

**THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting**  
**6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Time:** 6 pm  
**Place:** The Hub  
**Present:** **In person** – Kevin Eames (KE), Toby Corden (TC), Amanda McClean (AMc), Sophia Olezynski (SO), Daniela Coy (DC), Andrew Hawkins – 6.20pm (AH), Ben Pope (BP)

**Via Teams - Advisers** Amy Eyers (AE), Linda Baines (LB)

**Advisers:** Ben Rhodes (BRH), Abbie Clark (AC), Helen Kerr (HK), Vicki Marshall (VM), Laura Rossiter (LR)

**Apologies:** Pete Gear

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Actions Agreed</b>	<b>Who</b>
16/24 f	Staff to inform governors of opportunities to capture student voice, one week in advance	SLT/SLs
16/24 i(i)	Invitations to be sent to governors for 6 <sup>th</sup> form presentation evening	LB
16/24 i(ii)	Parent voice to be sought re newsletter. AMc to meet with SN on 14.12.23	BR/AMc
16/24 i(iii)	Governors to be invited to link faculty meetings	SLT
17/24 b	Subject crib sheets to be distributed to governors	BR/Clerk
17/24 c	Parent Governor election to be held in Spring Term	Clerk
17/24 d	Postcards to staff to be distributed. Names to be sent to TC	BR/TC
19/24	Governor Health Check to be distributed to governors	Clerk

**13/24 Apologies and Welcome**

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were agreed and accepted.

**14/24 Declaration of Business Interests**

None disclosed.

**15/24 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the LGB meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and the S&C Meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> September were agreed and signed as an accurate record of each meeting.

**16/24 Headteacher Report**

BR explained that the format of the report had been changed in line with that used by other Equa schools; Focusing on the SIP and its key actions relating to Attendance, Behaviour and Experience and Curriculum, this format enables members of SLT to engage in the self-evaluation process. Governors were invited to ask questions regarding each section of the document.

**a) Attendance – Laura Rossiter**

LR shared that whole-school attendance is now 91.5% which is 0.1% above national average.

A breakdown of data into groups shows the following: girls – 90.1%; boys – 93.9%; FSM -87.1%; Non-FSM – 92.9%; Persistent Absence – 24.9%

**Governors asked what had contributed to the improvement in overall absence.** LR explained that the sustained focus on attendance, particularly for those students attending AP or considered to be vulnerable to non-attendance had contributed significantly through the use of Triple P (Personalised Provision Panels) and ITAC (Individual Team Around the Child) meetings during which, barriers are identified and interventions put in place and working with parents. This has seen a significant improvement for students with EHCPs. There has also been a focus on students arriving late in schools/late to lessons. **Governors asked what next steps had been identified.** In addition to retaining a relentless focus, LR explained that the school were continuing to work with the Education Welfare Service. As a result, a blanket letter would be sent out to students with borderline attendance.

**Governors asked if there had been any pushback from parents.** LR explained that although there are some relationships to build, parents are largely on board and want their children to be in school. There are still discussions taking place linked to mild illness and term-time holidays.

**Governors then asked what was in place for Y11 girls and Y11 students with an EHCP.** VM explained that the data re EHCPs was impacted by one student. LR explained that a multi-agency approach remained in place for Y11.

**b) SEND – Vicki Marshall**

BR reminded governors that only students with an EHCP now access external provision and asked VM to explain how provision is quality assured. VM explained that provision is accessed from the Wiltshire Approved Providers list, for which the LA has carried out due diligence on behalf of schools. In addition, the school also visits providers and ensures that key policies and procedures relating for example to safeguarding, safer recruitment and risk assessments are in place and in line with school policy (these are also available on the school system).

**Governors asked how school know that they are doing everything that they need to do to ensure student safety.** VM shared that in discussion with other local schools, the school are very proactive. HK added that the school's good practice has been identified at the West Wilts Alliance Behaviour & Attendance Committee.

Moving onto data, **governors asked about the positive impact on reading and what had led to this.**

VM explained that this improvement was a result of the school's targeted corrective reading programme focusing on both decoding and comprehension, which TAs deliver skilfully and confidently. Reading for pleasure is encouraged as students are involved in choosing the books read and are thus engaged in the process. VM added that timetabling is also considered to ensure that they are not withdrawn from subjects such as PE, DT etc.

The plans for the **Resource Base (RB)** are progressing well. The school has been given further funding to facilitate the build. The school has also been asked to consider raising the PAN to 30 (this will be phased) on completion. Although there are currently 6 students accessing the RB, 10 places have been funded for this year due to the cost of staffing. VM has requested funding to be accessed in blocks if numbers rise beyond 10.

**Governors asked if there had been any movement on recruitment.** VM explained that a highly skilled member of staff, formerly the HT of a specialist independent school, had been employed. BR added that the school are currently looking to employ additional TAS however this is proving to be challenging.

**Governors asked if access to the canteen will be an issue.** BR explained that potentially, this could form part of Phase 2.

**Governors asked why additional money had been made available.** VM explained that the LA are spending money to save money due to the need to place students out of county.

**Governors asked what opportunities the RB students would have to be part of the wider school community.** VM stated that the school aims to achieve a 50:50 split of time spent in the RB/mainstream by the end of Y7. She gave examples of integration already in place: Speech & Language interventions and lunches are fully integrated; students from the RB are attending mainstream sessions in Spanish, cooking, art and RE as appropriate. Students also attended PGL. VM added that the school are currently considering how to progress students to GCSE with an expectation that they will access the 5 core subjects plus one another through a reduced curriculum.

**Governors asked if the proposed PAN of 30 would be across all year groups.** VM replied that this was correct.

#### **c) Quality of Education – Abby Clark**

AC shared that Tracking Point 1 (TP1) shows a positive picture however a focus still remains on boys, PP and SEND students. To ensure that this focus is maintained, Department Leads attend SLT meetings to share planned interventions/support/how teaching has been adapted for targeted students.

A recent Maths review showed that students continue to increase in confidence and resilience but that this is still a focus. Y11 are currently sitting mock exams so the school will have access to current accurate data

for this cohort. The school were given specific criteria to follow for mock exams – exam conditions, paper to sit etc as the data has to be kept for future reference.

**Governors asked what was in place to ensure best outcomes for students.** AC explained that the National Tutor Programme (NTP) is up and running in school and that the relentless focus on attendance had impacted on outcomes. Quality first teaching remains a focus. BR added that VM is leading on adaptive teaching to support students with SEND. AC emphasised that the gap between PP and non-PP students was quite significant and that plans for PP spend were based on EEF guidance with around 50% of funding being designated for teaching and learning.

**Governors asked if the change of role for Amy Eysers had had a noticeable impact.** BR explained that it was always known that the transitional period would be difficult but now that the schools were now more aligned JoG was beginning to see the benefits of the merger and that this would increase.

**d) Pupil Premium – Abby Clark**

AC shared in addition to the NTP, the impact of Academic Tutors (AT) in KS4 had been very positive, with students showing twice the progress made from Mock 1, in comparison to those who did not access the provision. Ideally, the school would like to employ an AT for KS3 however due to budget constraints this is not an option currently. The school is currently part of the Wiltshire Affordable Schools project.

Emma Jefferies has been tasked with leading on PP across the school with a view to beginning focusing on barriers etc at the point of transition from primary schools.

Despite current concerns, PP remains a strength of the school. Progress 8 measures for PP children show JoG has a P8 score of 0.42. The national average P8 score was 0.57 whilst Wiltshire was 0.8.

In a list of Wiltshire schools showing outcomes for students, JoG was placed 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Governors asked AC to explain what was involved in the Wiltshire Affordable Schools programme.** AC explained that the school needed to meet a specific set of criteria in order to be accredited as an Affordable School. Surveys have been sent to parents to identify barriers that students may face which will impact negatively on learning. This could be the cost of uniform, cost of trips etc. The information received will enable the school to remove these barriers. The school aim to achieve the Bronze Award by the end of the academic year. **Governors then asked if the surveys will focus on computers and connectivity.** This has currently not been identified as an issue however the school continues to support students by providing laptops and dongles where needed.

