

Minutes of a meeting of the Governor's Education & Standards Sub-Committee held on Thursday 22nd November 2018 at 6.00p.m.

Present: Ms J Mills (Chair) Mr A Worth
Mr P Buckland Miss R McMann (Clerk)
Mr M Worrall Mrs T Boving-Foster
Dr T Castles Mrs R Chapman

Visitors: Mrs J Bellas (SEND),
Mr A Martin & Miss V Smith (Heads of Sixth Form)

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 4

Governors in attendance – 6 until the end of item 4, 4 thereafter and for the remainder of the meeting.

Ms Mills chaired this meeting until the end of item 4, Mrs Boving-Foster chaired the rest of the meeting.

Prior to the start of the meeting, round the table introductions and welcomes were extended to Mr Worrall, new Governor.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mr Hansford (work), Mr M Bauer (family) & Dr Mawson (in school production). It was noted that Mr Shephard is now on the Finance committee.

2. Declarations of Interest in Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest

3. SEND Update E&S201819(4)

To begin her update, Mrs Bellas circulated an anonymised personal learning plan of a KS4 student on the autistic spectrum. Formerly an IEP, this document has been changed to adopt a more holistic approach, showing the strengths of each individual student. It has a system where targets are written and updated every 8-12 weeks. As the example demonstrates, KS4 targets are written in the first person as Mrs Bellas works with the pupil and parents to write them.

This particular example is a success story. When in year 7, this pupil would see Mrs Bellas on a daily basis and spend their lunchtimes playing strategy games. Now, this individual has a group of friends and only sees Mrs Bellas once a week. Success is measured through involvement, for instance, they are in the school production. Mrs Bellas wished to acknowledge the teaching assistants and subject teachers who have made a connection with this pupil.

Questions and comments on this document were as follows:

- *Find this form to be very good. However, how does the system work when supply teachers are brought in (TBF)?* This is done via the SEN register which has brief key details of each child which has enough information for the supply teacher. They do not see the personalised learning plan as this is deemed to be too confidential and the SEN register does not leave school. Additionally, supply teachers get a copy of the seating plan of the classroom and Mrs Warner is very good at organising cover with regular people who get to know the school and students very well (JB & RC).
- *How do you measure the engagement in the plan (TC)?* There is an open door policy for staff and students. Teachers will regularly visit, give positive information and ask questions / for advice when necessary. Contact with the pupil and their parents / carers is crucial in order to build up a trusting relationship to facilitate openness and if required, to be frank (JB) Mrs Bellas has incredibly strong relationships with the students (RC).

The Governors felt that this was a very positive document and congratulated Mrs Bellas on the implementation of it. All Governors gave back their example copy to Mrs Bellas due to its confidential nature.

Mrs Bellas drew the Governors attention to page 4 of her previously circulated report, which details action points for the year. In particular, it is the aim of herself and Mrs Chapman to write a Mental Health policy which involves Heads of Years and tutors in an anxiety management programme. The rationale for this comes from the current six months wait for a CAMHS referral and that they have a strong desire to develop resilience amongst students. It is envisaged that the anxiety management programme would consist of six weeks 1:1 support with Mrs Bellas, three weeks support from the Head of Year and thereafter, support from the form tutor. If required after this period, Mrs Bellas is still on hand to help support.

Questions and comments arising from the report were as follows:

- *Is the trend for anxiety increasing and is it a particular year group (AW)?* Yes it is increasing and for the first time have seen anxiety related OCD in Year 7. Additionally, Years 10 and 11 (not just girls) due to exams. The school is doing a lot to put things into perspective for students. However, students feed off one another but teachers are incredibly supportive. This is a national problem that is becoming more recognised (JB).
- *Is there something the most able Sixth Formers could do to help those going through their GCSE exams (TBF)?* There is already a buddying system in place and there is more work to do with this (AW).
- It is a 'catch 22' situation as external resources have been cut back and schools and staff like Mrs Chapman and Mrs Bellas are expected to absorb this, adding more and more pressure (PB)
- Trying to implement practical measures to avoid unhealthy dependencies (RC).
- *Would it be feasible to try and get volunteer adults to help as a buddying system (TBF)?* Whilst could potentially buy-in a hired counsellor, students can become dependent on them and what if money

for this runs out? Also, do not want to over-compensate (PB). This is complex - a lot of these children are vulnerable and need one trusted key adult and if the volunteer decided to leave, it could promote feelings of abandonment. Additionally, they need to develop independence ready for the world of work but of course where necessary specialist help would always be sought (JB).

Ms Mills thanked Mrs Bellas for her time and excellent report. Mr Buckland added his thanks for the fantastic, highly professional job Mrs Bellas does with a warm human side. Mrs Bellas left the meeting.

4. Link Report: Sixth Form E&S201819(5):

Ms Mills introduced the Heads of Sixth form who have been in post for two years now and handed over to Mr Martin and Miss Smith to present their views on the department as it was confirmed that everyone had read the previously circulated report.

Miss Smith began by saying that they had been awarded a smooth transition but were keen to innovate. Mr Martin supported by SLT, reduced his role, giving up as the Head of History in order to afford more time as a joint Head of Sixth Form. Overall, they both feel that their skill sets complement one another and they have a good knowledge of the 240 students. They broke their report down into highlights and challenges:

Examples of some of the highlights / achievements are as follows:

- Physical: created a giant study space, created a games room, kitchen has been re-done, re-organised the IT, moved their office downstairs for greater visibility, lockers installed, speed humps in car-park.
- Academic: new reporting system which identifies those who are struggling and parents are emailed regularly with both positive and negative feedback as appropriate., new contracts, re-done the website, more emphasis on apprenticeships alongside university, better Oxbridge programme (this year 19 have applied for Oxbridge which is greater than normal, so far 6 have had a response and 5 of these have been granted an interview).
- Pastoral: Sixth Form student council which led to the establishment of lockers, changes to the prefect system, prospectus changed to reflect their style, training on teenage mental health.

