

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting
7th February 2024

Time: 6 pm
Place: The Hub
Present: **In person** –Toby Corden (TC), Amanda McClean (AMc), Daniela Coy (DC), Andrew Hawkins – 6.12pm (AH), Ben Pope (BP), Jo Trigg (JT)

Via Teams - Pete Gear (PG), Martin Sanders (MS) – 6.12pm, Ben Rhodes (HT), Abbie Clark (AC), Laura Rossiter (LR), Helen Kerr (HK)

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

Apologies: Kevin Eames (KE), Sophia Olezynski

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
16/24 f	Staff to inform governors of opportunities to capture student voice, one week in advance	SLT/SLs
23/24 d	Helen Kerr to send Behaviour Essentials to LS for distribution to governors	HK/LS
26/24 a	Parent Governor Vacancy to be advertised	LS/SN

20/24 Apologies and Welcome

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

21/24 Declaration of Business Interests

None disclosed.

22/24 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the LGB meeting of the 6th December 2023 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Outstanding action(s): 16/24f - staff to inform governors of opportunities to capture student voice, one week in advance

23/24 Headteacher Report

TC welcomed members of SLT to the meeting

a) Attendance – Laura Rossiter

LR shared that following mild illness which requires 48 hours away from school (D&V), whole-school attendance is now slightly below national average.

The absence of students with SEND has risen slightly and Y10 attendance remains strong however, the attendance of Y11 girls and children entitled to FSM in Y9, remain a challenge.

Strategies continue to be implemented, including the use of positive feedback to parents where attendance has improved. Y8 and Y9 leads are in the process of delivering additional focused support linked to mental health and well-being at school, coming to school during menstruation and how to deal with challenging social situations in school. Blanket letters have also been constructed linked to late arrival which show accrued learning time lost as a result.

In order to communicate with 'harder to reach' parents, SAMs are now being offered via TEAMs and home visits.

Interviews are currently being held for the role of attendance admin officer. So far this process has been unsuccessful. A further interview is due to take place however, the post may need to be revised and readvertised.

Governors noted that attendance in the south west is currently 3% lower than the national average and was this the normal picture. LR replied that attendance figures for the south west normally run slightly below national average.

Governors asked how mental health was being supported in school. LR explained that the school continued to implement both national and local strategies as discussed previously and that the packs distributed during SAMs contained links to additional, external agencies who could provide support.

b) Quality of Education – Abby Clark

AC shared that predictions for the average SPI , based on the recent mocks, has decreased slightly from Tracking Point 1 (TP1). It is believed that this data is more accurate due to the way in which the mocks were delivered and marked in line with end of year statutory assessments.

English and maths have both improved since TP1 which is positive for the school, particularly as Progress 8 measures will be placed on hold for two years due to the lack of SATs data during Covid.

Other headlines were shared including that the priority focus on boys' attainment was having a positive impact as the gap is closing.

Although overall, students with SEND continue to achieve at or above national average, students with EHCPs remain a concern (attendance is a key factor) and SEND boys remain a key priority.

Students entitled to Pupil Premium continue to be a cause for concern.

AC also drew governors attention to the change in Vocational Qualifications: if students do not pass one of multiple units of the course, they fail the course overall.

Y11 interviews have just taken place; these interviews have underlined the fact that the students are not taking responsibility for their learning outside of school. A piece of work is to be planned to address this and to encourage parents to engage.

Governors asked if the timing of the mocks, changed to December, was appropriate and if this had impacted on outcomes and if so, how this would be addressed going forward. AC signposted governors to the previous discussion regarding the changes made and explained that some resits of English, maths and science will take place shortly. In future, two mock periods will take place, one in December and one in the spring term.

Governors asked if AC could share information about the new mentoring role for male students and perceived impact. AC explained that mentoring was currently being trialled in Y10 and Y11, having begun in October. The mentor, who is an experienced coach, holds 1:1 meetings with targeted students; these sessions focus on raising aspirations and supporting the students with next steps e.g. completion of college applications. Feedback from students has been very positive and initial monitoring shows a greater focus from the students in lessons which in turn should lead to an acceleration in progress.

c) Safeguarding, Vulnerable Learners and Behaviour– Helen Kerr

In addition to the information outlined in her report, HK informed governors that currently, 343 students are involved in a safeguarding focus across all levels (Concern, Early Support, CIN, CP etc). This represents a high percentage of students. Of the students at CIN/CP level, 7 are in KS3 and 12 in KS4 and the majority are linked to Risk Outside the Home (ROTS) i.e. criminal exploitation, drugs etc.

Services, including adult social care, are stretched. A number of parents in school are also dealing with their own mental health issues which impact on the students. If issues are raised, the school are requested to carry out a DART or Early Support Assessment (ESA).

Governors asked if school could support the parents in any way in order to reduce the impact on students. HK replied that unfortunately, parents fall outside of school remit regarding safeguarding and as such are unable to ensure parents engage with support. Consequently, the focus on students mental health remains a priority.

Governors asked if the recent guidance relating to gender identity would change the school's approach when supporting children struggling with identity issues as this may impact on student mental health and well-being. A governor followed this up by asking if all governors should read the guidance.

