

Minutes of the Governing Body of Heckmondwike Grammar School Governors

Tuesday 5th December 2017 in room C.0.15 at 6.00pm

Present: Mr N Bulley (Headteacher) , Mr M Pinder (Chair), Mr D Cross, Mr J Hodgson, Mrs J Parker, Mr K Wilson, Mr Z Aziz, Mr D Hall, Mrs D Glover, Mr S Eakin, Mr G Harris, Mrs S Ahmed, Mr J Longridge

Non-voting: Mr J Flynn (Finance Director), Mr P Roberts, Mrs C Proud, Mr S Taylor, Mrs C Smith (Minutes)

Apologies – Mr AK Atherton, Mrs S Waterhouse (Clerk), Mr E Ineson, Mrs S Doubell

Mr K Wilson pointed out that Mr J Donnelly had now resigned and it was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to him.

3.99 **Declaration of Interests** – none declared

4.00 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (10th October 2017) were received and approved.

4.11 **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Mr Pinder was voted in as Chair for a further year and as a result of a vote by ballot, Mr Cross was voted in as Vice Chair.

4.12 **Safeguarding**

Mr Taylor presented a report on safeguarding (See attached).

Mr Hodgson enquired about the typical length of time required to get a counsellor appointment for a pupil. Mr Taylor explained that this varied according to the nature of the case but also that there was a weekly review of casework to prioritise.

4.13 **Minutes of sub-committees**

a) Finance & Resources

Mr Hodgson invited Mr Flynn to update Governors on the National Funding Formula (NFF). Mr Flynn reported that there were four options and that three of them would potentially mean a significant (further) loss of funding for the school. However, at a Schools Forum meeting on 1st December 2017 it was agreed to support the fourth option which would theoretically result in a only a small loss of funding for the school.

b) Curriculum & Staffing

Curriculum – Mr Cross reported that a review of the summer results showed an insignificant dip in GCSE results. Mr Roberts reported that a review of GCSE provision is being undertaken. There is a proposal that the average number of subjects studied is reduced by one due to this currently being over 12, and this would go to full staff consultation next week. There is also a proposal to begin GCSE courses in Year 9. Mr Hall asked about the impact that this would have on other foundation subjects normally studied in Year 9. Mr Roberts reported that there would be little impact on DT, but that Music & Drama could be significantly affected. However, there would also be a slight increase in time for these subjects in Years 7 and 8 to compensate.

A discussion took place around the Staffing and Curriculum Committee's decision to no longer make sitting a language at GCSE compulsory, with the choice of a language being made optional. The reasoning:

- grades are consistently lower nationally for languages, and the difficulty is recognised to be significantly greater than for other subjects.
- the government no longer recognised the historical specialist school status for Languages, and therefore funding for this had ceased.
- the sub-committee made their decision principally on the basis that choice should be at the heart of our curriculum where possible.

Following a detailed discussion, the decision to make languages non-compulsory was supported.

4.14 **Headteachers Report**

Mr Bulley responded to questions/comments posed by Mr Hodgson prior to the meeting.

Student numbers: It was agreed that an alternative expression to "arrivals and departures" should be considered.

Student progress: It was noted that there is a gender gap in pupil progress and this needed to be addressed.

Student Behaviour: It was noted that student behaviour was good apart from punctuality-though the graph presented very much exaggerated this due to being scaled from 98.6-99.6%.

Mr Hodgson also commented on the recent adverse OFSTED report for the Mirfield Free Grammar School and questioned whether or not we should be concerned given the comments about governance and the sixth form outcomes being below national this year. Mr Bulley pointed out that as an "outstanding" school we were not subject to routine inspections but that if our results were monitored this would, in his view, mean that we were unlikely to be prioritised for a visit. He also suggested that outcomes, as could be seen on the report, indicated that our current tracking shows a significant improvement in outcomes this year.

School Development Plan: Mr Bulley noted that this was not tight enough and needed to be narrowed down as there were too many development points.

Staff: Mr Bulley pointed out that although the report stated that a further eight operational staff had been appointed, two of these were internal appointments and four were sixth form students appointed as cleaners.

Quality of Teaching: some SLT members have been dropping in on lessons resulting in some positive outcomes but also some areas for development.

Complaints, Community Relations & Correspondence: Mr Bulley pointed out that there is mixed involvement in the community and that some parents would like to see more pupil involvement in charity work. Mr Bulley suggested that this becomes complex and there are safeguarding issues but that this could be an area for future development .

Governor Training: Governors agreed to consulting with ASCL (£750 per day) for a governance review given the nature of the report from Ofsted on the Mirfield Free Grammar.

4.15 **Governor Training Tool: The Key**

Mr Flynn encouraged Governors to obtain a login and use this tool.

4.16 **Self-Evaluation Form**

Mr Roberts reported that good progress was being made with systems and procedures and that hopefully this would lead to a good set of results in the summer. However, in the sixth form there are some issues with students new to the school and this is being addressed.

4.17 **AOB**

Mr Flynn asked Governors to agree the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st August 2017. These were agreed and accepted.

Mr Flynn distributed Register of Interest forms to Governors and asked that they be completed before leaving the meeting.

Mr Roberts circulated a proposed new school day (attached) with an earlier start and finish time, with two lunchtime options. This will hopefully relieve pressure on the dining room and better enable travelling to after school fixtures. Mr Hall commented that this would also better accommodate pupils who undertake lunchtime activities. Governors agreed for the proposal to go to consultation.

Mr Pinder noted that this was Mr Longridge's final meeting as a Governor and thanked him for his contribution.

Mr Bulley noted that the school had received a further 'Dear Accounting Officer' letter from the ESFA regarding standards of financial management and governance. The contents of the letter were noted.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm