

**Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School,  
Penrith, held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 5.30pm in Room B3.**

Present

Miss R McMann (Clerk)  
Mr M Worrall (CoG) (Chair)  
Dr J Jenkins (CoG)  
Mr A Worth (S)  
Mr P Airey (CoG)  
Mr C Hansford (GbS)

Mr D Marchant (Head, Ex-officio)  
Mrs T Boving-Foster (P)  
Mr J Ray (CoG)  
Mr N Ruddick (P)  
Ms J Mills (CoG)

SLT present: Mr R Dawson and Ms Rourke

Visitors: none

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

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 meeting starting Governors participated in a Prevent training session led by Mr Dawson. There is a quiz to complete which will be circulated by Miss McMann.***

***Additionally, Governors were asked to submit questions they had to the items with papers via email prior to the meeting. This enables Mr Marchant to have the information ready to answer these immediately at the meeting. Of course, questions and comments are still also welcome at the meeting.***

1. Apologies for absence

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

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. All Governors have now completed their annual declaration and this is displayed on the website.

4. To consider any items to be minuted separately

None.

5. Minutes of the Meetings Held in July (x2) and October 2022

There were three comments to add into the first meeting held in July. Subject to this, it was unanimously agreed that all sets of minutes are a true record and signed by Mr Worrall.

6. Matters Arising

In following up to the October policy meeting, Mr Marchant confirmed that he is looking at the Mental Health Policy and the Behaviour Policy is item 11 on the agenda.

Following on from the July meeting, the positions of Vice Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of the Education and Standards Committee are still vacant. There have been no volunteers for the role of Vice Chair and so Mr Worrall confirmed that he is happy to continue as Chair on the basis that should he not be present at a meeting, another Governor will step up and Chair the meeting.

Ms Mills had confirmed that she did not wish to re-stand as Vice Chair of the Education and Standards Committee. Mrs Boving-Foster had volunteered via email prior to the meeting. **A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Mrs Boving-Foster will undertake the role of Vice Chair of the Education and Standards Committee.**

7. Exam Results

Questions via email from the previously circulated document were as follows:

- *A very readable format, thank you, and overall a good set of results. Both set of results are improved compared to 2019, but that was to be expected as the government had said results in general would be between 2019 results and 2021.*

*The below points are in regards to A levels.*

- *Drama has both a lower progress and VA than most subject, though I think it usually performs better (haven't checked). Any thoughts / comments / actions?* Have met with the Head of Year. There have been issues with marking the practical as it has been done online and not in person.
- *How is Environmental Science VA measured? It has an average grade of C+ but a good VA of 0.41. This is a success story from a low ability group.*
- *While EPQ are performing better than previous cohort, neither average grade nor VA is great, and it has the highest student numbers of any subject. Any thoughts / comments / actions?* This is a very different qualification but not where we want to be. There is lots of work moving forward including reviewing staffing and reducing group sizes.
- *RS is low at both average grade and VA, and without going back into old paper I think this has been a weaker subject before. Any thoughts / comments / actions?* Working with the department on this and have been staff absences. The results tend to fluctuate but will stick with this.

In response to a question as to whether the schools results were as good as SLT would like, the answer was yes as the value added and average grades are going up. Mr Marchant added that he would like to improve further. There are some issues at GCSE level. Mr Worrall thanked Mr Marchant for his report on this and that he was sure the school would continue to move forward and that there is not a broad brush approach to this.

**It was also agreed that it would be good to circulate the exam results for the rest of the school.**

#### 8. Report from Finance and Pay Committee, September 2022

In the absence of Mr Miller, Mr Ray offered to take any questions or comments on the minutes. There were none although Mr Marchant updated Governors that the current figure for the year end accounts looks to be around £179,000 (and this is without any support for pay awards). Thanks were given to Ms Rourke for all her work in this area.

Mr Ray also wished to make Governors aware that he has conducted an internal audit, which will be discussed at the Risk and Audit meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November. He reported that the main issue concerns the banking and personnel changes.

With regards to the external audit, Mr Ray said that he had spoken to Mrs Rae and that she would be happy to assist with feedback on the Management Report in writing and that she felt there would not be any conflict of interest. However, after some discussion the Governors felt that as much as they value Mrs Rae's advice, they felt there would be a conflict of interest. Therefore, it was agreed that once the Management Report is available, the concerns will be looked at and then it will be decided if there is a need to take any further advice.

## 9. School Development Plan (first draft)

Mr Marchant explained that this is still very much in draft form and that it is a working document with more things to add. He is looking at all areas and then prioritising whilst being creative with the budget.

Questions submitted via email were as follows:

- *When adding up the cost, I get to approx. £100K plus £60K for the AHT. As far as I know the £100K is not in the budget? and I can't remember re. the AHT? My preference would be to appoint another AHT and PB had told me that was in the budget – it isn't. However, there are other priorities first.*

*The aim of this draft SDP is to get everything identified and then refine after HT and the T&L review. Agreed re: initials and timescales a – also part of prioritisation and finalisation*

- *For following up on the plan the "When" is often unclear or not there.*
- *Some actions have initials allocated to them, most haven't, but I assume that will come.*
- *In general, I have questions on "how will we know" and also thinking of governors knowing, and I'm specifically interested in the areas below. I know we have little time tomorrow, so I don't expect comment / answer on these immediately, unless you have already got there in the process. In general this is about review process both within school and then presentation at FGB. i.e next year's review of this SDP plus the new SDP.*
  - o *Safeguarding Audit... and Students and other stakeholders all are safe (and feel safe)*
  - o *Behaviour ... Students will be more engaged in lessons and actively contributing to what is happening in class.*
  - o *Develop Y12 careers guidance... Students are well informed...*
  - o *Completion of homework... Students' ability to know more and remember more will increase...*
  - o *Pupil Premium... Student wellbeing and happiness is higher*
  - o *Ensure T+L practice is effective, consistent.... Students are highly autonomous and independent, leading to better outcome...*
- *Will there be further reflection of the results and/or overall outcome targets (see also above)? Is the general outcome goal "All VHAP/MAP students achieve in line with FFT 20 targets"? If yes I think that will need a bit of explaining for the board. No further review – though always ongoing. I want to set KPIs but this is proving difficult in terms of data imports at the moment which we are working on.*

Dr Jenkins also commented in the meeting that it was a joy to read, with a good grasp of the issues. She requested that the Student Voice be added to the plan.

**To conclude it was agreed to have a session on FFT20 in the November Education and Standards meeting and that the Student Voice will be added to the plan.**

## 10. Admissions Policy (proposal)

The proposed policy for consultation had been previously circulated to Governors. Mr Marchant explained that he was aiming for the feeling of an academic and community school. His experience so far is that people feel that children from outside the catchment area

are prioritised. Therefore, he would like to retain the academic excellence but make it clear that it represents the community.

Questions and answers from email were as follows:

- *How different would the intake be on the current Year 7 if this had been applied? how many students would come from outside catchment? (apart from the ones including in the first 32 based on academic ability alone)* CEM assessment - In Y7 15 students would have achieved places who did not this year. Equally 9 students who gained places would not have passed the test due to scoring very low in one area. These students have already been identified as struggling and we feel this approach would actually be better for identifying who would benefit from a Grammar School education and students for whom it may not be the best place for them.

GL Assessment - In Y11 the numbers are lower

- *In theory we could get more than 10 PP for a year, how will they be ranked? We then go down to the next oversubscription criteria i.e. distance in catchment*
- *Is it the best option to put children of permanent staff as number 5 before the catchment area?* 3 students would have qualified on this in 2022 so I think it is appropriate and supports in recruitment – n.b. they would have all qualified in catchment
- *As earlier written, I'm (very) worried of the disadvantage rural children will have within the catchment area, so is it possible to do that based on test score?* This should not be an issue – as the pass mark will broadly be in line with historic pass mark. It will change if we can attract more students locally but at that point we are more likely to have an impact on Carlisle based places than rural. For me it comes back to what we were set up to do.

There was a lengthy discussion about the catchment area and a difference of opinion as to the perception in the community, though it was acknowledged that will never be able to please everyone.

**A vote on numerous items in the proposed policy was taken:**

- **It was unanimously agreed to accept the top 20% of test scores.**
- **It was unanimously agreed that point 6 would be ‘catchment by rank’**
- **It was agreed that point 7 would be ‘pass outside the catchment’ with 7 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions.**
- **It was agreed that the policy could go for consultation for admissions in 2024 / 25 with 7 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 1 abstention.**

With regards to Admissions for Year 12 Mr Marchant wishes to change the entry requirements, with a Grade 5 required for English Language and Literature and Maths with an average score of 4.8 for all. It is hoped that this will set the expectation of Sixth Formers lower down the school.

Questions and comments from email were as follows:

- *Same question as for Y7, what would be the consequences if we modelled it on this year students? As I understand it the difference is a stricter general entry requirement than we have now.* Yes – this would have an impact but most students who don't get these grades won't find courses which they can enter so it is about creating clarity and being able to raise expectations of internal students. Our entry requirements are currently the lowest I have ever seen for a Sixth Form.
- *Do we potentially put external candidates from less academic schools at a disadvantage because of the requirement for 8 good GCSEs?* Entry requirements are about ensuring that students can cope with courses. Also by using APS we ensure that they can have one or two poorer courses but strengths will balance out.

Overall, the Governors were in favour of having an academic Sixth Form which sets the bar high. In response to a question about limiting entry from feeder schools, Mr Marchant said that this should not be the case as if the pupils are bright enough they will hit the entry requirements as they are not excessively high. In fact, it may well attract more external candidates.

**A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that the policy could go out to consultation.**

*Mr Ruddick left the meeting.*

## 11. Behaviour Policy

This policy had been delegated to be reviewed and implemented in the policy meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October. There have been no substantial changes to this other than to reflect the DfE review.

Questions via email were as follows:

- *Can you give an overview of changes and why? It looks to me that Roles and Responsibilities are new and the "diagrams" are less detailed, but again a background would be helpful. Just a few comments / feedback as there probably won't be time to discuss it tomorrow.* This came out of the OFSTED complaint follow up and the fact that Roles and responsibilities needed to be detailed. I also feel having a clear structure is really important with sanctioning. It has been really helpful in recent days as there have been some serious breaches and to have a clear reference point for parents has led to fewer issues. Two points which have also come out: Add After School detention to Level 2 (i.e. middle leader). Add Level 2 'Be Respectful' – 'Breach of Code of Conduct travelling to or from school/in school uniform'
- *My experience of the award system over the years has been quite varied, and gained as much as a parent as a governor. Over time it has been discussed at governor level how to make it a fair and proper motivational system, the issue being that teachers have used it quite differently, and only the younger years really see it as something to*

*strive for. This has been supported by comments over 9 years of children in QEGS.*  
Agreed – this has come up at home already!

- *Excellent attendance reward - a question mark re. this as some students for a variety of reasons will not be able to achieve this however hard they want to. Agreed – happy to remove.*
- *Celebration breakfast - this is a purely parental comment. My children have participated in many of these, and I think there is a missed opportunity for SLT and/or other senior staff to inspire/motivate/at least be properly present during these meals. Absolutely.*

**Subject to the amendments shown in the first bullet point, the Governors were happy with the policy.**

## 12. Curriculum Review / School Day Consultation

Mr Dawson presented on this stating that the school is looking at two different models of structuring the school day:

- 5 x 1 hour lessons on a two week timetable
- 6 x 50 minute lessons on a two week timetable

Whilst each model has risks and mitigations, the aim is to ensure more regular contact with groups and there is a concern that there are too many lunchtime lessons. This will go out to wider staff but Mr Dawson wished to invite comments from Governors.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- *Does SLT have a preference?* Open to a proper consultation and there is no agenda.
- *Very positive and like the idea of five minutes more for lunch break.*
- *Will the students be part of this via the Council?* Yes, this is an important part of the process.
- *Is there a plan for the snack bar to get people through?* Have been short staffed but the intention is to run it at second break.

## 13. Health and Safety

It was noted that a legionella contractor has been appointed and also that an asbestos survey needs to be carried out.

## 14. Safeguarding

Mrs Boving-Foster is the new Safeguarding link and will be having meetings on a termly basis with Miss Smith.

**All Governors are reminded to please complete the online training and send their certificates to Miss McMann.**

*Ms Mills left the room whilst the other Governors were given a safeguarding update and returned at the end of the item.*

#### 15. Headteacher's Report

Mr Marchant introduced this saying that he produces his report in a slightly different format but hoped all Governors found it useful. Questions and comments via email were as follows:

- *Year 12 has 118 on roll, which is a disappointing after initial estimate of probably 130. You might not have the background, but why are the numbers nearly 10% down? It quite quickly became clear we were looking at 115-25. Mostly this is externals not taking up the place (probably enticed back by friends). Guidance for some weaker students. 4 students got high level apprenticeships or Newcastle Falcons.*
- *This is only information re. contact time and cover I guess you have already heard that this is a contentious area. When Paul started he cut down on contact time, and my memory is that teacher did do some cover teaching (as you say, it's expensive to cover otherwise), but it was promised them that when the budget was stable and not in deficit contact time would go do - and it did, so we are now back to where Paul started.... It was also part of the discussion of joining WLMAT, which as far as I understand has more contact time than out teachers. Agreed. There seems little understanding of how fortunate we are here and I can understand the reasons for keeping it at 15%. Grammar students do more extended writing which leads to more marking but there needs to be some balance and the 40 period fortnight does not lend itself to workload balance.*
- *How did the admission test go, and how many children took the test? 287 sat. Pass was 66 in catchment and 94 out of catchment*

#### 16. Governor Information Booklet

As time was short, Miss McMann has been given copies of some changes to be made to personnel and wording around suspension. The document will be amended and uploaded to the website.

#### 17. Written Resolution (in respect to proposed MAT)

This item is to make Governors aware of the legal steps and direction of intent.

#### 18. Instructing Representatives during the Potential Transfer

Mr Marchant informed Governors that he needed to appoint a legal firm to deal with the legal transfer, adding that the DfE pay for this.

There has been some confusion as to who owns the site that QEGS is on. Mr Hansford said that the site is owned by the Trustees of the School and that the Charitable Trust owns the property. **Action point: Mr Hansford to send Mr Marchant information on this.**

There was a discussion about who best to represent the school. **The Governors agreed that whoever should be appointed must have no association with West Lakes. Additionally, the Governors requested quotes from three different sources. Mr Marchant will do this, with the help of the Governors working in the legal sector and report back via email.**

#### 19. Notices

There were no notices.

#### 20. Items to be Added to the Next Agenda

The statutory accounts are to be added to the December agenda.

#### 21. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 5.30pm in school.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.