vice Chair. Mrs Linnell made a short statement in which she explained: the decision to stand as Vice Chair had not been an easy one; her intention to leave the Board after one year; her 100% commitment to the post; her willingness to stand aside for an alternative candidate; her intention to support Mr Harris and the SLT; the importance of developing other Trustees for key roles in view of the number of Trustees leaving in the near future.

In response to queries from Mrs Nickells and Mr Eaton Hart, Mrs Robinson explained that a recruitment programme for new Trustees, as outlined in the Governance Review, is underway and that she will ask for the support of the Trustees once the required supporting material is ready. Mrs Robinson will be liaising with Dr Styles to publicise Trustee vacancies to the School alumni group.

Mrs Linnell left the room and the Board unanimously voted to appoint Mrs Linnell as Vice Chair of the Board for a period of one year.

**6. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 14 July 2016**

These were approved and signed.

**7. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**8. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 29 September 2016**

These were approved and signed.

**9. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**10. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 17 November 2016**

These were approved and signed.

**11. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **12. Headteacher's Report**

Prior to discussing the Headteacher's report, Mr Harris read a short statement from Mrs Wainwright, who thanked the Trustees for their support during her time at the school and in particular, Dr Bastin, for his help during her time as Headteacher. Mrs Wainwright expressed her view that the Board will unite behind Mr Harris and help him to focus on what is important, and ensure that students remain at the heart of what we do.

Mr Harris drew the attention of the Committee to the Headteacher's report circulated prior to the meeting. He explained that his intention was that future reports be written around the four key areas for school improvement: Leadership and Management, Teaching and Learning, Behaviour and Achievement. It is crucial to the development of the school that Trustees are better informed and are able to hold the school leadership to account. In addition, Trustees must be able to communicate effectively with Ofsted, either in a meeting or a phone call, the strengths and development areas of the school.

Mr Harris then talked through key points in the report focusing initially on areas requiring improvement:

- Progress statistics for the School's disadvantaged pupils are a focus for improvement. Mr Harris explained that external agencies look at 3 year trends and a downward trend is likely to trigger an inspection. Currently the data, based upon 5 students, is just above the minimum threshold of -0.5
- Mr Bush has a new responsibility as lead on disadvantaged students. Mr Harris explained that as Progress 8 scores for disadvantaged students are not at an expected level, particularly with regard to attendance and performance outcomes, they will be more effectively tracked using a new data system. Specifically, new attendance reports are being produced on a fortnightly basis to aid Mr Bush in this new role
- Some subject areas are a focus for improvement. Mr Harris explained that the data on progress by subject is based upon Year 10 GCSE students and that these figures should improve with an extra 12 months to identify and intervene in any problems
- The limited data the School has on KS5 progress, (new detailed data is due in January 2017), shows that attainment is very good, but progress data shows low added value. Mr Harris explained that the average points score for each A level is B+ and raising this to an A is a priority.

Mr Harris then focused on some of the key positive highlights within the report including:

- Subjects that are excelling at KS5 progress and Level 3 Value Added, such as Religious Studies, History, Politics and English Literature. Mr Harris stated that this breadth of subjects will be extremely helpful in supporting the future marketing of the sixth form, showing that Colyton is not just good at maths and science
- The high number of leadership events, educational visits and competition wins, showing that Colyton is not all about exam results
- The fact that there have not been any exclusions
- The largely positive feedback from a number of surveys undertaken with students in Years 7 and 13 and how Year 10 will be surveyed in the new year
- How Ofsted encourage parents to actively add to 'Parent View' on an ongoing basis. Mr Harris expressed his hope that parents who have positive feedback to give, add to this forum, not just parents with negative feedback.

Dr Bastin thanked Mr Harris for such a comprehensive report.

In response to a query from Mrs Linnell about the difference between Group A and Group B on page 17 of the report (the Pupil Premium Statement), Mr Cook explained that Group A consists of those students for whom the school received Pupil Premium Funding and Group B represents those who are eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the current school year and so have access to an individual in-school Pupil Premium account. Mr Harris commented that in future, he will add in attendance for Pupil Premium students, colour coded, on the Key Performance Indicator document which supports his Headteacher's report.

