

**QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, PENRITH**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Governor's Education & Standards Sub-Committee held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 5.30p.m via Zoom.**

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

Visitors: Mr Munro, SEND report

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 4  
Governors in attendance – 7

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted for Mr Worrall (family).

2. Declarations of Interest in Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest

3. SEND Update

Mr Munro gave the Governors an update on SEND as per the previously circulated report. Highlights from his report include:

- Hit the ground running with sourcing help from external agencies, due to Mr Munro's past experience
- PLPs for almost all or SENH plans / medical plans for those that do not. These are reviewed every 8-12 weeks
- More staff available to help more students due to EHCPs in Year 7 (these are reviewed annually - three reviews have been held and all have agreed that support should continue)
- Everything which Mr Munro's predecessor (Mrs Bellas) set out to do last year was achieved
- Moving forward there will be a focus on social, emotional and mental health needs and have identified a group of Year 7, which would benefit.
- Look to be more creative and holistic in the approach with Teaching Assistants.
- Using cascade models of training within the department and ensuring that staff have their own areas of expertise.

Mr Munro concluded by saying that he felt there had been a positive start to the year. Mr Hansford thanked Mr Munro for his report, saying that the progress made so far is great.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- *From a teaching perspective, Mr Munro has communicated well with staff and settled in well (AW).*
- *Echoing above comments – a very impressive start given the staff changes over the summer. Really like the emphasis on resilience and work done during lockdown phenomenal in transferring Year 6 to Year 7 (JJ).*
- *Need to have a report that links SEND, pupil premium and catch-up that shows the impact of the budget and what the school gets for it (JJ). Mr Buckland will follow this up as soon as possible.*

Mr Buckland re-iterated the positive impact Mr Munro has had. Mr Munro left the meeting.

#### 4. Minutes of Education and Standards meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record. Mr Hansford will sign them as soon as is practicable under the circumstances.

Mr Buckland reported that the Art department are using EduLink. Additionally, he gave an update on attendance figures. The school is still doing well in terms of student attendance – this was at 97% at the end of last week but since have had two days where 70 students have been sent home to self-isolate. However, attendance levels are way above other secondary schools. Three members of staff are self-isolating after a member of staff tested positive but staff attendance is at pre-Covid levels.

#### 5. Catch-Up Premium

Dr Mawson reported that the first tranche of funding had been received and that herself and Mr Martin have been through children looking at those who have the most need.

However, contrary to the press release, the National Tutoring Programme is only for pupil premium and SEN (capped at 60 students), and so needs have been identified in this area. They are only entitled to one subject each (one block of 15 hours) which is subsidised at a rate 75%. In reality, the school acknowledges that these students may also need help in other areas and so provision will be made for that also.

Once this process is complete, the school will utilise the rest of the money for anyone who needs it, be that for academic or well-being purposes. The plan is to start this in January and areas of support will be both a mixture of groups of varying sizes and 1:1 support.

## 6. Child Protection Policy

**Prior to policies being presented Mrs Boving-Foster informed the committee that the Child Protection, Designated Teacher and Equalities Policy all need to be agreed by the Full Governing Body. Therefore, this committee will discuss and challenge, where appropriate, and give a recommendation to the Full Governing Body who are meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020.**

Mr Martin presented this policy stating that it was the statutory annual review. He described that the updates reflect the latest details in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 document and have been incorporated into the policy using The Key. There is a big focus on mental health as well as child sexual and criminal exploitation. Questions and comments were invited:

- *Suggestion that the specific names of the safeguarding / whistleblowing Governor be detailed in the policy (TBF)?* A short discussion was had on this and even though the Governors in these positions may change, as the policy is reviewed annually it was agreed to put names in.
- *Does the list of contacts put undue pressure on Mr Martin to be available at all times, inclusive of school holidays (TBF)?* During holidays, for example, there is an automated email response with a list of emergency contacts and generally check emails once a week (AM).

**Subject to adding Governor names to roles in the policy the Governors unanimously agreed to recommend that the policy be adopted by the Full Governing Body. Once the changes have been made Miss McMann will circulate the policy.**

## 7. Designated Teacher Policy

Mr Martin informed Governors that there is a requirement for an official policy but in essence it reflects what he does currently and makes it clear. Questions and comments were invited:

- *Where has the policy been adapted from (CH)?* The Key (AM).

**The Governors unanimously agreed to recommend that the policy be adopted by the Full Governing Body. Miss McMann will circulate the policy.**

## 8. Data Drop

Dr Mawson led on this item stating that she had put an extra bit on to reflect pupil premium and SEN students. The Year 7 data was tricky to calculate as there were no SATs scores to use and thus have had to use CAT scores. In addition, Dr Mawson reported that there is a bigger academic range in this year due to more late successful appeals and a higher proportion of SEN students. Questions and comments were invited:

- *Thanks to Dr Mawson for preparing and have spoken about next time having some additional percentage data so that whole year groups or of 10*

- or more can be compared (TBF)*. Agreed but note of caution that even in a group of 10, 1 child can skew a percentage (EM).
- *Thanks for displaying pupil premium and SEN data. Is this valuable in school in increasing the profile of these children (JJ)?* As this is shared with all staff it keeps it on their radar as a sub-group. EduLink also does this (EM).
  - *Are there any causes for concern (TBF)?* No, the biggest concern is Year 11 and whether their predictions are too optimistic. The worry is that staff have perhaps been generous with marking as they are sympathetic to what the pupils have been through during Covid. Broadly speaking however, there is nothing hugely worrying and that many of those who have had support have turned things around. The top four or five students struggling have intensive support in place. Year 7 seemed to have settled in well.
  - *It is very positive data given the circumstances (TBF)* Year 7 is just a slightly weaker year partly due to demographics (Keswick undersubscribed) and there were a lot of appeals. Moreover, the new Year 7s have missed a significant part of Year 6 and so not quite as independent (EM).

## 9. Remote Learning Policy

Governors were informed by Dr Mawson that this is a new policy arising from the Corona Virus Act 2020 and was put together using a lot of different resources including: The Key and other model policies. The main aim is writing down what the school is doing and what it will do in all scenarios. The final appendix will be regularly reviewed, monthly or more frequently if required and the policy as a whole annually. This policy may be refined further once the school has seen how it works. Questions and comments were as follows:

- *Concern over section 3.1 of if had children at home self-isolating and also a partner working from home, that would not be able to deliver live lessons (AW)*. This is covered later in the policy and would be reported as time off to look after a dependent. The school is also trying to be flexible and appreciates that some work can be done outside of normal school hours (EM)
- *Does all work have to be on Edulink?* Detail could be on another platform and the link shown in Edulink (EM)
- *School have been supportive and the I.T. department very helpful. Refining the system is moving forward quite rapidly (AW)*
- *Any idea of how many staff have problems with broadband (TBF)?* A minority but the biggest problem is having a separate room or childcare and this is why there are safe spaces in school. Offer staff the flexibility but this has to be balanced with being safe (EM).
- *A suggestion that perhaps going forward to use this policy in other circumstances and not just enforced situations (CH)*. Yes the policy in the rationale says in any school closure and also could be used in cases of long-term absence though there are challenges with doing this (EM).
- *How are the Governing Body to monitor this (CH)?* The policy will be reviewed annually but up to Governors the level although a lot of the policy is operational. Could report back to Governors if there was another lockdown for example (EM).

- *In the next calendar year would like to do a monitoring exercise and perhaps hear from a couple of teachers (TBF) Agreed and it was noted that there has been positive feedback from parents and students using it (EM).*
- *What is the availability IT support staff given that staff who are isolating perhaps have to do work outside of normal working hours (TBF)? Mr Colosi is perhaps too readily available but most support needed has been at the start of live lessons. I.T. staff are very responsive with emails. (AW)*
- *There should be some protection and expectation from I.T. staff (TBF) Agreed this makes sense to have core hours but they also need flexibility to respond when is good for them (EM).*

**It was unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.**

#### 10. Time Off Work Policy

**Mr Buckland reported that the next three policies (items 10-12) were just updates and have been taken from the Local Authority and are approved by the unions and used by all maintained schools under the LA. Therefore it is assumed that Governors have read the policies and questions and comments are invited on each before a vote is taken.**

There was a short discussion about section 8 and the use of the term ‘elective cosmetic surgery’. Dr Jenkins said that in health ‘elective’ is all planned surgery and some cosmetic surgery may be medically essential (well-being and burns for instance). In health ‘limited clinical value’ is the term used to get round being judged by using word cosmetic. Mr Buckland answered that the sentence later that says ‘elective surgery at a doctors’ recommendation’ avoids this issue and so staff would get paid leave as normal.

**It was unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.**

#### 11. Disability Policy

Mr Bauer questioned whether it was obligatory have and to adopt the LA policies Mr Buckland answered that this one is not essential but it links to the Absence and Time Off Work policy and he wanted to have a complete set of policies which covers all bases. Mr Bauer said that he felt that some of the content in these policies was onerous and in some ways this was a benefit but it also puts the responsibility onto school to make allowances. Therefore, he suggested that in the future the policies be reviewed and perhaps be simplified.

**It was unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.**

#### 12. Equalities Policy

Mr Bauer highlighted that on page 5, paragraph 8 there is no mention of ‘sexual orientation’ and this is a protected characteristic so should be included.

Mrs Boving-Foster asked for an update about any transgender students and toilet arrangements as this was discussed at length the last time the policy was reviewed. This is also more prevalent given the current Covid circumstances. Mr Buckland

said it had not become an issue yet and that there are a couple of students in this position. They are happy to continue to use the same toilets, as they are early in the process. Mr Martin agreed with this and that in Sixth Form there is a unisex toilet and that this will be discussed further in the future.

**Subject to the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’ as detailed above, the Governors unanimously agreed to recommend that the policy be adopted by the Full Governing Body. Once the changes have been made Miss McMann will circulate the policy. Additionally, it was agreed that this policy will go to the Full Governing Body every other year (by law it should be updated every four years).**

### 13. RSE Policy

Mr Martin presented this policy stating that the Government have brought out new guidelines with what to teach in this area, which the school already does and the policy just brings everything up-to-date. The Government have asked that the teaching begins in the summer term (delay due to Covid) but the school plans to start this in January.

Mrs Boving-Foster highlighted a typing error in the Year 8 section on page 4 where an ‘and’ is missing. Additionally she asked that the approval process be stated as the Education and Standards Committee.

**Subject to the above revisions, the committee unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.**

### 14. Headteacher’s Update

Mr Buckland reported that the school is coping with Covid (three positive cases in Years 9, 10 and 11 and one staff member). The public health consultant for the County Council telephoned the school noting these cases but praised the school for its handling of Covid and offered any support should it be needed. The positive cases were connected and it is felt that the system works smoothly (seating plans, questioning social groups, isolating within an hour and escorting students off site when parents arrive). Staff are reminding students about ‘hands, face and space’.

There are been 12 Zoom / Teams lessons. The School Cloud is being utilised for parents’ evenings (Year 7 tutors evening and Year 11 parents evening have taken place). These went well despite a few teething problems and a survey has gone out to parents which will obtain feedback on this. Mr Buckland felt the School Cloud makes the process very efficient – two positive emails have been received and no complaints. Mr Hansford said that it worked brilliantly but felt that four minutes may be too short a time and suggested that five may be better. Additionally he asked if it was correct that the survey only had two questions on this? Dr Mawson answered that it is the normal parents evening questionnaire that is issued. So far there have already been 37 responses with some very positive comments. Mr Buckland added that it was great data to show OFSTED and it is a record that goes back 6 years.

Mr Buckland reported that with regards to contingency plans, the Remote Learning Policy goes a long way to cover this and praised Mr Dawson and Dr

Mawson for their hard work on this. Additionally, EduLink is now well embedded in daily practice and a lot of I.T. equipment has been purchased to deliver lessons remotely if necessary. Thus, he concluded that he is confident that the school has the systems in place to cope with any scenario.

Mrs Boving-Foster praised the systems in place but queried what would happen in the eventuality that one of the SLT contracts Covid or becomes ill? Mr Buckland answered that as a team they are trying to maintain social distancing and try not to be together to minimise the risk but unfortunately it is a possibility though SLT are a strong team alongside the administration team.

There has been no change in the GCSE and A-Level examinations for this academic year except for some coursework reduction and exams being delayed by three weeks.

With regards to staff, Mr Buckland said that everyone was pulling together with great spirit but there is no getting away from the fact that they will get tired and stressed in what has been a long term. However, the Children in Need videos produced show the great spirit within the staff and these will be sent to Governors.

Mr Buckland gave an update on the English Department saying that it is being closely monitored but it is quite difficult due to the risks of doing learning walks for example. Mock exams are coming up and the English Department have made their exams more rigorous and realistic. These mock exams will also be externally assessed and there will a clearer picture after Christmas.

#### Date of Next Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 5.30pm via Zoom.

It was agreed that the Full Governing Body meeting in January will be held via Zoom.

Meeting closed at 7.10pm