

Minutes of a meeting of the Governor's Education & Standards Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 22nd November 2017 at 6.00p.m.

Present: Mr C Hansford (Chair) (item 4) Mr A Worth
 Dr E Mawson Mr P Buckland
 Ms J Mills Mrs J Nicol
 Mr M Bauer Dr T Castles
 Mrs T Boving-Foster Mrs R Chapman

Visitors: Mr Wilson, Head of MFL for item 3.

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 4
Governors in attendance – 7 until item 4, 8 thereafter

As the Chair, Mr Hansford, did not arrive until item 4, the Vice Chair, Ms Mills, led the meeting until Mr Hansford's arrival.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mr Shephard, Miss McMann (bad weather: flooding) and Mrs Bellas (ill). **As the clerk was absent the meeting was recorded and the minutes completed remotely.**

2. Declarations of Interest in Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Link Report: MFL

Welcome and thanks were extended to Mr Wilson for attending this part of the meeting to help Mrs Nicol present her report. Mrs Nicol confirmed that all Governors had read the report. Mrs Nicol took the opportunity to ask Mr Wilson to reflect on his experience of being a Head of Department and going through this process. Overall, Mr Wilson reported that he found the experience a very positive one with it being nice to witness Governor interest and for Mrs Nicol to meet other members of the department. to get a snapshot of what the department does.

Mrs Nicol reported that the highlights for her were meeting the team and seeing a busy and productive department. Mrs Nicol wondered if there was an opportunity for exchange visits to be supported by Friends of QEGS to make the cost more manageable for families, as she feels it is an essential part of the curriculum. Mrs Boving-Foster re-iterated this stating that her daughter had learnt a vast amount from taking part in the exchange. Mr Buckland said he would raise this in the upcoming AGM meeting.

It was reported that exchange visits are increasingly difficult to arrange of variety of reasons with more red tape, safeguarding fir instance. Mrs Boving-

Foster added that the way in which the French and German exchanges are arranged closely together in the spring time, meant that her daughter only took part in the French exchange as this came first and felt it was too much to miss two weeks of school in one term. Additionally, there is the economic aspect of this to consider. Mr Worth agreed with this point but can see why they are planned in the way that they are and that there is the return visit which happens in the summer term to factor in. Mr Wilson reported that this year there is not enough up-take to run the French exchange and that presently, the German one is hanging in the balance. Mrs Chapman reported that this is representative of a national picture, with fewer schools running exchanges. Mr Wilson stated that the school trips are being looked at as a whole especially if it becomes apparent that in the long-term exchange trips are not viable.

Mrs Nicol wished to note the issue of IT resources. Mr Buckland confirmed this is something that is being looked at and will chat about the possibility of getting another machine with Mr Wilson tomorrow.

Given there is a paper for Governors to discuss on the curriculum review later in their meeting, Mr Nicol asked for Mr Wilson's thoughts on this. He stated that Dr Mawson has gone to great lengths to ensure that staff have been consulted on the issue. He felt that the department's position on it is that it is regrettable that languages may just become an option but the current wave just is not working particularly in year 11 and thus must be realistic about it. He added that there is a degree of flexibility in the department due to part-time workers and another member of staff who is due to retire at the end of the year. Dr Mawson added that she wouldn't want to discourage students from having the breadth of the curriculum and studying a language.

Mr Buckland extended praise to Mr Wilson for the tremendous job he is doing. Thanks were extended to Mr Wilson and he left the meeting.

4. SEND Update

As Mrs Bellas was unable to attend the meeting and Governors had received copies of the documents, Mr Buckland asked for any questions or comments from the Governors. Mrs Chapman felt that the report was very clear and that Mrs Bellas does an excellent job with the case studies designed to show how things work in practice. This was echoed by Mr Buckland, especially given the funding constraints.

Ms Mills cited her concern about the help available for these children during the holidays. Mrs Chapman reported that she does do a lot of work with families, as the children are only in school for around 6 hours a day and more regular contact with parents is one of Mrs Bellas' targets for 2017/18 to ensure that there is continuity at home. However, the holiday period can be a worry and the start of a new academic year presents a backlog as Mrs Bellas and her team have to check that every child is ok.

In response to a question from Mr Bauer, it was confirmed that external agencies such as CAMHS do not have the resources to allocate each child the time / help they require and external agencies are putting the responsibility

onto schools. Mr Buckland cited an example where a child who tried to commit suicide is not considered a high enough risk for CAMHS to intervene and presently, the school is the only agency helping this child. Ms Mills cited her sympathy with the school highlighting the enormous pressure this will put onto staff.

Mrs Chapman informed the Governors that herself, Mrs Lowes and Mrs Bellas have attended a national 2 day first aid in mental health course, funded by the Government and there are a couple of heads of year scheduled to do complete this on the next round of funding.

Mrs Boving-Foster asked if the trend reported last year on an increase in stress and self-harm was continuing. Mrs Chapman confirmed that this was the case, that it is growing and this is one of the reasons she made sure that QEGS was one of schools in the first cohort to do the mental first aid course. By volunteering to be a help centre, more staff have gotten through the training quicker. Mr Hansford queried if there was a gender split in this area with Mrs Chapman stating self-harm is more girls. However, in the case of anxiety both sexes suffer with girls being more likely to come forward. Mrs Boving-Foster felt that part of this is the pressure of being in a grammar school and the expectation to do well. Mr Buckland answered that this will feed into the later curriculum discussion and presents a national issue with selective schools. Ms Mills asked if this is covered in the curriculum with Mrs Chapman stating that the previous Citizenship Day the school ran was centred around mental health and dealing with stress. However, she acknowledged more needs to be done and she has set herself the aim of writing a mental health policy.

Mrs Chapman also made the Governors aware that QEGS deals with a full range of mental health issues from stress to substance abuse, domestic issues and rarely sexual abuse. Mr Hansford brought the discussion to an end by asking that Mrs Chapman sends thanks from the Governors to Mrs Bellas for the hard work and commitment she displays.

5. Minutes of Education and Standards meeting held Wednesday E&S201617(17)

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record and Mr Hansford signed them.

6. Matters Arising

With regards to conducting another ‘Governor Day’ Mr Buckland has looked at some dates and suggested 25th June, 4th July and 12th July as potential dates and these all fall prior to a sub-committee or Full Governors’ meeting. Mr Buckland suggested it may be nice to hear more from Heads of Department about their role and do some training for Governors. Dr Castles echoed this sentiment stating he feels it is important that Heads of Departments and Years get to know the Governing Body. Mr Hansford felt the obvious date was the Full Governors’ meeting. **Action: Miss McMann to circulate the potential dates and obtain which is the best.**

7. Safeguarding Policy

Mrs Chapman built the new policy on one from 'The Key' which has been written to reflect the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document, which all Governors have signed to say they have read it. Dr Castles asked for confirmation that the two new Governors have read it. **Action: Mrs Chapman to check.**

Mrs Chapman went through the policy, explaining the detail behind it and that she has added things such as a policy for dealing with 'sexting' (appendix 5, page 25) and a new document 'recording safeguarding concerns' which staff have recently been briefed on. Whilst it is not statutory it is a recommended practice which will now become mandatory in school. In response to Ms Mills' question, Mrs Chapman confirmed staff have responded positively to this. Overall, Mrs Chapman concluded that this is designed to be a working document for staff to adhere to their statutory requirement and be able to follow a process. There are no concerns about any staff here and regular communication and training is in place.

Questions and comments were invited:

- *Page 4 is there anything about pregnant students (TBF)?* There is nothing specific in statutory guidance about it but would come under the difficult situations section
- *Page 5 should the name of the Safeguarding Governors be there (TBF)?* It does state that they can contact the Chair of Governors via the clerk but can put Ms Mills' name in. **It was agreed to put a contact list at the start with Ms Mills named as the Safeguarding Link Governor, but no personal contact details and that contact would be made via the school.**
- *Is bullying a part of the whole safeguarding policy (TBF)?* That would be covered in the behaviour policy but can put that in.
- *Cannot seem to find the children's use of mobile phones and media policy on the website (TBF)?* It is within the behaviour policy.
- *Apart from approving the policy, how do Governors monitor safeguarding (TBF / JN)?* First step has been taken by naming a Governor dedicated to safeguarding (TC). It is the Governors' job to check with Mrs Chapman that she is managing safeguarding (EM). Ms Mills was keen for a paper trail and Mrs Chapman suggested devising a list of key safeguarding questions. Dr Castles felt that link Governors should be asking their Heads of Department that they understand safeguarding and if there are any issues and feed this back to Ms Mills. **Action: add another category to the link governor report form to reflect safeguarding (Mrs Nicol with input of Mrs Chapman)**
- *Would like to see Safeguarding questions OFSTED would ask (AW)*
- *Statistics which Governors must be aware of is that a standing item on the agenda (MB)?* Not presently but will form part of Full Governors' agenda and this will be done via Mr Buckland's report.
- *Page 14 says that all Governors receive training about safeguarding, does this reflect the 'Keeping Children Safe uin Education' document or are we missing something (TBF)?* Perhaps as part of the Governor Day there could be a session on safeguarding.

- *Attended safeguarding meeting and there was a document which summarises concisely what Governors need to know (TBF). If this is sent to Ms Mills and Mrs Chapman to look at and if she is happy this will be circulated to all Governors via Miss McMann.*

Mrs Chapman asked that all Governors familiarise themselves with the documents.

Dr Castles gave some feedback stating that Mrs Rae will conduct some training with Governors as to what is their strategic role versus what is the operational role of the headteacher. It is anticipated that this will be done in the Full Governors' meeting in January.

With the above revisions to include the anti-bullying policy and the key contacts the Governors' unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

8. Children Looked After Policy

Presently, this is not a statutory policy but will be as of April 2018. The policy is the recommended one from the Virtual School, which is part of the Local Authority that looks after Children Looked After and has not been amended. From April the guidance states that their needs to be a named teacher who deals with Children Looked After, which the school already has and a named Governor. **Ms Mills agreed to take this on as it links very closely to safeguarding.**

Also, all Governors must be aware of how many Looked After Children there are in school. Presently, this figure is two who are in long-term placements and one child who is deemed as 'edge of care' which means they have recently come out of care. Governors must also ensure that Mrs Chapman has written these children their PEPs (Personal Education Plan) which has been done and can be shared in an anonymised form. A key part of the PEP is to celebrate what these children have done well. **Mr Hansford asked that this also forms part of Mr Buckland's update to Full Governors.**

These children are entitled up to £1,900 worth of funding. However, Mrs Chapman must apply for this money and agree with the carers and social worker what it is to be spent on. This can vary from school trips to music lessons to sporting activities or a cost on the time Mrs Bellas spends with them.

Dr Castles asked this is reviewed on an annual basis and that is reflected in the policy (it is recommended that it is reviewed annually but at least once every three years). **It was agreed that this was reviewed at the same time as the Safeguarding Policy.**

The Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

9. Code of Conduct

This is a review of an existing policy which has been tweaked to remove any out of date information or change any names where necessary. Mr Bauer, having experience of writing such policies, would add into the honesty and integrity section something broader about the best interests of the school and

he was happy to submit some wording to Mr Buckland as it would cover a multitude of expectations. Mr Buckland was happy with this suggestion.

Subject to the revision, the Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

10. Whistleblowing Policy

This is a review of an existing policy which has been tweaked. Mr Bauer had the following suggestions:

- 7.1 link to safeguarding policy and have contact details
- 7.2 from a legal perspective to add some wording to say where something is disclosed verbally, it will be likely that you will be asked to put this in writing.
- 8.4 by stating within 10 days, where practicable a response will be given – make sure the wording does not give the impression of an absolute promise whereby the school will be held to account if this is not done
- 8.7 change wording to ‘*may if appropriate* arrangements made for you to receive advice’ rather than stating that this will happen and the advice could well be internal.

Subject to the revisions, the Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

11. Headteacher’s Update

Mr Buckland gave the following updates:

- Attendance at 97.1% versus national average of 94.5% - more detail to follow in report to Full Governors
- By Christmas will be full in capacity in year 7 and 8. There are 874 students on roll.
- There has been a single two day exclusion of a year 11 pupil for verbal abuse and threatening behaviour against a member of staff.
- Staffing issues: Mr Field, network manager has requested to return to a full-time teaching role as soon as possible, which will be an additional cost of around £30,000 to the school for a new network manager. However, it is hoped that this will be balanced as the school will no longer have to pay for some external support as is currently happening. An advert and job specification have been prepared with the advert due to go out next week with the aim of appointing straight after Christmas. An external provider will be used to talk to the candidates and set a test so that employ the best candidate who can do the job well.
- Sabbatical in the R.E. department due to family reasons which has been accepted. There is current capacity in the school to meet that.
- Mrs Johnston, outdoor education co-ordinator, has resigned. The work she has done over the years has been greatly appreciated. Mr Nightingale from Science department will take over
- Duke Of Edinburgh been moved to outside of school as is a massive undertake which understandably no-one is willing to take on. Mr Field will co-ordinate with the school and the external provider.

- Mrs Cannon, science technician for fourteen years, has resigned. Temporarily taken on a temporary member of the science staff for the rest of the year.
- Looked at summary of enquiries of results from the summer of last year. Of 133 candidate requests, 45 came back with an increased grade, 2 with an increased grade for a particular unit, 8 with an increased score, 14 with a lower score (did not affect their grade) and only 64 with no change.
- Thanks to Ms Ellwood who has done a great job with the exams and the JCQ issued a letter praising the school for the way in which it has handled exams over the last three years. Mr Buckland has written to Ms Ellwood to acknowledge her hard work.

Curriculum Review:

It was noted that there have been consultations with staff since 10th October 2017 and now feedback will be obtained from this committee and it will also go to Full Governors on 7th December 2017.

Dr Mawson gave a presentation based on the previously circulated document, which has also been viewed by all staff members on 16th November and feedback from an open staff focus group had been obtained prior to this. The main focus is to bring Governors into the consultation process, to have the opportunity to ask questions now and to reflect upon it and send any questions / thoughts to Dr Mawson. The confidentiality of this item was highlighted as it is just at a proposal phase and any final decisions need to be communicated properly with the wider community.

The context for this proposal is that KS4 results were not as good as they could have been coupled with feedback from Heads of Departments that a review of The Wave needs to take place in order to be able to support both staff and students. Dr Mawson advised that when making key decisions, Governors must go back to the school's ethos and aims to ensure that this is what we deliver for the students to give them the best quality education.

The key questions highlighted in the document for KS4 are:

- Should students take 3 or 4 option subjects?
- Should MFL be compulsory for all?
- Is timetabling fit for purpose?

The focus group strongly felt that 3 options was the way forward which represents a national picture. Dr Mawson presented the ways to implement this, as shown in the document and the implications for the school. Model 1 shows that a modern language would be compulsory and that two other subjects would be chosen. Model 2 favours students choosing an Ebaac subject (French, German, History and Geography) and then two other subjects. Model 3 shows that students that pick 3 subjects of their choice.

Dr Mawson referred to the previously circulated document which shows different model options.

The presentation was concluded by Dr Mawson stating she was happy to go into more detail, answer any questions, or take feedback at any point before the close of the consultation which is 9.00am on 30th November 2017.

