

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held in School on 3rd July 2018 at 6.00pm

Present: Shaista Ahmed (SA); Zed Aziz (ZA); Derek Cross (DC); Jane Dixon (JD); Sue Doubell (SD); Debra Glover (DG); David Hall (DH); Gareth Harris (GH); Johnathan Hodgson (JH); Malcolm Pinder (MP); Keith Wilson (KW)

Non-voting: Mr J.Flynn (JMF), Mrs J Dunn (JDN); Mr N Bulley (NDB) Mrs C Proud (CEP); Mr S Taylor (SAT); Mrs K Abbott (KA).

1. Apologies for absence: Tony Atherton; Stuart Eakin; Ernest Ineson; Liz Currie; Peter Roberts.

2. Declaration of Interests: None

3. Development Session

Kate Abbott (KA) attended the meeting to provide feedback following the governance review held in February.

KA explained the order of the development session:

- Brief overview of the Competency Framework
- The Evidence Base - 10 minutes
- The Report: key areas of strength and development
- Governor discussion about strengths and development points - 30 minutes
- Discussion about Agreed follow up

KA put up the competency framework on screen and ran through the document. She said this framework describes excellence, underlined by the principles and personal attributes (7Cs) and if followed, we would be an excellent governing body. KA then ran through the 7 Cs; Committed, Confident, Curious, Challenging, Collaborative, Critical and Creative, and gave examples of how governors could achieve them.

JDN will circulate this framework to all governors via email and encouraged all to read it.

KA then moved on to the evidence based report and explained it is just for governors' use, the actual report anyone can see and use, including Ofsted if we choose. The report highlights the feedback from the people she spoke to during the interviews and from others who were given opportunities to provide feedback via a questionnaire. All information gathered has been reflected in this report. KA highlighted points that will help the growth and strengthening of the governing body and gave several recommendations for improvement including commitment and clarification. She advised that sub-committee chairs should leave meetings with clarity, ask themselves: can we make decisions? Are we confident? Does it need to be taken to FGB? It was also advised the governors utilise relationships with other committees and staff and build structured mechanisms to do this.

All governors have to understand educational standards and school performance data. If they don't they should ask. SLT want governors to understand in order to be fully confident. Training can be arranged if required.

KA then ran through the strengths of the governing body and highlighted that the calibration

reviews and the effectiveness questionnaires are excellent practice, as are the ways in which some governors already engage within the school. The assessment highlighting the 10 biggest risks to school initiated by JH and recently carried out by F&R/JMF is fantastic and this should be done and brought to FGB once a year.

KA then spoke through summary of findings of the actual report. She started with the strengths and what we do well. We have a 'fairly clear idea' of where the school wants to be. Reflection is good and important. We keep clear minutes with evidence of challenge. It is excellent that all members are part of committees. She then moved on to areas for development, including having more engagement with staff, holding school to account more and asking for updates. Also continuing to support the clerk.

DG asked about the report as it states that most of our students are of a white British background, and asked if this was the case. NDB clarified this was the case in terms of the group with the highest percentage in school, but not 'most', and gave the values: Main school- 23% APKN, 23% AIND, 41% WBRI. Sixth form- 28% APKN, 25% AIND, 37% WBRI

The following points for discussion were then put on the screen;

- How to make the best use of the HT report
- How to increase governor knowledge and understanding of the school in all areas especially Curriculum and Standards
- The relationship between the work of the Committees and the Full Board – especially to create clarity concerning decision making authority and when matter need to be explored at the FGB

Do governors feel they can ask questions about the HT report, do they understand it?

NDB explained he asks governors to send in questions ahead of meetings. He thinks this works well and ensures prior reading and understanding of the report. Thanks to those who send them. KW says it's the only way we can see what school is about - it is very useful. ZA added that previously we have made suggestions that things are changed or added to the report and school has done so in response.

Do governors understand terminology used?

KA suggested maintaining the same format throughout meetings and having summary documents. It was added that there is often no need to question these things as SLT are so open and things are already self-explanatory. CEP added we try not use acronyms so all understand so we don't have to waste time explaining. It would be useful for governors to provide a checklist to challenge data to make sure we are on track and where and why things are happening. Governors and SLT can work well together and spot trends etc. Governors are already picking up on these as are shown in C&S minutes.

NDB suggested we do some data training for governors – all agreed it was a good idea.