**e) Safeguarding, Vulnerable Learners and Behaviour– Helen Kerr**

In addition to the information outlined in the HT Report, HK provided context for governors. Currently, 5 children without EHCPs access onsite AP. There are an increasing number of children accessing ESA support. Targeted provision for these students is a focus for Triple P meetings. A Social Worker Assistant

currently works in school one day per month to support students. There are also an increasing number of students requiring pastoral support for mental health and well-being.

As CPOMs was now being used to record incidents; this may result in a marked increase in incidents due to how the system works.

**Governors queried the number of vulnerable/students with medical needs in Y8/Y9.** HK explained that the increase in numbers is due to the school successfully supporting students with additional needs e.g. there are currently 3 students in wheelchairs. **Governors asked if accessibility is an issue for these students and whether additional measures need to be put in place.** BR gave examples of additional measures the school has put in place for students with additional needs citing the creation of a new area for students with food allergies, additional ramps etc. Timetabling has also been a focus to ensure students can access rooms. **Governors asked if consideration should be given to installing a lift.** BR explained that the school has a lift however this needs to be replaced which would cost tens of thousands of pounds. TC stated that due to the growth in the Equa Trust and subsequent funding increase it may be possible to bid for funding from Equa.

In addition to the above average number of pupils with SEND (school 15.2%, NA 12.4%) HK noted that the school faces increasing challenge from the number of students with EAL as a number of students are from non-European backgrounds.

The number of students accessing Elective Home Education has also increased. The school continues to advocate a return to school for these students.

#### **f) Behaviour – Helen Kerr**

HK explained that a second PEX had been upheld this week. The school is continuing to support the family although it is unlikely that the decision will be appealed.

Suspensions are significantly down when compared to the same point in time as last year (13 to-date to 55 in 22-23) showing that the actions taken are having a positive impact, however, SEND students and DLs are still over-represented.

The school has recently been awarded the National Anti-bullying Silver Award.

**Governors asked how student voice would be captured going forward.** HK gave examples of meetings with students that it would be appropriate for governors to attend. It was agreed that SLT would inform governors of such meetings one week in advance.

**Action** - Staff to inform governors of opportunities to capture student voice, one week in advance

#### **g) Quality of Teaching & Learning – Amy Eysers**

AE updated governors on the Developmental Drop-in Cycles (DDIs) for the Autumn Term Each cycle constitutes an open observation focusing on an aspect of pedagogy followed by a coaching session during which actions are decided upon; these are followed up in a subsequent drop-in. In the Autumn term the

focus was on ensuring that students are able to articulate links to previous learning. Drop-ins show that students have made positive progress in this area.

DDI Cycle 2 will focus on the impact of recent CPD on adaptive teaching. Monitoring and evaluation of students books will focus on SEND/non-SEND to ensure consistency of expectation as well as outcomes. Trust level actions were shared: In the Spring Term, two TD days will focus on 'Curriculum Journeys' and 'Building Oracy in the Curriculum'.

Staff continue to engage with National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) as part of succession planning.

**Governors enquired as to who is now responsible for conducting DDIs.** AE explained that in the Autumn term she, along with Lead Practitioners, carried out the DDIs however, in the Spring this would be delegated to middle leaders due to the focus on curriculum.

**h) Post 16 – Linda Baines**

Mocks have taken place for Y13. Analysis of data at TP1 show a positive picture when compared to 2019 data. The ELP programme has been used to look at value-added. This has shown some inconsistencies in some subjects which may be due to staff changes. Students have been identified for additional support and will be invited to attend Y12 lessons where timetabling allows. The school is also using some of the 16-19 tuition fund to buy into Uplearn.

**Governors noted that vocational subjects had an unusual profile in comparison to previous years.** LB stated that a number of students were due to resit Applied Science which should impact this. Caution had also been applied in considering Sport and Health & Social Care.