Areas where they feel there are challenges were reported as follows:

- Facilities: they felt that Mr Buckland is working hard on this but the last ten years have seen the Sixth Form site on and off for sale which means that now from the outside at least, the Sixth Form looks run down and does not reflect the forward thinking of the school.
- Two tutors are on prolonged absence which has a big impact as Mr Martin has had to pick up an additional 23 UCAS forms which is a big strain

- Variety of A-Levels: they believe that the variety on offer at QEGS is one of its USPs. These courses are currently offered even though some classes run with only 3 or 4 students meaning they are costing the school. They are keen to maintain this if possible.
- Administrative support: whilst both Miss Smith and Mr Martin greatly appreciate the administrative support they have, they feel that a specialist Sixth Form administrator is needed as some of the work is specialist and thus, ends up being bounced back to them to do. They are sympathetic of the budget constraints but this means that they are under time pressure, doing a lot more work for a lot less pay and Mr Martin felt that this was the correct forum to give this view. However, both Miss Smith and Mr Martin concluded that they do the job they do because they love it.

With regards to the future, they feel there is still a lot more to do. They cited a consultation on the Sixth Form dress code which was currently underway. Additionally, they are continuing to build up links with local schools, for instance Mental Health Course which UCC are involved with, as well as looking further afield to recruit students.

Whilst the Governors took a few minutes to digest this information and think of any questions, Ms Mills said that she felt privileged to work with Miss Smith and Mr Martin. She felt that between them they cover every aspect of assisting these students to become young adults and are constantly improving what QEGS has to offer. She gave her thanks to them for their work and taking the time to attend the meeting.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- *In Governors meetings we are discussing ways to increase revenue and attracting more students to Sixth Form is often mentioned. Thus, what is the best way to attract students and where from (AW)?* It is a tricky balance – the biggest catchment is Carlisle but do not feel can aggressively recruit as a lot of local schools have a Sixth Form. Feel that we are getting better at selling QEGS (VS). As a counter argument, most of the students which are difficult are external ones. The reasons for this are unknown but it could possibly be because of the ethos of the school. However, more numbers is good for finances and being able to run under subscribed courses (AM).
- In relation to the above, there is no funding for Sixth Form or Sixth Form expansion . Funding is at around £4,000 per student – if it had gone up in line with inflation it would be £7,500. The area to concentrate on is the numbers in the main school (PB).

Mr Buckland concluded that the school makes the most of what it has got, runs courses that other schools do not and he wholly appreciates Miss Smith and Mr Allan and the work that they do. Miss Smith and Mr Martin were thanked for their time and left the meeting. Dr Castles and Ms Mills also left the meeting.

5. Minutes of Education and Standards meeting held Thursday 27th September 2018 E&S201819(6)

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record and Mrs Boving-Foster signed them.

6. Matters Arising

With regards to the admissions policy it was noted that this was on hold (this was discussed at the last Full Governors' meeting). Mr Buckland felt there are no issues with the current policy.

7. Headteacher's Update

Highlights from Mr Buckland's update were as follows:

- 882 students on role.
- 1 Looked After Child in Year 7 and also 1 in Year 8
- No child protection cases
- Achievement of the Head of Maths was noted – they have been selected as one of only two in the north to attend a Mastering Maths event in Shanghai. An ex Head of Department is to cover this absence.

Mrs Boving-Foster asked if there was any way in which Governors could be involved in the Carlisle Schools Collaboration? Mr Buckland was unsure but said that he would find out.

Mr Buckland presented the FFT KS4 Data Dashboard report sent to Governors. The report does not show anything that has not already been reported to Governors. Overall, he was extremely pleased as the school is placed in the top 25% nationally for progress. This is a particularly great achievement after last years' 'blip'. Mr Buckland went through each page of the report, highlighting the following:

- Variances in the English Language department's results over the past three years, despite the same staff doing the same things. This is reflected nationally and in part is due to the new specification introduced in 2017.
- Maths department results are very significant going from 0.2 to 0.3 to 0.5 in three years.
- Middle attainers are doing very well and he believes this is down to the ethos of the school.
- Concerns with IT are being addressed and it is no longer offered as an A-Level
- Though it may seem statistically irrelevant, it is very pleasing to see disadvantaged students doing so well and Mr Buckland highlighted that each individual student behind the numbers matters.
- Attendance data figures are good with absenteeism well below the national average. Where there are instances of prolonged absence, there is often a reason so must look into the context.

With regards to the English Language fluctuations, Mr Worth queried how the time was split between language and literature. Mr Buckland felt that perhaps slightly more time was spent on literature reading texts and because of this the department is looking at which texts they choose to study.

A short discussion was had regarding the R.E. as it appears not to be as strong as it once was. Mrs Boving-Foster felt that from her daughters' experience this is partially due to the two week timetable. Mr Buckland noted that the attainment is still very good.

Mr Buckland apologised for the short notice of this document but wanted to introduce it to this committee. He felt it should be sent to all Governors but asked Miss McMann to check with Dr Castles if it should feature as an agenda item for the meeting on 13th December.

8. Additional Items to be Added to Next Agenda

- Link Process

9. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 7th February 2019, 6.00pm

Meeting closed at 7.30pm