In response to a comment from Dr Bastin, Mr Harris explained that, although the School does not have the data showing who has put Colyton on their admissions form, based upon results, there should be between 7 and 9 Pupil Premium students starting in September. He also highlighted his use of the website 'Education Data Lab' which shows that the percentage of Colyton Pupil Premium students is not vastly dissimilar to those for both selective and non-selective schools (7% as opposed to 13%). This website is a free resource which is compiled by the same data team who work on the data for CEM Durham, Fischer Family Trust, Sutton Trust etc.

In response to a query from Mr Merrett, Mr Harris explained that the process of raising awareness of the expansion of the sixth form has already started. Recently, Mr Harris was approached by ITV to be interviewed about selective entry, but he had given the interview on the basis that he would also speak about the expansion of the sixth form and the increased PAN. Mr Harris also reported that an article will be appearing in the Christmas edition of Exeter Life and that he will be working with Mr Smith on marketing as next year's options evening approaches. The Board made various suggestions for marketing routes, including media, radio and poster sites. Mr Harris then outlined some of the threats to Colyton sixth form including: the formation of a local Multi Academy Trust, the creation of a free school at junction 27 of the M5 that will have a 300 place sixth form and a new creative arts school in Exeter.

Mr Merrett queried how the School is encouraging disadvantaged pupils. Mr Harris explained that Mrs Wainwright has been fostering relationships with primary schools in an effort to encourage applications. In particular she has been clarifying that any student scoring 108 and above should apply, although she has reported that in some primary schools there is no take up whatsoever and there is some negative feeling towards selective schools. Mr Harris continued by explaining his frustration in obtaining data about how many able and disadvantaged students there are.

In response to a query from Mrs Nickells, Mr Harris explained that the deadline for applications is one week prior to the test and that Colyton is the only school out of 26 to leave the deadline this late. He expressed his hope that the Local Authority will not insist that this deadline is moved.

In response to a comment from Dr Bastin, Mr Harris explained how some of the local schools, with small sixth forms, are planning to pool resources and reported that Colyton has set up support for one of the Axe Valley Oxbridge students.

Mr Goscomb reported that he would send Mr Harris some additional comments on the Headteacher's Report following the meeting.

### **13. Chairman's Report**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the report circulated prior to the meeting which listed his recent activities. The Board did not have any queries.

#### **14. Register of Interest**

Mrs Robinson confirmed that the annual update of the Register of Interests had been completed with returns from all Trustees. The register is published, as required, on the School website.

#### **15. Policies for Review**

##### **a). Charitable Status Policy**

Mr Cook reported that this policy is extensively covered by the School Funding Agreement and Articles and suggested that it is no longer required. This was agreed by the Board.

##### **Action**

Mrs Robinson to remove from the Governance Yearbook and policy records.

#### **16. Year 12 Admissions Policy 2018**

Mr Harris drew the attention of the Board to the Year 12 Admissions Policy circulated prior to the meeting, stating that this is due to go out for consultation tomorrow. He explained that the policy makes it clear that Colyton will have an admissions point at year 12 and that this policy also applies to current students. Mr Harris reported that the admissions bar has not been set particularly high, in comparison to competitor schools, as it is important that the School does not appear so exclusive that people are discouraged from applying.

In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mr Harris explained in order to consult, the policy will appear on the School website, on the Local Authority website and will be circulated to other schools. The policy will also be brought to the attention of current parents. The consultation will finish on February 1 2017.

The Board discussed the importance of spelling out the benefits offered to sixth form students, such as the use of the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund and the Bradbeer Fund to assist with travel costs. In response to a query from Lt Col Dyer, Mr Harris explained that the Admissions Policy is stripped of anything other than admissions criteria to ensure it is not open to mis-interpretation. Further discussion clarified the admissions process as outlined in the policy, with particular reference to existing student applications and the points score required for admission.

In response to a suggestion from Mr Goscomb, Mr Harris reported that there are not allowances for siblings joining a school at sixth form, as entrance is based upon GCSE results and the Admissions Code does not allow this.

In response to a query from Dr Bastin, Mr Harris explained that this new admissions point will be advertised through the press and at open evenings, but other routes are being considered, such as the back of buses. Mr Eaton Hart suggested that radio advertising might be appropriate and Dr Bastin suggested that all ideas for marketing should be forwarded to Mr Harris.

