



CANON LEE SCHOOL

**Minutes of the Achievement & Learning Committee meeting
held on Thursday 20th October 2016 at 5pm in the Conference Room**

Present:	Helen Dowds (Acting Principal) Paul Black (Chair) Rob Orr Donna McMahon	
In attendance:	Liz Hardy (Vice Principal, Key Stage 4) Jess Swarbrick (Clerk – Governor Support Officer)	
		ACTION
1.	Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received, with consent, from Sarah Byrne, Matt Halifax and Fran Johnston.	
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2016 The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising The Chair requested clarification and updates on a number of items within the minutes. He emphasised to governors the importance of providing a high level of challenge and questioning to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team. It was suggested that any governor questions and challenge be marked in bold within the minutes, in order to highlight where this took place.</p> <p>With reference to the Pupil Premium Action Plan, which had been introduced in February 2016, governors asked for further detail about how the impact of this action plan would be evidenced. The Principal advised that this would be shown through improved Progress 8 outcomes at GCSE, and also attendance figures. Governors asked whether they would have regular reports on progress to ensure both these indicators were on track. The Principal confirmed that Pupil Premium attendance was reported on at each committee meeting, and that mock data would be available for scrutiny and challenge at the next meeting.</p> <p>Governors challenged the Principal to provide further information about boys' performance, specifically what was being done for middle attaining boys who were persistent absentees. The Principal advised that at present, this area was not an immediate priority, but focus strategies to engage this group were being planned for the following term. The Principal added that at present, the key focus was to ensure intervention strategies were in place for all students who were not on target. She added that a "war board" provided information on individual students, and the interventions in place to bring them back on track in terms of progress. It was noted that an example of this had been tabled for information at the previous meeting. The Chair challenged the title of this strategy, noting that "war board" implied there was a battle going on, and that such metaphors may have a negative impact. The Principal advised that the name was not shared beyond staff. In addition, she argued that this was common terminology in secondary education, and was known to staff. The Principal further added that the term "war board" led to a sense of urgency and the need for high priority actions.</p> <p>Governors requested an update on the English department, following concerns</p>	

	<p>which had been raised at the last meeting. The Principal reported that a new Head of English, Vivienne Busgeeth had now been appointed, and she was very pleased with the appointment. The Principal further reported that interviews had been held for the English teacher post, but no appointment had been made, as it was felt that the candidate was not strong enough. The Principal added that one supply teacher would be leaving after half term, with the other current supply teacher continuing until January. It was hoped that Suzy Faraq, a Canadian English teacher, would still be able to be appointed, but that this was being held up with immigration issues.</p> <p>Governors commended the Principal and SLT for the decision not to appoint any but the best teaching staff, and agreed that this was an essential policy to ensure the best for the school.</p> <p>With reference to the Aspire Centre, governors asked what progress had been made in staffing, and whether a Behaviour Manager was now in place. The Principal reported that a Behaviour Manager had now been appointed and would start after half term. She further advised that plans were in place to ensure that the Aspire Centre was fully covered until this point.</p> <p>Governors requested an update on progress regarding the exclusions target for 2016/17. The Principal advised that a full update on attendance and exclusions would be provided under item 6.</p> <p>With reference to the report on Year 11 intervention plans, governors asked whether the plan to provide a personal mentor for each student was in place. Liz Hardy advised that plans were ongoing to develop this along with other strategies, but were not yet in place. Liz confirmed that individual progress for Year 11 students continued to be tracked closely.</p> <p>Governors noted from the previous minutes the issue raised around staff being reluctant to predict A*s for pupils. Governors asked the Principal whether this had been addressed. The Principal advised that the data set for this term was not yet available, but once this was in place, she would be emphasising the importance of aspirational predictions to staff. The Principal added that lower predictions would also affect the overall residuals, and staff would need to put interventions in place to raise these. Governors agreed it would be important to continue to monitor this increase in aspirational thinking, and they would need to see evidence that this was happening. It was agreed that this was a learning curve for staff, with a shift in ethos emerging.</p> <p>Governors challenged the Principal regarding the Ofsted RAG rating. It was noted that the points rated as “green” had been reported extensively at previous governing body meetings, and a question was raised about whether these were areas where the fastest improvement could be made, and this was why more information had been provided previously. The Principal advised that this was not the rationale for the ratings. She further advised that the RAG ratings had changed since the previous meeting, and she would provide an update on these under Any Other Business.</p> <p>It was agreed that in future meetings, Ofsted Priorities would be a standing item on the agenda, along with updates on English and Maths specifically.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p><i>English update – feedback from the English Audit</i> Liz Hardy provided an update on English staffing and tabled a summary of the English Department audit, which had taken place by an external auditor, Steff Holt, on 7th October 2016.</p> <p>Liz advised that the auditor had spent around two thirds of a day in school, had observed a number of lessons and spoken to Liz and two members of the English department. The auditor had also looked at the schemes of work in place. Liz explained that on receipt of the auditor’s report, she had taken out a number of elements which were felt to be generic, rather than specific to the school. Liz further advised that some points within the report had no evidence to back them up.</p>	

