

Minutes of a meeting of the Governor's Education & Standards Sub-Committee held on Thursday 28th November 2019 at 5.30p.m.

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

Visitors: Mrs J Bellas for the annual SEND update

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 4

Governors in attendance – 7 until item 5, 6 thereafter and for the remainder of the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mr Hansford (work commitment). Ms Mills Chaired the meeting in his absence.

2. Declarations of Interest in Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest

3. SEND Update

Mrs Bellas confirmed that all present had received and read her previously circulated report and proposed that the focus of this item should be to look at the action plan for the year which centres on promoting positive mental health and self-care with students being proactive. There are 100 SEND students and over a third of these have mental health problems. Initiatives to help achieve this include:

- Zen Garden: an initiative which Mrs Bellas is working on with the School Council. The children are involved in the design and it is intended to be a quiet space for reflection and chatting. In the future it may also be used for outdoor teaching.
- Weekly teen yoga sessions
- Drawing and talking art therapy which a year 7 pupil with muscular dystrophy has engaged in as there is no alternative therapy about. They are able to release their emotions through drawing. There are no outcomes yet as it is a 12 week programme but the pupil is engaging well with it.

Questions and comments to Mrs Bellas and Mrs Chapman were as follows:

- *Are the mindfulness sessions still going and is this just for exam groups (TBF)?* It was confirmed that they are running for exam students but it

was noted that all year groups took part in World Mental Health Day (RC)

- *There seems to be a very complex level of input on the school's level (JJ)* Yes and this is with very limited training (PB). We are not counsellors but the feedback from parents is one of gratitude that their children have someone to talk to. With regards to the 12 week anxiety management programme, this had limited success as it had few resources and found that students were ok but would bounce into the programme. It is therefore important to promote positive self-care more (JB).
- Reflecting on the above, there are two issues. The more care that is given, the more students seem to need and thus, more staff / time needed for the care which becomes a drain on resources. Secondly, have to look at the personal strain this puts on Mrs Bellas, Mrs Chapman and those dealing with the issues given they do this without recognition or training (PB).
- *There is a balance between resilience and medical intervention which is incredibly tough (MB)*. It is – there is the new pastoral support officer who is getting established, Mental Health First Aid course, Eden Mind the charity have had input with Year 11s and excellent communication between the team so there are a range of things on offer (RC).
- *What are the rules on informing parents (MB)?* We share as much as we can and sometimes this involves some negotiation with the child but not bound by same confidentiality rules as a GP (RC). We take pride in communicating with parents even if it is a quick email update. This is appreciated by them (JB).
- *Do boys feel they are able to come forward and speak to someone if they are struggling (TBF)?* They will pick different people to go to for instance in the Sixth Form they might go to Mr Martin (RC). The children can choose who they go to – we have a very positive and open approach and for those who don't openly talk, we look for signs of them struggling (EM).
- *Externally, social workers for example are offered support. Are there any online tools of support (JJ)?* No and any support would be at a monetary and time cost but it is something which needs to be considered. As a team we talk and share but it is not professional help (RC).
- *As Governors we have to realise the toll it takes on staff and look to get some support for them (MW)* The scale has to be appreciated as students talk to different members of staff so could be looking at least 10-15 members of staff (EM). For example there have been two serious suicide attempts and that has affected a lot of people (PB).
- *Are there more children in need of support or is it that people are more willing to talk about their issues (MB)?* More willing to talk and the culture is not the same as two generations ago. However, it is a national problem, not one which is exclusive to this school (EM)
- There is a lack of investment in services and rise in social media attributes to mental health problems (PB)
- New curriculum which is more exam weighted is not autistic or dyslexic friendly (being dyslexic does not guarantee more time) which means that students become more disengaged and demotivated (JB)

The pressures of the new curriculum has resulted in students going from 11 GCSES to 10 (PB).

Mrs Bellas reported that she is producing simplified personal learning plans for those with social and emotional needs for key workers as there is currently nothing in place and staff would like more information on these pupils. This will be piloted and staff will give feedback. This was welcomed by Governors.

To conclude Mrs Chapman said that they are open to discussion and new ideas. Mr Worrall said that he had found this item very useful and once more emphasised that he is keen to keep in mind support for staff members. Mrs Boving-Foster agreed that this was something to keep an eye on. Mr Bauer said he was very grateful to the staff for their support, commitment and imaginative approach. This appreciation was shared by all Governors present. Mrs Bellas thanked the Governors saying that their support was really felt in this meeting. Mrs Bellas left the meeting

4. Minutes of Education and Standards meeting held Thursday 20th June 2019

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record and Ms Mills signed them.

5. Matters Arising

As the SEND link has changed from Mr Shephard to Dr Jenkins and the Safeguard link from Ms Mills to Mr Worrall if the policies should be updated. It was decided as the correct link Governor is clearly displayed on the website and as the policies are reviewed annually in any case, there was no need to do anything at present.

6. Data Drop

Dr Mawson led on this item with a PowerPoint presentation (attached as appendix 1) on how the reporting system works. Dr Mawson drew attention to the work the school is doing with parents to help manage their aspirations with the new GCSE grading system so that they do not put pressure on their child to get a 9 as only a minority will achieve this in the new system.

As per the presentation reporting is done in three areas:

1. Progress Grade: intervention at an individual level for 'D' with an action plan to support the student and class level for 'C'
2. Attitude to learning: intervention at 3 and 4
3. Target grade for end of Year 11: this is only shared in Year 10/11 and this fits in with the school ethos as do not want students ranking themselves against one another and it also enables this target to be reviewed.

Dr Mawson had previously sent out data for each year group saying that this document will build up over the year with each data drop. It was reported that currently there are issues with comparability and also those who enter the school without a KS2 score cannot be measured.

Mr Worrall commented that he is encouraged by the additional CAT assessment in Year 7 citing that there is a feeling in primary schools that it is comparable to unconditional university offers that once they have been given their acceptance into QEGS letter that they become complacent about performance. Dr Mawson replied that this is why all data is taken into account.

Dr Jenkins asked if Dr Mawson used data tracking for pupil premium and SEND. This was also asked in the context of Governors having knowledge in these areas for OFSTED. Dr Mawson answered that whilst this is looked at the numbers are so small that it is insignificant data. What the school does is compare their data at Year 11 to the rest of their cohort. Additionally, Heads of Departments do have to talk about sub-groups when reflecting in results. With regards to OFSTED all information required goes into the pupil premium statement and all that Governors are required to know is the headlines of each sub group. Mr Buckland added that this is not a big issue in this school as the numbers are so low and thus, would not be the main focus of an inspector. However, Dr Mawson said that she would be happy to show any Governor more detailed data. Dr Jenkins said that she would value the time and perhaps a side of A4 with evidence. Ms Mills brought the discussion to a close for this to be arranged / discussed further outside of the meeting.

Thanks were given to Dr Mawson for the time taken to present on this. Mrs Boving-Foster confirmed that the data itself will be looked at in closer detail in the next meeting as it is presently very early in the year. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

7. Celebration Culture

Mr Worth confirmed that all had read the previously circulated papers and noted that vast list of extra-curricular activities are done outside of staff's contractual obligations. Ms Mills said that this was an amazing list, praising the staff for this.

Mr Worrall said that he does not necessarily agree with rewarding good behaviour in that he felt good behaviour should be expected. He went on to explain that he struggles with this concept as it could promote children to behave badly in order to later get a reward. Mr Buckland answered that whilst he understood this it is important to acknowledge good behaviour as otherwise students disappear. Ms Mills said that she agreed with Mr Buckland that it is a holistic approach, helping to promote positive mental help and fits with the kind and caring ethos of the school.

This led to a discussion about the commendation system generally with Mrs Boving-Foster asking if this works less as the children progress up the school as it becomes less 'cool', they get less and have to do more / work harder to get one. Mr Worth said that the reward system is as such that it intends to get good habits into Year 7s intrinsically and that in actual fact the aim is to get students to be independent of the reward system. Mr Worth agreed that in Year 10 there is a dip but there has been a big uptake in the first term with the Year 11s. The discussion on rewarding good behaviour and the commendation system was closed with Mr Worth reporting that the commendation system is going to be reviewed with discussion about commendations in a variety of areas.

Mrs Boving-Foster asked who co-ordinates all the clubs and activities. This is Mr Dawson. Credit was given to all staff at the school for their time and dedication. Mr Worth was thanked for taking the added time to produce this report in his capacity as staff Governor.

8. Headteacher's Report

As the report for the Full Governors' meeting on 5th December has been circulated, Mr Buckland had no further updates but welcomed any questions. There were none.

Date of Next Meeting

6th February 2020, 5.30pm

To be confirmed

Meeting closed at 7.10pm