- i)** BR drew attention to and answered questions on the remainder of the report. The RAG ratings on the section relating to school improvement show a positive picture however significant issues with staffing has slowed progress in some areas, particularly where long-term absence is an issue. Due to difficulty in obtaining supply staff, cover has been facilitated by JoG staff.

**Governors asked if the previously identified lagged delay in dealing with HR issues has improved.** BR explained that as Ellie Green is now based at The Hub there is greater fluidity in dealing with issues.

As mentioned by other members of SLT, P8 at TP1 paints a positive picture. **Governors asked why if behaviour and attitudes had improved there was a focus on students taking more responsibility for their own learning.** BR explained that as behaviour had improved, the school want to ensure that student are actively engaged in the learning process rather than passive receivers of information.

**Governors asked if recent recruitment had been successful.** BR explained that the decision to recruit 4 faculty admin staff and a member of staff to the data team, who is also supporting attendance, has had a

positive impact. BR then outlined current issues with recruiting teaching and support staff. The school have been unable to recruit a music teacher but have sourced long term cover from T3. Due to being unable to recruit English and science teachers, some classes will need to collapse – there is capacity to do this. Adverts will continue to be placed. A long-term supply science specialist is currently being considered. Mark Lee is taking on the vacant AHT role. The school continues to advertise for TAs. The site team is also one member down however, Matt would like to offer this role to an apprentice later in the year. A cleaner has retired after 35 years at the school.

In relation to **Leadership & Management**, BR shared that a complaint had been made in relation to the school's handling of an attendance issue (which had followed school procedure) which led to a parent contacting her MP and Ofsted. This led to a meeting with the LA; the school came out with flying colours however the LA did not send their report to Ofsted. This resulted in an investigation by Ofsted and the initial complaint has become a qualified complaint (on record).

BR stated that increased communication between stakeholders and governors would be beneficial to the school. **Governors asked how this could be facilitated.** BR suggested that governors could contribute to newsletters, attend upcoming presentation meetings, Carol Service etc.

**Governors commented that although they found the newsletter informative, they wondered if parents read it due to the length.**

**Action** - It was agreed that parent voice would be sought.

AC reminded governors that they could attend link faculty visits. Governors shared that they were unaware of when these were happening.

**Action** – SLT to ensure that invites are sent out.

BR went on to describe the positive impact made by the extended leadership team's projects in school including the KS4 tutor programme focusing on well-being, GDPR etc.

BR then asked for comments on the new report format. **Governors agreed that this was a useful tool, particularly in view of the school being in the Ofsted window, though it would be useful to speak to SLT in report order.**

## **17/24 Chair's Report**

### **a) Equa Update**

The Equa/Mead Trust merger is progressing. Four Trowbridge schools (Southwick, Grove, Studley Green and North Bradley) and a Lavington school will also be joining the trust.

### **b) Governor Training/Development and Link Governor Visits**

TC reminded governors to ensure that statutory training was up-to-date. A governor with outstanding Prevent training indicated that this was now completed.

Due to time constraints AH is unable to continue as DL link governor. SO to take on responsibility.

**Governors stated that they would like to continue to engage with SLs to ensure they were clear about the school's offer, outcomes across subjects etc.** It was agreed that governors would continue to liaise with SLs with whom they were previously linked. MS indicated an interest in becoming link governor for maths.

**Action** – BR to send subject crib sheets to LS to forward.

**A governor shared** that he visited Jog in November 23 and carried out monitoring and evaluation with HK on the Single Central Record and on IT filtering.

**c) Governor Vacancy**

Gemma Pugh has unfortunately had to step down. TC suggested that an election be held for a parent governor.

**Action** – LS to source paperwork for T3 meeting.

**d) Postcards**

**Action** – BR to send names of staff to TC.

**18/24 Policies**

The consolidation of JoG/Equa policies is almost complete. Policies will be available at the meeting in T3.

**19/24 AOB**

- Governor Healthcheck shared.

**Action** – LS to send link to governors

The meeting closed at 7.58pm. Date of next Board meeting: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_