	<p>Governors argued that this could be seen as the Vice Principal cherry-picking the best parts of the external report. Liz emphasised that this was not the case, but that she had prioritised the items within the report which were relevant to improving the department.</p> <p>Governors noted the strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the audit summary. The report noted that the department development plan was not yet complete. Liz advised that as Acting Head of English, she had been maintaining a draft plan along with the rest of the SLT, but it was felt that the newly appointed Head of English would need to take ownership of this plan.</p> <p>The audit had noted a lack of consistency in marking, with generic comments being made in some instances. Liz advised that this had been found to be the case with the supply teachers currently in the department. Governors expressed concern at this, as it was felt that this was an issue whether supply or permanent members of staff. In response to a question about whether supply staff were provided with a copy of the school's marking policy, the Principal replied that they were. She added that the findings of the auditor were that marking was too generic, rather than being focused on how students could improve.</p> <p>Governors requested an anonymised report from the Principal outlining the frequency of marking amongst all staff members. The Principal advised that she would be able to provide this within the feedback and outcomes from the next Focus Fortnight, which would be reported on at the next meeting. The Principal added that evidence and quality of marking was a performance management issue, and part of the Teachers' Standards. Governors agreed that consistent and good quality marking and feedback provided the evidence that students were getting the necessary challenge and support to make good progress.</p> <p>Liz advised that the common themes within the auditor's report focused on marking, supply staff and the lack of a department head. Governors noted that these were all issues which were already known and being acted upon. It was further noted that the audit took place before the appointment of Head of English was made. The Principal advised that SLT had discussed whether to continue with the recommendations of the auditor, and the following conclusions had been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A permanent Head of English was now in place, providing leadership and stability - The Executive Principal was proposing to commission support for English across the whole of the Hope Learning Trust, which would initially be based at Canon Lee - There may be a place for some of the recommendations but it was unlikely these would be considered until after February half term - It had been agreed that at this point, the school should thank the auditor for her time and suggestions, but explain that there was now different management in place which had changed the department's position somewhat. <p>Governors agreed it was important to allow the newly appointed Head of English time to put her own strategies in place, before taking on any recommendations of the auditor.</p> <p>Governors commended the school for commissioning and presenting the audit report in all its detail, noting that it was essential for transparency not to shy away from any of the issues. Particular thanks was also noted to Liz Hardy for her work as Acting Head of English during this half term.</p> <p>Governors agreed that in addressing issues which had been specifically raised by Ofsted, commissioning the audit was the right thing to do. It was further agreed that if a Head of English appointment had not been made, it may have been right to take on some of the recommendations within the audit.</p>	<i>Principal</i>
4.	<p>2016 Results Final Position</p> <p>The Principal tabled an updated 2016 results analysis for governors, and explained that this included amended figures following the release of provisional performance tables.</p>	

The following headline outcomes were noted:

Progress 8: -0.26

Attainment 8: 48.8

A*-C Maths & English: 55.9%

It was noted that the Progress 8 figure had improved from the previous report, due to re-mark data. The Principal advised that the small cohort of 102 students, meant that all remarks represented a significant change in the baseline figure.