ZA asked if governors could have access to information to look deeper into things. NDB said yes we can do that, and we will give log-ins to Sisra.

The length of recent meetings was raised, to which CEP explained this might be to do with

time of year, as things in school all come together at the summer term. We could however make this more efficient. NDB said we are working on work plans so we can break them down across the year and know what we will cover at each in advance. The calibration report could include summaries to shorten presentation. All agreed the C&S committee was a long meeting but it was worthwhile.

It was highlighted that we need to establish what delegated power is, clarify if a decision needs to be taken or if it is a recommendation we are looking for. What do the terms of reference say? That currently, major decisions go to FGB? - got to have the conversations to establish this.

GH, said he was unclear as to what decisions were made after the last C&S meeting. Conversations were had but he is not clear what the outcome was.

Maybe we should look at our minutes and detail action points below. JH suggested we should detail what the intention is against the agenda items – to be clear what needs to be achieved.

KA summarized by informing the FGB that the governing body has got strong processes but taking on the recommendations from the report it would be an excellent governing body. Remember communication, clarity, commitment, challenging school. Be energized by the competency framework. You are all working together to improve school. This review is about ironing out the wrinkles.

KW suggested that the chairs and the clerk get together to put together a development plan. KA said if anyone needed anything else factually added or amended they should let her know via JDN.

MP and NDB thanked Kate for her time and effort in completing the review and she left the meeting.

4. Minutes from the last meeting – all in agreement that they are a true reflection of the previous meeting. NDB asked if we can take out confidential information before they are published on website. MP agreed.

5. Minutes of sub committees

F&R

F&R - JH gave an overview of what was discussed in the meeting. He explained several things were agreed but would be discussed later in this meeting. He asked governors to accept KW joining the F&R committee. All agreed. No questions.

C&S

DC gave an overview of the meeting and what discussions were had.

GH said he felt strongly that the staff survey should be repeated and needed to be completely anonymous. DC said he agreed about its anonymity, he was just saying it's hard to pinpoint where any specific issues lie as a result.

DC asked where we are with the catering review. JMF explained consultation meetings are

underway and seem to be going smoothly.

GH raised it wasn't clear how many staff had left at the C&S meeting and he remains extremely concerned about staff welfare. Now the numbers have come out we have significant turnover this year, even compared with national [official figures: c.20% staff leaving HGS; national c.10% leaving teaching and c.9% moving school]. Also the staff survey results are concerning. GH thinks we should run again soon. JDN added it was agreed last time we would run in the summer term. GH continued to express concerns and suggested it was run sooner.

It was suggested by DG that we get feedback on this via the well-being group, but NDB disagreed as he doesn't want the group to be used for this. NDB suggested we use KA's feedback, using link governors to find out more.

NDB said he can see why there are concerns, but this is not the biggest focus - student outcomes is, though he appreciates that staff stability and wellbeing has a significant impact on that. He explained governors are right to ask, but his job is to try and reassure that we are doing things to help. Putting the coffee machine in the staffroom has had a massive positive impact, but was not part of any intentional plan. NDB said he is not going to make everyone happy, he can only do what he can to create the right framework.

It was asked if it was the feeling that governors would like us to reflect more. NDB said he was concerned that the wellbeing group was not a representative group. CEP said it will be advertised again in Sept when we have new staff in the hope that the group increases and includes some male staff.

It was decided that this matter should be taken back to the next C&S meeting.

SA asked if there was a key reason why staff are leaving? NDB explained there seemed to be a number of reasons, curriculum changes, lots of change in school and the national picture, etc.

6. Safeguarding

A verbal report was given by SAT on the facts and figures relating to child protection referrals and the current caseload of the counsellor in school. The support provided by the counsellor, school nurse and pastoral team in school continues to be widely used and provides an essential support service for the students and some staff.

An update was given on child protection training – four new members of operational staff and one new member of teaching staff require induction safeguarding training. There is one governor (EI) who needs to refresh child protection training, though the meeting was told that this governor does not intend to seek re-election.

KW asked if there was a pattern in numbers if those who join us in year 12 as opposed to year 7. CEP said it was about 50/50 - not a pattern. Some students who have left in Y11 and Y13 still come back to have appointments. Others have been taken off and then come back on if required at a later date. CEP meets with counsellor on a weekly basis to maximize the appointments.

DC said he reads that exam pressures increased stress levels, do we have any evidence of this on our school? SAT explained that this is always going to be the case, lots come from an

external source, with exam stress adding to it. We do a lot to support them, extra study etc. CEP added we probably even things out as we do exams in all years. We have strategies and coping mechanisms in place to try to minimise this. SSM's have been on mental health training courses. We try to prevent rather than react.

SA asked how do we identify students who have a need for support? Do we identify or do students come to us? SAT explained it is a mix of both. We give them the option to talk to us but we also make staff aware to look out for signs. Some peers make us aware.

7. HT Report

NDB answered the following questions he had been sent with regards to the HT report ahead of the meeting.

Q -Exclusions – what are the 4 'other' exclusions for? SAT gave an explanation for each.

Q - Pupil Premium strategies- are they working? - They are- to a degree. We have identified that the gap is currently growing, though our disadvantaged students do better than the national progress even for non-disadvantaged students. Having said that, they arrive in Year 7 with no gap at all, or a very small one. So this is a challenge for us in terms of really focusing in on them. The SSMs have made them a priority for individual attention this year; and we will see the outcome of that strategy imminently. We do though feel the need for additional academic support, in particular in English. So went out to advert for a one-to-one/small group tutor about a month ago. However, we were unable to appoint due to the calibre of the candidates- bearing in mind that our students are working at a much higher level than most tutors are used to. We are considering as a result appointing, effectively, a supernumerary English teacher next year as an NQT costs not much more than a tutor would- so it could be a really worthwhile investment. Jeremy Barnett will be focusing on this as his project next year- he has had responsibility for it previously, but this will now be one of the three key improvement priorities for the school.

Q - Do I have any concerns about Maths/Biology recruitment?

No. We have recruited extremely well, especially compared with other schools nationally. We have appointed highly effective staff- including a current Subject Leader for Biology to our Subject Leader post (who taught the best lesson at interview that Peter Roberts has ever seen) and another Biologist who is currently a 2nd in her Science dept- but wants A level teaching. In Maths, for example, we have appointed a teacher who is currently a Lead Practitioner at another school; and an equally effective mathematician with 3-4 years' experience. The one area we didn't get any good external applications for was Subject Leader for Maths- however, we have made an internal temporary appointment of a member of staff who has been 2nd in dept for several years, and is currently stepping up to the role very effectively. The main concern is about ensuring quality A level teaching from staff with only limited or historical experience of it, and ensuring they all settle in as swiftly as possible. This is a focus for us in September- and the future looks very promising.

Q - The notes are very useful, the only query I have is relation to the gender gap. It might be worth summarising some of the work underway or planned to address this. I note that it also features within the SDP (item 4) as the key priority.

The gender gap in Y11 is hovering around 6 points and has been fairly consistent across all their PAGs over the 2 year GCSE course. Work being done to narrow the gap include:

1. Research has been undertaken as part of a member of staff's masters course using national data and literature/research reviews to gain a greater understanding of the barriers to learning for boys. Following this, research has been undertaken with HGS Y10 students to ascertain perceived reasons for boys' relative under performance compared to girls.

At HGS it appears the main reasons are:

- Cultural issues of it not being cool to work hard amongst some boys
- Boys don't read anything like as much as girls and their lower levels of literacy adversely affect performance in most other subjects
- Boys don't spend anything like as much time doing homework as girls

2. TDS staff have been on training for techniques of quality first teaching which will be very applicable to boys. The ideas learned are being shared with all staff at training sessions.

3. In September we will be kicking off our whole school training with a focus on boys. We are investigating inviting a guest speaker who is a specialist in boys achievement.

4. For the next academic year all staff will have an appraisal objective linked to narrowing the gap of boys' underperformance in their classes.

Conclusion: A lot of work to be done with trialing and evaluating strategies. This will not be a quick fix.

CEP added that we are trying to move away from gender. It comes down to high quality teaching and we are going to be working on this from September. We are putting an action plan in place for training and will share when it's finalised. We are asking staff to look at practices and teaching to address this. NDB stated that boys currently get more negatives but also more positives too.

Q. ZA – I note the strategies, however, do you feel these are starting to make an impact or is there further work/development opportunities required?

A lot of work being done as identified in the HTs report. Subjectively we feel the strategies are having an impact though as ever such strategies are difficult to measure. To answer Jonathan's question – there is certainly further work to be done and it will always be an ongoing issue to address (a bit like boys performance).

