

**Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School,
Penrith, held on Thursday 17th October 2019 at 5.30pm in Room E19**

Present

Miss R McMann (Clerk)	Mr A Martin (S)
Dr E Mawson (Deputy Head)	Mr A Worth (S)
Mrs R Shephard (CoG)	Mr P Buckland
Mr C Hansford	Mrs T Boving-Foster (P) (Chair)
Dr J Jenkins (CoG)	Mr M Bauer (CoG)
Mr G Miller (P)	Ms J Mills (CoG)

Visitors: none

10 Governors in attendance until the end of item 7, 9 thereafter and for the remainder of the meeting.

Quorum per article 114 – 8 Governors
(one half of the governors holding office rounded up to the nearest whole number)

GbS – Governor by Statute
MaG – Member appointed Governor
CoG – Co-opted Governor
S – Staff
P- Parent

Round the table introductions were made to new Governor Mrs Jenkins. Mrs Jenkins also outlined her experience and that she was looking forward to her time on the Governing Board.

As per the new format, each person present spoke of a positive experience in the last week. Mrs Boving-Foster also reported that she is trying a new way in presenting the agenda, splitting it into points for information, discussion and approval.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mr Airey, Mrs Rae and Mr Worrall (holiday) and also Mr Ray (work)

2. Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

There were no declarations of interest in the agenda items.

3. Any changes to the declaration of Business Interests

There were no changes to the declaration of business interests. Governors were asked to update and sign forms for the current year.

4. Minutes of the Governors Meeting Held Thursday 11th July 2019

It was unanimously agreed to accept the minutes as a true record and Mrs Boving-Foster signed them.

5. Matters Arising

With regards to the action points from the last meeting:

- It was agreed that the monitoring of the amounts held in each bank account would become a standing item on the Finance agenda
- Mrs Boving-Foster reported that with regards to comparing the NGA and The Key she felt that the online learning was valuable on the NGA but information was easier to find on The Key. Mr Buckland added that he found The Key particularly useful, especially the school leaders section which is accessed nearly every day. To conclude Mrs Boving-Foster said that she would look into the cost.

6. Report from the Finance Committee

In the absence of Mrs Rae and Mr Ray, Mrs Boving-Foster presented the minutes. In response to a question, it was reported that the reserves are still enough to cover the deficit and in fact the deficit is less than originally reported. **Action: all Governors to have a copy of the three-year budget with the changes in it.**

Additionally, Mrs Boving-Foster reported on a session covering the Academies Financial Handbook which was very useful in terms of reminding Governors of their responsibilities and this will be followed up in the next Finance meeting.

7. Results

All Governors were given a pack with a wealth of information prior to the meeting. Dr Mawson presented this item, stating that one of the main purposes of the presentation was to show Governors what the next steps are. Governors were reminded that their packs of information contain confidential information on the front pages.

A-Level

This was reported as a really positive results day and the majority of those who went through clearing was due to the fact they had changed their minds. Mrs Boving-Foster echoed this saying that she could really see the support from staff,

taking care of pupils. The headline was a 100% pass rate with 82% achieving an A* - C grade. The school is in the top 25% nationally. Dr Mawson emphasised that this shows how hard staff have worked especially given the Sixth Form is no more selective than any other Sixth Form college. The improvement in Physics was noted as this has been on the agenda for a while and also a special mention to Art Graphic Design which was in the top 1% for the country.

In terms of going forward, Dr Mawson emphasised that the school needs to continue to challenge the high ability students, keep an eye on performance by gender as there is no year on year theme and also to identify much earlier students that need support.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- *How do the results compare against the targets the school set itself (TBF)?* 24% of students achieved AAB grades, which is deemed to be about right. The school sets targets for Progress 8 and Value added as being positive and tends to steer away from setting targets for grades as this is dependent on intake. 0 is a good place to be and there was a short debate as to why this was the case. Dr Mawson explained that the Sixth Form, unlike the lower school, is no more selective than other Sixth Forms and so there is a full range of average GCSE points and QEGS is unlike other Sixth Forms as it is solely academic, whereas, other Sixth Forms offer vocational qualifications. It was also mentioned that students from school were accepted into the Sixth Form on 4s or 5s as it was right for them to stay in the school setting. (EM). Mr Miller supported the fact that the welfare of the students is supported by staff and they encourage the students to take the path that is right for them.
- *When results are so good how do you target your efforts (MB)?* Each Head of Department always strives to improve and each Head of Department has link leadership meetings (EM).
- *Where there are issues do Heads of Department take responsibility (MB)?* Yes the staff are very professional and want to push forward (EM). There are three reviews, staff are well supported and reflect in their results (AW). If there was a continuing trend, then of course this would be tackled but luckily this is not necessary (EM).