Governors noted that the Progress 8 figure was an improvement from the previous year (-0.47), and Attainment 8 was also higher than the previous year, though below the target. The Principal emphasised again the journey of improvement which the school was continuing along.

The Principal advised that final figures would be available in mid-December, with the publication of the RAISEOnline report.

The Principal reported that deeper analysis of the figures had now been undertaken, following the publication of provisional national performance tables. She advised that this meant it was now possible to determine the school's ranking and percentile position.

Within the set group of similar schools, Canon Lee was ranked 51st out of 55, and was on the 74th percentile for Progress 8 nationally.

Governors asked for more detailed information about the school's ranking the previous year. The Principal agreed to look into this and report back at the next meeting. It was agreed that this was important to gauge where the school had come from, given the improved outcomes. The Principal advised that in the national context, the school was still on the cusp of Special Measures / Requiring Improvement. However, it was agreed that it was still important to recognise the upward journey which was being made.

Governors challenged the Principal about what was being done to further improve the school's position in terms of ranking. The Principal advised that she was hoping to work closely with another local secondary school, who showed consistently good performance within their group ranking. She further advised that it was hoped that lessons could be learnt and good practice shared about what actions were taken to achieve this.

With reference to the results summary, the Principal reported that although some figures had changed, the trends in the data remained unchanged from the previous meeting, with the exception of the EBacc. The Principal explained that where this had been reported as a positive residual in September, this was now at -0.24. The Principal explained that this was due to a change in scoring of EBacc subjects from 2015, meaning that data was out of line. She further added that the changes to some of these were equivalent to a whole grade.

Following on from the recommendation at the last meeting that the Chair should write to the heads of departments who had achieved a positive residual, the Principal provided a list of these individuals. The Chair agreed to write on behalf of the governing body recognising this achievement.

Governors agreed that the contextual ranking information was useful, as this provided a way of benchmarking performance against other similar schools.

Governors challenged the Principal about what was being done following the publication of this revised data, and whether this had led to a change in focus for the SLT. The Principal advised that a direct correlation had been made between attainment and absence levels, and this was now a key focus. The Principal reported that the SLT were looking at what other local schools were doing to achieve a consistently high level of attendance. One of the SLT performance objectives was to visit local schools where this was successful in order to look at what was being done to achieve

Principal

	<p>this.</p> <p>The Principal advised that she was also considering entries to Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), as it had been shown that a higher entry into these subjects was more likely to result in a higher Progress 8 score.</p> <p>Governors asked whether making this compulsory would attract parents wanting a more traditional education for their children. The Principal advised that she had not considered this side of the argument, but had noticed a pattern in other local schools between MFL and Progress 8 scores. The Principal added that further investigation was needed to ascertain whether this was also a national trend.</p> <p>Liz Hardy noted that results for languages at Canon Lee had been generally high when it had been a compulsory subject. She added that when it became a choice, it may have been that more students opted out in favour of an easier subject.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there was likely to be a proposal in the future to take a risk in making MFL compulsory. It was noted that there was a need to balance the higher overall scores for the school with the best outcomes for individual students. Governors agreed that it was essential to keep this at the forefront of any decision. Compulsory MFL may be better for the school but significantly worse for some individuals. It was agreed that it was important at a governance level to consider strategically what was being offered, and what the rationale was behind this.</p> <p>Governors agreed that it would be useful in the spring or summer term to have further information on this, with a clear rationale about the pros and cons of making MFL compulsory.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><i>SEN Staffing Update</i></p> <p>The Principal provided an update and the following points were noted.</p> <p>Appointments had now been made to the TA2 and three TA1 posts, and these staff would all start in the first two weeks after half term.</p> <p>It was noted that the TA3 post had not yet been filled, due to a lack of strong applicants for the role. The Principal advised that as a Seclusion Manager had now been appointed, the TA3 role may no longer be necessary.</p> <p>As reported under matters arising, the Behaviour Manager post had now been filled, and would start after. It was noted that this would provide the capacity to run seclusion and a pre-seclusion room full time.</p> <p>The Principal reported that the school also now had a Wellbeing Worker provided through the LA, who was in school for one day a week.</p> <p>The Principal advised that given the level of need, the school had by far the lowest proportion of TA staffing in the city, and there was a clear link between this and behaviour issues. The Principal added, however, that the school was operating under severe financial restrictions. Governors noted that it would be a decision for the Hope Learning Trust longer term to consider where support could be increased in school.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><i>Attendance & Exclusions Update</i></p> <p>The Principal table attendance figures from 7th September 2016 to 20th October 2016. It was noted that in like for like comparison to the previous two years, attendance had improved 0.36% from 2014, but was slightly below for the same period in 2015.</p> <p>The Principal reported that a large factor of the 3.43% authorised absence figure was due to the high level of exclusions, 17 this term, compared with 13 for the same period in 2015/16. Governors recognised that this was due to the introduction of an increased robustness in behaviour management, and had been necessary for the Principal to set clear boundaries for students.</p>	