Questions and comments during and after the presentation were as follows:

- *Have we consulted universities on dropping to 3 option subjects as most students from QEGS go on to study at university (TC)?* Some universities would still prefer students to have a language and the school's stance would be that the majority of them take a language but some students would find a language restrictive.
- *What percentage go to Russell Group universities (AW)?* About 65%
- *What are other selective schools doing (MB)* Visits to other schools have been conducted as well as taking part in a selective schools survey. The majority had last year dropped to three options last year with a split between those that have a compulsory language and those that do not.
- *Is R.E. compulsory in other schools (AW)?* Most grammar schools do the GCSE in R.E. as they are able to do it in less time given the ability of the children and a good win with grades.
- *How many people were in the focus group (MB)?* 15-20 and all staff have been involved in the consultation. To date, there have been 25 responses to the consultation.
- *Found the document hard to follow blind (MB)* Did not like to give it out prior to the meeting, however, given the volume of information it is a tricky balance to achieve.
- *Is there any reason why R.E. couldn't be optional (MB)?* It is a statutory requirement that schools have to allocate time to study R.E. and presently deliver this as a GCSE under significantly reduced time. Cutting back would not present any advantage to the timetable.
- *Feels that R.E. is important in order to give students a rounded curriculum (TBF)*
- *Although strongly in favour of children studying a language, having listened to the presentation feels that if there are students who feel they will not use a language and thus, are unmotivated, why put the teaching staff and other pupils at a disadvantage (TBF)*
- *Felt it important to gain the opinion of Mr Wilson in his capacity as Head of MFL on the matter as he was present earlier in the meeting and was very open when the link report was being compiled (JN).*
- *Better for students to actively choose their own subjects – promotes a much more positive learning environment (TC).* This was echoed stating that there are one or two students who have been forced to do a language and it has an effect on the rest of their option subjects as it is a sticking point for them. If go down this route, there would be much more communication and parental input at the beginning of the process.
- *If reduce to three options will there be a backlash from current year 10s who have four option subjects (TBF)?* There already are issues in this area with requests to drop a subject. Due to timetabling it would not be viable to have a policy whereby current year 10s had the option to drop a subject at the start of year 11.
- ***Results were not as good and this is largely apportioned to The Wave. The first data drop for current year 11 is also not great and looking similar to the outcomes of last year. If do the same with year 10 and a***

there is a similar end result, this would be a three year pattern which would trigger OFSTED (PB)

- *With the above in mind when did this trend start (CH)? The trend began this year because the curriculum has changed to be broader and more difficult and all exam based. This year will see pupils take GCSEs under a new curriculum in all subjects and not just English and Maths as was last year.*
- *Emphasise the advantages of taking three options as opposed to four in the presentation to parents in the presentation to avoid any backlash. Employers will prefer 9 or 10 A*s as opposed to 11 As and Bs for example. (CH).*
- *Would be useful for Governors and when presenting to parents to have the data of how many option subjects other selective grammar schools and main competitors are making (MB).*
- *There are a number of people in this school who would be up for the challenge and able to do four option subjects and should be mindful of this (MB).*
- *This was countered by the fact that there may be a very small number who could manage but the majority of them are working so hard that they do not have the time to dedicate to other activities outside of school which is equally as important (TBF). Students are also dealt with on an individual basis and where possible their requirements met.*
- *The Governors role is strategic so it is felt that really is just the number of option subjects and the issue of MFL which they should have input in to (AW).*

The purpose of this meeting was to give Governors information and the opportunity to feedback prior to the deadline. A vote was taken on the number of options and which model to adopt. **The Governors unanimously agreed that they felt 3 option subjects and that model two maintaining the Ebaac subjects were best. If this was to be implemented following the consultation process, this means that most students will take 10 GCSEs as opposed to 11Mr Hansford recommended that he report the final recommendation to full governors as the committee did not feel there was a need for a full presentation at full governors given the depth of conversation which has taken place at committee level and the unanimous agreement. This will be shared by Mr Hansford as part of the feedback from this meeting at full governors on the 7th December 2017.**

12. Additional Items to be Added to Next Agenda

- Sex and Relationships Policy

13. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 7th February 2017, pm

Meeting closed at 8.48pm.