GCSE

This was also a very positive picture and this was also under the caveat that the data does not include remarks and this year has had successful remarks with some still waiting on. It was noted that 28 students made an average of 1 grade or more

progress which is phenomenal. Mr Bauer commented that again the support from staff was amazing. Provisional data shows that the Progress 8 score will be 0.24 but after remarks it could be nearer the 0.27 mark. Even at the lower end of this prediction, it is still above average and the school is in the top 40% of schools nationally.

It was reported that there are a couple of subjects to work with (Chemistry, Physics and R.E.) With regards to R.E. it was noted that this is difficult as this is a statutory requirement to teach it and it is felt that it is better that if the students have to learn it, they should get a GCSE out of it and a lot of students do well from it.

With regards to pupil premium there were two or three students who did amazingly. Overall, it was reported that the gap between the performance of pupil premium children and the other children is smaller than the national gap. In response to Dr Jenkins' question about the small number of pupil premium children in school, Mr Buckland answered that the school is still trying to address this. The current year 7 is made up of 10% pupil premium students. Additionally, thanks to the outreach work selling the school, more and more children are taking the test.

This item was concluded with Mrs Boving-Foster thanking Dr Mawson for presenting such a good overview, placing particular emphasis on how positive it was for Governors to see how things were being addressed.

It was decided that next year the results data would again be solely presented to the Full Governing Body. The data drop will be addressed in the next Education and Standards meeting.

Mr Miller left the meeting.

8. SEF & SIP

SEF

Mr Buckland reported that this has taken the format of an OFSTED inspection and that he has graded the school as outstanding in all categories. Mrs Boving-Foster challenged if Mr Buckland felt that grading everything as outstanding was a fair reflection. Mr Buckland answered that if he marked any category as anything other than outstanding, the school would lose its rating in the event of an inspection. However, he truly believed that the school is outstanding, though that is not say there are not things which could be done better.

As Mr Worrall was unable to attend the meeting, he had sent in some feedback via email. He felt that a comment on the effectiveness of the Governing Body and SLT could be inserted into the leadership and management section.

SIP

This document presents the key priorities for one year and incorporates feedback from staff. Mr Buckland reported that he will be working with Mr Worrall on a new three year plan. He added that it always difficult to keep the number of priorities down in a plan.

Mrs Boving-Foster asked if it would be useful to include an ALPS target. Dr Mawson whilst not disagreeing with the suggestion, she felt that it would not add anything different. Mr Buckland added that OFSTED do not recognise ALPS.

In response to a question about whether there should be more specific focus areas, it was deemed that it would not be useful to single out departments and that every department is in fact very self-reflective.

Dr Jenkins, as a new Governor, asked how this document is monitored by Governors and it was explained that this is on the agenda for every Full Governors' meeting with a traffic light system so that Governors can see how each element is progressing.

Mr Worrall also sent in some comments via email:

- *Would it be worthwhile to do an independent safeguarding and health and safety review once funds improve?* Mr Buckland answered that a health and safety one had been done last year. He agreed that these are useful, but as Mr Worrall pointed out have financial implications. However, this has been done internally using his experience as an OFSTED inspector.
- *With regards to CPD there does not seem to be much for SLT.* Mr Buckland commented that in particular Dr Mawson and Mr Dawson had done a lot and that it would perhaps be worth highlighting this.