KW asked for an update on staff for the next meeting, so we can monitor.

Q - Are there adequate safeguards to ensure that Twitter content is appropriate?

JDN replied with the following points:

- All parents have to give consent for their child's picture to be used on social media.
- We don't put pictures on with full name so no student can be identified.
- All content is positive
- A policy has been introduced to ensure the aims and objectives of use are clear.

NDB asked for any other questions about the report?

KW asked about the careers quality mark. Yes we got it and got an amazing report. Careers team are doing a great job.

JDN raised the question of The Key subscription, and how governors felt about renewing it.

It was decided that all governors found it useful and we should keep it.

Governor dates for the next academic year were discussed as it was proposed they move to a Wednesday. The reason for change was explained but some could not make it if we moved date. After brief discussion it was agreed we would go back to Tuesdays in spite of potential clashes.

NDB told governors that the MAT situation has changed significantly since it was last discussed and it has now been decided that those other schools are all now going to progress discussions regarding potentially forming a MAT. There has been a change of leadership at Spen Valley High. This is likely to hit the news quite soon. Also, Batley Girls has now got teaching school status meaning we are unlikely to get it in the future due to close proximity should we want it. There have been no discussions about attempting to do so- however, we would like to work closely with them.

MP suggested that if we are sending questions about the report ahead of the meeting, we shouldn't be asking them at the meeting. All governors disagreed with this and said the floor for questioning should remain open.

8. Financial Matters

JMF talked through document and shared information on:

- The scheme of delegation - Minimal changes made - JMF asked chair to sign.
- Revenue budget monitor to May 18 – we had underspend of 50k.
- Revenue budget 18/19 – done this based on 2% increase of teacher pay award; it could be more but we are waiting for further detail. We will continue to monitor and evaluate. JMF ask for budget to be approved - all governors agreed and accepted.
- School Meals – JMF asked governors to approve price of standard school meal (£2.35), this will remain in line with Kirklees. This was approved by governors.
- Charging & Remissions Policy - minimal changes.

9. Building matters

JMF gave an update on the new sixth form centre annex – expected to be complete in October 2018. Project progressing well. He also ran through other site developments and improvements to be made during the summer including installation of new CCTV system and general maintenance.

10. a - Appraisal Policy

Minor changes have been made to this on the back of staff feedback. We have taken bits out to make life easier and save time. We are reducing the number of observations from 2 formal ones to one and three learning walks. This will mean less prep for staff and gives us a better picture.

JD asked how NDB reports back to the governors on the outcomes of the appraisal process. NDB went over how he gives brief anonymized performance summaries to the C&S committee

regarding those wishing to progress. The committee then decides whether to approve those recommendations or not.

10.b – Governor Code of Conduct

JH raised that the policy doesn't mention about the governor body enacting values. NDB said it was a good point and agreed he would like to write something in along those lines. He would adapt the following bullet point;

We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

It was decided we should make the policy our own but state we have adapted it from the NGA model. Commitment to meetings line to be added to the reach of this code of conduct section.

GH requested that some clarity be provided around what the consequences would be should it be adhered to, as there are only the 'ultimate' sanctions provided of removal from the governors. NDB responded that he and MP will look into a reasonable form of wording for an interim step to be taken.

11. AOB

DG asked does our Head boy and girl get invited to these meetings. NDB said yes we do but tend not to this one due to exams. They have just been appointed and will be invited to the next one.

The meeting closed at 8.45

Actions following meeting

- JDN to circulate the governors competency framework, the governance review reports, the list of next years' governors meetings and the school calendars to all governors via email and encouraged all to read it.
- JDN & JMF to ensure the assessment highlighting the 10 biggest risks to school initiated by JH and recently carried out by F&R/JMF is done and brought to FGB once a year.
- JDN & JMF to review and recirculate the terms of reference to all governors
- JDN to ensure the issue of staff well-being is on the agenda for the next C&S meeting.
- JDN to arrange a meeting with NDB, MP, DC and JH to put together a development plan in response to the feedback from the governance review
- JDN to ensure a staffing update is taken to the next meeting
- JMF/JDN to renew The Key subscription
- NDB to look at the governor code of conduct policy and make amendments suggested above
- JDN to invite head boy and head girl to next FGB.