HK advised that as the document was currently being consulted on, governors would be best served by waiting until the consultation was complete and any amendments had been made. She went on to explain that the school had concerns about informing parents however, no official changes such as change to name etc were ever made in school without parents being aware.

Governors asked if the role of Safeguarding critical friend had been shared with Ofsted. HK confirmed that this was the case.

In addition, see confidential minute.

d) Behaviour – Helen Kerr

HK drew governors' attention to the comparison of behaviour over the past three years and the improving picture, particularly when considering aggressive and physical behaviour towards staff.

Although there have been a small number of racist incidents as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, numbers remain low and will continue to be monitored.

HK shared concerns that behaviour tracking shows that PP students, boys and SEND students are still over-represented.

Governors asked if there had been a dip in behaviour as a result of Ofsted. HK replied that if anything, there had been a sharper focus.

HK also explained that the school reward system is currently under review as a result of perceived inconsistent application of the system by staff. **Governors asked if the relaunch would mean more of the same.** HK responded that she is working with members of the School Council to ensure that rewards meet student need and ensure that the reward tariff has a proportionality. This will then be relaunched to staff to ensure buy-in. HK went on to share the Behaviour Essentials Model to be adopted in support of the relaunch.

Action: HK to send Behaviour Essentials Chart to clerk for distribution to governors.

HK also shared that due to a falling birthrate, the school was expecting a slight dip in numbers in 24-25 and as a result JoG's approach to transition was being reconsidered. In order to ensure that behaviour remains good, part of transition will focus on being 'secondary ready'. Visits to local schools, summer school etc will also continue.

e) Post 16 – Linda Baines

Headlines of data analysis at TP2 were shared with governors. These continue to show a positive picture, which is a significant improvement on 2019 data. 86.6% of students are predicted A* - C grades with 61.6% achieving A*-B. Based on TP2, the average expected grade overall is B.

Uplearn (an online tuition program) is now being used to support Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Maths. Students have responded positively to the scheme.

Biology and Sociology have both seen an acceleration in progress, however chemistry remains a focus. It

LB commented that the second round of mocks, following those in November, were timetabled too soon.

Governors asked LB to expand on the 'Finance for Life' programme being offered to students. LB

explained that this formed part of the school's non-qualification curriculum as a result of the push for maths following Covid. It has been well-received by students, who see its relevance to their future as it focuses on savings, credit cards, insurances etc. **Governors asked if this would benefit KS4 students.**

LB responded that the school's PSHE programme already contains aspects of financial management at KS4.

Governors asked how about the impact of the promotion of the 6th form on numbers for next year.

LB stated that Y11 interviews had focused on ensuring that all KS4 students had meaningful destinations for KS5 and 6th form had been considered during these. Currently, almost 100 students are applying for 6th form with a further 40 external applications, including 21 from Lavington, being considered. It is expected that some of these are part of multiple applications. As ever, final numbers will depend on GCSE grades.

Governors asked what the conversion rate of applicants to take-up of places was expected. LB replied that based on previous years a decrease of around 25 students could be expected. **Governors asked if this would give JoG a functioning 6th form.** LB stated that the school will need to be mindful of numbers when planning courses however, it is hoped that it will be possible to run a music 'A' level in 24-25; this is to be celebrated.

- f) Governors thanked BR and the school team for all of their hard work leading up to Ofsted and for the detail outlined in the report.** BR drew attention to the ongoing impact of staff absence and how hard staff were working to ensure that students were still offered the best education possible

See also, confidential minute

24/24 Chair's Report

a) Equa Update

The Equa/Mead Trust merger continues to progress with a decision being made by the Regional Board on the 19th February. Due diligence continues to be carried out by the new hub of schools. Mel Jacobs is leading the project and met with hub members yesterday. A solicitor has been retained by the schools to further the move towards joining the MAT. If a positive decision is made on the 19th February, the schools will formally join the MAT on the 1st June 2024.

b) Ofsted

TC thanked everyone who was able to contribute to and support the school during the recent Ofsted

c) Governor Training/Development and Link Governor Visits

TC reminded governors that the link for the recent Equa finance training was available on Governor Hub. This links to monitoring that governors complete throughout the year

25/24 Policies

Although some issues with formatting were noted, the acceptance of the policies outlined on the agenda was proposed by TC and seconded by AH. Policies are noted as ratified.

26/24 AOB

- a. Parent Governor Election – LS shared letter to be sent to parents. It was agreed that this should be sent out on 19th February.

Action – LS to send information to SN

- b. MS queried if he should contact the maths department to introduce himself as the new Maths Link Governor. This was agreed.
- c. **Governors asked when the school was likely to receive the Ofsted report.** BR stated that due to the recent pause in inspections there was no backlog of reports, however, it is not expected before next term.
- d. **AH tendered his resignation with immediate effect due to a change in personal circumstances.** BR and TC thanked AH for his hard work and support over the years. This was echoed by all governors.
- e. **AMc reported that she had met with SN re the newsletter as agreed.** She explained that SN had asked if governors were able to send info for the newsletter occasionally.
- f. **See confidential Minute 2**

The meeting closed at 7.48pm. Date of next Board meeting: Wednesday 27th March at 6pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____