#### **17. Exam Review**

Mr Harris explained that the paper circulated prior to the meeting had been reviewed by the Admissions Learning and Standards Committee.

#### **18. School Improvement Plan 2016/2017**

Mr Harris reported that each Committee has reviewed the School Improvement Plan. He explained that some minor amendments will be made to add two areas of improvement; Pupil Premium student attendance and the safeguarding of pupils on site from visitors and vehicles.

Rev Dawson confirmed that she has spoken to Mr Bush about the students understanding of safety and she will be attending school to actively challenge students on their understanding. The Prevent agenda will also be highlighted in assemblies.

#### **19. Governance Review Implementation Plan**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the Governance Review Implementation Plan circulated prior to the meeting.

Proposed by Mrs Nickells, seconded by Mr Merrett and unanimously agreed that the Chairs Committee should be abolished as outlined in the Governance Review

Proposed by Lt Col Dyer, seconded by Mrs Linnell and unanimously agreed that the School Futures Group should be abolished as outlined in the Governance Review

In relation to item 2.1.2 of the Governance Review, Mr Harris reported that Mr Merrett, Data Lead Trustee, had volunteered to meet with Mr Stidwell in January to focus on the RaiseOnline report. Mr Harris reiterated that the aim is for Trustees to be educated on the analysis of the report this year, and in subsequent years compile their own queries.

Proposed by Mr Davis, seconded by Mrs Burns Price and unanimously agreed that in future working groups will be 'task and finish' only as outlined in the Governance Review.

In relation to section 1 of the Governance Review, Rev Dawson, Mr Goscomb and Lt Col Dyer agreed to meet with Mr Harris in January to define a clear vision, ethos and strategy for the School. Mr Harris agreed to prepare a paper as a basis for discussion.

The Board then discussed the proposed separation of Members and Trustees as outlined in section 6.1 of the Governance Review.

Mr Goscomb reminded the Board that Mr Cook had circulated a paper prior to the meeting, which explained the benefits of the proposed separation. He reiterated his view that this is an important recommendation to strengthen overall governance. Dr Bastin clarified that 5 members are proposed, one of whom will be the Chair of the Board of Trustees and that this will be implemented in 2017. Discussion followed including:

- Clarification that currently any Trustee who is Chair of a Committee becomes a Member
- Whether an extra tier of authority would be of benefit
- How research of other schools has shown that very few have Members who are not also Trustees

- How this year's Academies' Financial Handbook indicates that separate Members are strongly recommended, but with the Chair of the Trustees also being a Member
- The Governance Review as an opportunity to move forward, rather than dwelling on the arrangements of other schools
- How the DfE have not yet enforced a separation of Members and Trustees
- The benefits of including the Chair of the Trustees as a Member
- Whether it is a good time for the Governing Body to be considering a separation, especially as the Board currently has a number of vacancies and some current Trustees have indicated they will be retiring. Or, whether retirements in the summer should be viewed as an opportunity
- Further clarification of the role of Members including; oversight and audit of the Trustees, recruitment of new Trustees and Members, challenging the Trustees in the same way that Trustees challenge the Headteacher, and reviewing an Annual Trustee report and Board and Committee meeting minutes
- How with the current system of Members also being Trustees, it is impossible for them to audit themselves
- How Members already appoint Article 50 Trustees, staff elect Staff Trustees and parents elect Parent Trustees and the process for this will not change, including the consultation of the Board prior to appointment
- How current Member core responsibilities will not change
- The difficulties of recruiting Members and Trustees
- How parents should view the additional auditing of Trustees as a strength
- How a transition arrangement, whereby current experienced Trustees become Members, is an opportunity to retain knowledge and experience whilst Members from outside the School community can be recruited and inducted
- The potential use of Associate Members to retain expertise
- The phased implementation of this recommendation, including external recruitment of both Members and Trustees if suitable candidates stand for election

The Board agreed to accept the principle of separating Members from Trustees, with a link through the Chair of the Board of Trustees and to discuss implementation at the Board meeting on Thursday 16 March.