9. Governor Roles and Committees (including number of meetings per year)

Mrs Boving-Foster explained that the main purpose of this item was to look at how Governors do their monitoring. The only statutory obligations are to have a link with Safeguarding and SEN. The other areas are at the discretion of Governors. As

Ms Mills is now increasingly busy, it was suggested that Mr Worrall takes on the Safeguarding role.

Mrs Boving-Foster advocated an approach whereby that instead of having a Governor per subject, that instead the SIP should be utilised and align Governors against elements within it. Mr Shephard agreed to look at I.T. development and behaviour. It was suggested that Mr Worrall would perhaps look at quality of education and outcomes.

Additionally, she thought that each of the stakeholders should have a Governor aligned to them:

- Teaching and support staff: Mrs Boving-Foster
- Students and Student Council: Dr Jenkins (especially fitting as Dr Jenkins is not a parent of any pupil in the school)
- Parents and Friends of QEGS: to be confirmed and a **message to be sent to all for volunteers.**

There was a short discussion about what information was needed and what exactly was expected of Governors. Mrs Boving-Foster felt that it was about looking at key questions and that it was a soft area that needs developing. Mr Buckland added that it was about keeping the SLT on their toes by asking them questions.

Whilst staff Governors do not normally take on specific roles as these, it was deemed appropriate for Mr Worth to look at the staff celebration culture and Mr Martin career progression.

With regards to the number of meetings, Mrs Boving-Foster felt that the number of meetings for this year should be kept as it is currently as there will be more reports and additionally research from Mrs Boving-Foster's Chair course suggests that QEGS is in line with other schools in this area.

10. GDPR and Governors

Miss McMann, who prepared the proposal, confirmed that all Governors had read the document. As there were no questions, Governors voted on which option they felt would work best. **It was unanimously agreed to adopt option three (the use of school email addresses and a hub to store documents). The only reservation was the use of the two factor authentication due to a lack of mobile reception in rural areas. Miss McMann will follow this up.**

11. Code of Conduct

Mrs Boving-Foster led on this saying that this needed to be re-introduced and had made some changes to the old one using a model from the NGA. The key point in this document is that all Governors have equal responsibility. As the changes had been highlighted in yellow questions and comments were invited.

It was decided to add in 'as appropriate' to the bullet point regarding the role of the Governor.

Subject to the above insertion, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Code of Conduct. Miss McMann will have copies printed and these will be distributed for signature in the next round of meetings.

12. Safeguarding

Mr Buckland reported that there is a police investigation in the early stages under way. As there is police involvement, no further details can be released at this time.

13. Health and Safety

Mr Buckland reported that Mr Miller had attended the first Health and Safety Committee meeting. He added that Mr Miller will be visiting Heads of Departments, for example, science and technology but on the whole he was very happy with the measures in place in school.

14. Training

Mr Martin reported that he had been working through some of the NGA online modules and that he found them very useful. He added that the emphasis seemed to be on comparing

Dr Jenkins told that she had also been using the online training and found it very informative and accessible,.

Mrs Boving-Foster gave an update on her Chair Development Programme and reported that they had been looking at meeting structure. With this in mind, she reported that she will be going to observe another Full Governing Body meeting and sought permission that another Chair would come and observe a QEGS

meeting. **It was unanimously agreed that this was a good idea and this will take place on the meeting of 5th December 2019.**

15. Headteacher's Report

Mr Buckland confirmed that all had read the report and as there were no further updates invited questions and comments.

At the end of this report, Dr Mawson provided some comparative data for expected Progress 8 scores (bearing in mind QEGS is expected to be at around 0.24):

- Keswick: 0.17
- UCC: -0.44
- Kirkby Stephen: -0.26
- Appleby: -0.2

Mr Bauer commented that it was brilliant context and very useful data to have to see how the school is doing.

16. Notices

Mrs Boving-Foster encouraged Governors to attend the awards evenings. Mrs Mills and Mr Bauer confirmed they would be there. All Governors are asked to let Miss McMann know if they are attending so that Mrs Marsden can co-ordinate seating.

16. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 5th December 2019, 5.30pm.

The meeting concluded with a round the table analysis of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm