

**Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School,
Penrith, held on Thursday 5th May 2022 at 5.30pm.**

Present

Miss R McMann (Clerk)
Mr M Bauer (CoG)
Dr J Jenkins (CoG)
Mr C Hansford (GbS)
Mr G Miller (P)
Mr N Ruddick (P)

Mr P Buckland
Mrs T Boving-Foster (P) (Chair)
Mr J Ray (CoG)
Mr P Airey (CoG)
Mr A Worth (S)

SLT present: Mr A Martin
Mr R Dawson
Mrs J Scott

Visitors: none

Governors in attendance: 10

Quorum per article 114 – 6 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

Prior to the standard meeting, there were presentations from the Heads of Department for Politics, Economics, Computer Science and Citizenship

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted for Ms Mills (long-term absence, illness) and Mr Worrall (holiday).

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 interests.

4. Minutes from the Meetings Held in March and April 2022

With regards to the action point for the Risk Register, Mrs Boving-Foster said that this was still to do.

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record and Mrs Boving-Foster will sign these as soon as is practicable.

5. Minutes of the Finance and Pay Meeting held in April 2022

As the minutes had been previously circulated Mr Ray invited any questions or comments. There were none.

6. School Resource Management Self Assessment School Checklist

Mrs Scott presented this item stating that as per the previously circulated document it had been completed, and that she was sharing it with the Governing Body as is required. She said that she felt it was a useful document and invited any questions or comments. There were none.

7. Election of the Chair of the Finance and Pay Committee

Though Mr Worrall had sent his apologies for the meeting, he had stated he was happy to continue as Chair of the Committee in light of Mrs Rae's resignation, with support from Mr Ray as Vice Chair. Mr Ray wished it to be noted that whilst he would have taken on this role, he felt there was a potential for conflict given he conducts both the internal audits and stress testing. Thus, it is deemed to be good governance that these duties are kept separate. Mr Ray will continue his bi-weekly meetings with Mrs Scott and support as Vice Chair.

Miss McMann asked if anyone else from the committee would like to put themselves forward as Chair for the sub-committee. There were no volunteers.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to elect Mr Worrall as Chair of the Finance Committee.

8. Education and Standards Minutes from the Meeting held in April 2022.

Due to the extra-ordinary meeting directly before, this was much shorter than usual with items deferred until this meeting in order to give them proper time and consideration. There were no questions or comments to the previously circulated minutes.

9. Data Drop for Years 10, 12 and 13 (carried over from the Education and Standards Meeting)

Mr Dawson that noted that these are now slightly out of date as a result of them being carried forward to this meeting but invited any questions or comments from Governors:

- *Would be interesting to see what % of students are on track to see their aspirational targets (AW).*
- *It would be useful to look at how to read these numbers and to look at this in a future Education and Standards meeting (TBF).*
- *How is the school improving from mock results to exam results (JJ)? The school does as much as it can and there are a wide range of interventions which are tailored to suit each child (RD).*
- *On the above point it would be useful to have a very brief line / part with an action plan (TBF).*

With regards to Year 11 tutoring, Mr Dawson reported that two students had to be terminated for missing a large number of sessions. There are a further two students with low attendance but there is a background / context to this.

In response to a question from Mr Ruddick around encouraging / provisions for CLA children to apply to the school, Mr Buckland reported that the Admissions Policy had undergone some changes to be more open to social mobility, and will continue to work to enable more progress in this area. Mr Martin added that there has been a lot of outreach work with local schools and getting the teachers on board. Mrs Boving-Foster concluded this item by saying that there are two sides – outreach work and the policy itself which due to Covid and capacity has not yet been updated any further in this area.

10. SEND Action Plan Update

There were no updates from Dr Jenkins other than urging that all Governors complete the online training (details of which have been emailed) by the end of term. Anyone who completes this, should send the certificate to Miss McMann.

11. Due Diligence Update

It was reported that there is a parents information evening next Tuesday with 76 saying they are hoping to attend. Examples of staff queries were around outsourcing catering, the

curriculum and staff contracts. These comments will be passed on but all had been responded to and there was not anything unexpected. Assemblies will also be taking place for Year 7 to Year 12 pupils.

With regards to the due diligence, Mrs Scott and her team are doing the bulk of the work obtaining information requested by West Lakes. Mrs Boving-Foster informed the Governors that the team will be paid for their extra time spent on this, as it is taking a lot of time and is involving weekend work. It is estimated that it will cost between £3,000 - £4,000 – a flat rate will be charged and shared equally amongst the team.

Mr Ray said that the West Lakes deep dive is very detailed and have to look at the reverse process. He said he feels that it will not be as detailed and for him it would be looking at the culture, protecting the non-negotiables, financials and understanding the 6% top slice versus the cost savings. In response to a question it was confirmed that TUPE arrangements would happen post the due diligence stage.

Questions and comments were invited:

- *Is there a precedent to look at or an aide memoir that could be used? Is there an example of a grammar school who has gone through this process (PA)?* There is no one formula and have sought advice from the RSC and NGA - it is very non-descriptive and loose (TBF). There are very few grammar schools in MATS and those that are, are all very different (PB).
- *Is the fact that West Lakes are not consulting a worry (AW)?* It is normal procedure (TBF).
- *It would be useful to look at the agreements West Lakes have made with the primary schools in the MAT and asking for their feedback (NR).*
- *Need to look at what want from this process – autonomy over the curriculum, reserves for example. Comfortable that the culture is a good fit (JR).*
- *The unknown is finance (reserves, budgets, what does the school get in return from the top slice) and Human Resources. Would be good to speak to one of the MAT primaries about this (JR).* If this progresses would advise to leave all our current contracts in place (RD). There are many things which are done in school unique to it (JS).

The discussion drew to a close. Mrs Boving-Foster extended her thanks to the team for all their hard work and urged that as many Governors as possible attend the session with parents next week.

12. Parent Survey

Mr Buckland reported that the OFSTED survey was used and this is the first one done since Covid. Overall he felt that it was a positive set of feedback and invited any comments or questions on the previously circulated document.

In response to Dr Jenkins' question about feedback, Mr Buckland confirmed that those parents who had put their names on the survey had been responded to. Dr Jenkins suggested that there was some really positive feedback which should be communicated. This was backed up by Mrs Boving-Foster who cited the statistic of 96% in question 17 as an example.

Mrs Boving-Foster noted that there were quite a few comments about the dining space and waiting times, though acknowledged that this improved since the provision of the snack bar. Mr Buckland said that this area does need major investment though changes have been made to improve things. Mrs Scott said that she would communicate this to parents.

13. Safeguarding

Mr Martin had the following updates:

- 35 Year 12 students have completed training with Eden Mind to become pastoral students.
- New Pastoral Officer has made a good start and has previous employment history with Barnardos.
- Issues faced by the pastoral team are largely anxiety, particularly in relation to exams. This spans across the whole school as exams have not happened for two years and it is the fear of the unknown.

Questions were invited to Mr Martin:

- *Does the student having an expected grade add to the pressure they are feeling (PA)?* It is a balance between ambition and pressure but the data reviews enable individual conversations to happen (AM). Also, the student does not know of their expected grade until Year 10 and at this point they need to know what they are capable of and must remember the highly unusual circumstances of the last two years. Pressure can come from all sorts of places and feel it is important to be honest about their capability (PB).
- *How do you manage / monitor that these conversations between staff and student are happening consistently? What checks and balances are in place (GM)?* This is achieved through training, the Heads of Year have a spreadsheet and meet with their designated member of SLT and conversations are recorded (AM). Meet with the Heads of Year each week and decide where is best place to escalate / who should intervene with a student where necessary. The school finds the best fit for each student and does intervene (RD).
- *Feel that it is really important to teach resilience right from Year 7, for example in Citizenship (JJ).* These themes are also picked up on in pastoral time (AM).

In relation to the last point Mrs Boving-Foster said it would be useful to see how form time is used in an Education and Standards meeting next year. Mr Worth

suggested it may also be worthwhile to ask Heads of Year to come back and present to the Governors and again this will be planned for the next year.

14. Health and Safety

It was reported that the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee is to take place next Tuesday. As per the Finance Minutes, Mrs Scott said that she had filled out the Cumbria County Council questionnaire and hopes that they will complete an external audit.

15. SIP

Mr Buckland was pleased to report that most targets have been completed on the SIP and has gone very well given the circumstances of Covid. There were no questions or comments.

16. Headteacher's Update

In addition to the previously circulated report, Mr Buckland had the following updates with regards to recruitment:

- Food and Nutritionist post has been filled
- Good field of candidates to interview next week for the History post.
- Congratulations to Mr Dawson on his permanent appointment to Deputy Head
- Interviews for Headteacher position are taking place on the 17th and 18th May.

Mr Ruddick asked if the school has ever brought in a speaker to broadly tackle racist incidents? Mr Buckland replied that he is confident incidents are isolated and there does not appear to be any patterns forming. However, this is taught through Citizenship and any student who is involved in a racist incident is worked with individually. Mr Ruddick thought it would be a good idea to include some text on this in all job adverts and Mr Buckland that this was a good idea which he would follow up.

The next regular meeting will be on 7th July at the earlier time of 11am.

The meeting closed at 19.15pm.