	<p>The Principal outlined actions which had been taken for a number of specific pupils who had been the cause of serious concern regarding their behaviour. She advised that all incidents had been catalogued and reported to the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership. Governors emphasised that the Principal had their full backing in any future action which she felt it necessary to take.</p> <p>With reference to attendance, the Principal advised that she was keen to look at ways in which this could be further improved. She outlined a number of strategies which had not yet been implemented, including collecting students from home at the start of the day to ensure attendance at school. It was agreed that this could be an issue to consider at the start of the spring term, once the school was part of the Hope Learning Trust, as this could be done as a combined school approach.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Any Other Business 7.1 Ofsted Priorities Foci The Principal provided an updated RAG rating for each of the Ofsted Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marking & Feedback: RED The Principal advised that a new system had been introduced but was not yet up to speed - Challenge: AMBER - High Expectations: AMBER It was agreed that these two points were linked to the need for higher aspirations for students. - Standards of Presentation: GREEN - Attitudes to Learning: AMBER The Principal advised that the majority of students had a good attitude to learning, but a small minority were not engaged and presenting a significant challenge. - Literacy: AMBER Actions and interventions were ongoing. - TAs: AMBER It was noted that this was due to the vacancies which had been in place for the first half term. <p>7.2 Meeting Dates The Principal advised that due to the decision to reschedule committee meetings to a Thursday, this had presented an issue with two of the Vice Principals being able to attend. The Chair proposed that the dates be maintained as agreed for the present, as it was likely that on conversion in January, the structure of governing body meetings may change anyway.</p> <p>7.3 Pay Committee The Principal advised that the Pay Committee would need to meet to agree pay recommendations following the end of the performance management review cycle.</p> <p>The Clerk agreed to email all governors and call an extraordinary full governing body meeting on Thursday 3rd November, to agree committee membership and a date for this meeting. It was noted that governors would be asked to attend this meeting either virtually or in person.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Dates and times of future meetings (all at 5pm) Thursday 1st December 2016 Thursday 12th January 2017 Thursday 2nd March 2017 Thursday 6th April 2017 Thursday 11th May 2017 Thursday 15th June 2017 Thursday 13th July 2017</p>	

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Paul Black, Chair

Date

**ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING ATTAINMENT & LEARNING COMMITTEE MEETING 20TH
OCTOBER 2016**

	Action	Agenda	Person	Date
1.	Provide report on frequency and quality of marking	3	Principal	01/12/16
2.	Provide data on the school's ranking and percentile position for 2015	4	Principal	01/12/16

Items for next Agenda:

- English and Maths (focus on effectiveness of actions to improve)
- Ofsted Priorities Foci