Action

Mrs Robinson to add Governance Review Item 6.1 to the agenda of March's Board meeting

## **20. Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 August 2016**

Mr Cook reported that the Annual Report and Financial Statements were reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and were recommended for approval. He pointed out two minor amendments that have been made since the meeting: a typographical error on Mr Goscomb's date of appointment and the addition of reference to the planned Risk Management training.

Mrs Nickells explained that a representative from the auditors attended the Finance and Resources meeting on November 30. She reported that the auditor's only recommendation was in relation to the monitoring of the Head's expenses. These will now be signed off by Mrs Nickells. After confirming that, to date, he had not made any expenses claims, Mr Harris reported that there had also been discussion at the recent meeting about the Local



Government Pension Scheme deficit, lagged funding and consequently the importance of monetary reserves. In response to a query from Mr Merrett, Mr Harris clarified that this pension scheme is for support staff only.

The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2016.

### **21. Trustees' Annual Report**

Dr Bastin reported that, in line with the Board's commitment to improving communication with key stakeholders, the Trustee's Annual Report is being prepared and will be communicated to parents early in the spring term.

### **22. Financial Statements for Period Ending 31 October 2016**

Mr Cook reported that these financial statements had been reviewed and approved by the Finance and Resources Committee. He explained that the main area of discussion had concerned the challenge faced by catering in the light of considerable food price increases. The Finance and Resources Committee will keep this budget under close review and the School will be contacting students and parents to communicate the increase in material costs and to show the favourable comparison with prices in other schools.

### **23. Committee Reports**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the Committee minutes circulated prior to the meeting and the Chairs of these Committees commented:

a). Admissions Learning and Standards – Rev Dawson highlighted the Committee's focus on mental health issues, in particular the creation of a new Wellbeing Policy which will be reviewed annually. Mr Harris reported that Mr Bush has been working hard to clarify requirements related to mental health in schools, in particular the definition of 'early help'. Mr Bush is also arranging access to the Educational Welfare Officer for additional support and resources.

b). Finance and Resources – Mrs Nickells highlighted the key areas of discussion this term, in particular, the discussions on the contribution from School to the capital project Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids. Mr Cook confirmed that the bids have now been sent. In response to a query from Mr Merrett, Mr Cook explained that the Committee had looked at available reserves in detail and Mrs Nickells expressed her opinion that compared to a lot of other academies, the school is in a healthy position. Mr Merrett commented that, in addition to these reserves, the School may be able to gain a part of the £200 million the government pledged to grammar schools in the Autumn Statement.

c). Staffing – Mrs Wells was absent from the meeting.

### **24. Link Trustees' Reports**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to Mrs Linnell's report circulated prior to the meeting.

## **25. Safeguarding**

Rev Dawson reported that she is continuing to meet with Mr Bush each half term. A deputy safeguarding trustee is now required and it was agreed that this appointment will be addressed by the Admissions Learning and Standards Committee.

See also note raised under Item 18.

### Action

Mrs Robinson to add appointment of a Safeguarding Deputy to the agenda of the ALS meeting Wednesday 22 February

## **26. Risk Register**

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Board to the papers circulated prior to the meeting. He commented on:

- The importance of Risk Management training and how this has been postponed to a training evening in 2017.
- How each Committee and the Board are now receiving three documents at each meeting, each filtered to items pertinent to the relevant group: a Risk Register Review Report which shows any changes or additions since the last meeting; a complete copy of the register and an overview document. In addition Mr Cook had provided the Board with a copy of the Review Reports from each Committee meeting in this academic year.

There were no queries made concerning the change to risks overseen by the Board.

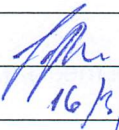
## **27. Any Other Business**

Dr Bastin reported that, although he is reluctant to add to the workload of the Board, it may be necessary to hold additional Board meetings during the coming year, particularly as the Board will be busy recruiting new Trustees and Members

Dr Bastin concluded the meeting by extending the Board's thanks to Mrs Wainwright for her extensive contribution to the School. He stated that when she was appointed as a Head for the academic year 2015/16 the Board had been wrong to think she would just be a 'safe pair of hands', as in fact, Mrs Wainwright had done an exceptional job.

## **28. Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting will take place on Thursday 16 March 2017

|         |   |                         |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| Signed: |  | (Chairman of Committee) |
| Date:   | 16/3/17   |                         |