



HARROGATE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Minutes of the Local Governing Body of

held on Thursday 8 February 2024 at 5.30pm

Present: Mr A Lindley (Chair), Mr N Renton (Headteacher), Ms J Watson, Dr J Featherstone, Ms L Charles, Mr J Topping, Dr T Stowell Mr D Hurcomb

Apologies Mr C Howard

Also present: Mrs K Moat, Mr N Mason, Mrs A Toulson (Minutes)

Minute No.		Action
LGB 1	1. Apologies Apologies were received from Mr Howard.	
LGB 2	2. Minutes of the last meetings The minutes of the meeting on 5 October 2023 were agreed as a true record of the meeting. Mr Renton advised that we had saved 10% on energy compared to this time last year. Following on from the last meeting, work is still in progress around providing additional pastoral support. This will start with the appointment of the Deputy Headteacher.	
LGB 3	3. Headteacher's Report Student numbers Mr Renton confirmed that there are no significant changes to student numbers. The only year group that is slightly under PAN is Y11. A Governor asked how the three new students in Y7, Y8 and Y9 were given a place in school. Mrs Moat advised that admissions are accepted either because we have a space, via appeals or through a direction from North Yorkshire. Data Dashboard Things are broadly in line for Y10 and there is nothing significant to report.	

We have analysed the Y11 mock data since the last Governors meeting and there has been much activity with this year group. This was the first time students had sat formal exams. They did not have the formulae sheets in maths and science. The Government have now confirmed that students will use formulae sheets in the summer examinations. The cohort is in a similar position to previous year groups, however, there is still much work to be done. Progression in Y11 will be an area of focus for us, especially when we get back after the half term break.

We now have data for Y12 and this again looks to be a similar position to previous year groups. There is a focus in Y12 around students who are new to the school to ensure similar levels of progress.

The biggest area of concern that is our pupil premium students. We have 36 students in Y11 and unfortunately, the gaps are not closing. We are concerned about this and it is very much part of our focus for Y11. We anticipate closing the gap but, not completely. Mrs Moat explained that she had tried to break down the students into groups of students where we can effect change, and the students that are difficult to reach, primarily because they are not in school. This is a much larger cohort than last year and we are doing everything we can. However, there is likely to be a widening of the gap compared to the past. Where appropriate, we are working hard to make sure these students achieve their functional skills which will enable them to access college and improve their life chances. Some of these students are having tuition at Strive.

A Governor asked if it was possible to analyse the students who are coming into school and are receiving input from us so that we can gauge how we are closing the gap with those particular students? Mrs Moat advised that we do that as part of the data meetings and talk about these key students. Any intervention is prioritised towards those children where we can make a difference. There are a number of those children that are doing very well.

A Governor asked if we were able to communicate with parents whose children do not attend about the impact coming into school could make on outcomes? Mrs Moat confirmed that is already happening and we are having conversations now with parents to discuss what exams we are entering their child for. For some children, to reduce overwhelm, we are reducing the exams they will be entered for so they can concentrate on the ones that will have most impact for them.

A Governor asked if we set the targets and if we measure the children that don't attend school differently. Mrs Moat confirmed that the data that is published nationally, includes every child, regardless of their attendance. This is why we present to Governors the picture of what will happen during the summer exams. Those children, regardless of their attendance, are still our responsibility as a school.

The positive P8 score is despite the big negative scores for some students. We are still striving to reduce the gaps to nothing. We are, however, fighting a national picture of declining attendance and it is becoming increasingly difficult to get some of those hard to reach children into school.

A Governor commented that it is important to remember that we are not chasing the data, we are striving for the best outcomes for every student. The evidence from Trust safeguarding meetings indicates that there is an increasing battle to get some of these children into schools.

A Governor asked if the Phoenix Centre was making a difference for those children that are hard to reach? Mrs Moat confirmed that the provision is predominantly for KS3 students at the moment so, we are not seeing any differences in data for Y11. It is, however, making a difference for KS3 children in terms of them being in school and their engagement. We do, however, have some children who have not been in school for a significant time and are now engaging with the Phoenix Centre and doing well. Hopefully, by doing the work with some of the KS3 students now means that they will be more engaged by the time they reach KS4.

A Governor asked what the recovery plan was for those KS4 students who are currently sitting under grade 5? Mrs Moat confirmed that there are a lot of initiatives taking place and Mr Mason will discuss these later in this meeting.

Mr Renton reiterated that the focus in school is the Y11 outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged students. There has been much work taking place in school and the consensus is that to improve KS4 outcomes, the work has to start in KS3 with students. There are new meetings that are now taking place in school called inclusion meetings which allow us to identify what the student needs early. We need to keep attendance high as we know this is the most important factor when it comes to students making progress. The razor sharp focus is progress for every child.

Attendance

Suspension are lower than pre-pandemic years, however we have had two permanent exclusions this academic year. Mr Renton confirmed that we are still using suspensions as a strategy. The Chair of Governors gave feedback on the independent review panel meeting into one of the permanent exclusions.

Mr Renton advised that our attendance is 2% above national figure but we are not where we want to be as a school, particularly in Y11. We have implemented several strategies but this is still a cause for concern, as it is nationally.

Culture

Sustainability

Mr Renton advised Governors about the new bins and discussions taking place about the potential to rewild some of the school grounds. We are making good progress in this area.

Safeguarding

Training continues to take place and we are keeping the monitoring and checks of iPads high.

There is a real strength in the shift we have made to CPOMS for referrals. This has been a very positive step for sharing information and referrals.

Staff

We are about to go into the period of teacher recruitment. We have had the first Deputy Head assessment day today and we made some successful teaching appointments last week.

Communication

We have received positive communication, particularly about the shift back to Classcharts.

The staff Governor commented that there has been a change in behaviour with students understanding the Classcharts system clearly. The system has more currency with students. For staff, it is an easier system to use. Mr Mason advised that from feedback he has received from parents, they are also finding it much easier to understand.

A Governor queried about a member of staff who joined in October and left in November. Mr Renton confirmed this was correct.

A Governor asked who in school would deal with queries relating to Classcharts. Mr Renton confirmed that this person would be the appropriate Director for that key stage. He requested that all queries are directed to the school.

Mr Renton advised Governors that we had received an Ofsted qualifying complaint. There had been no complaints until recently, until last year when we dealt with two. We did think that this complaint was coming because, in a parental meeting, the parent had advised that they had submitted their complaint. Mr Renton advised Governors of the nature of the complaint. Our response to the local authority will be shared with Governors. No further action has currently been identified.

A Governor asked if it is clear on the website how parents complain. Mr Renton advised that there is clear signposting of the complaints section and policy. Mr Renton reiterated that it is important that any complaints come into school so that can be dealt with by us in the first instance. We have raised before with Ofsted about their filtering of complaints and how we feel that, in the first instance, the school should deal with the complaint, rather than parents going straight to Ofsted. Chairing any recent parent events in school, Mr Renton is reiterating that if parents have any concerns, please come to school first and we will do everything we can to address their concerns.

Finance

Mr Renton summarised the financial position of the school at this time. We are in a much stronger position than this time last year. We are projecting to grow our reserves if we do not spend anything. However, we are planning to invest some of the surplus. The increase in reserves has come from some staffing savings and the biggest area of success in catering. The catering account is showing profit rather than loss.

We need £50,000 to match the external funding we have for improvements to two Sixth Form science labs. We also need to invest in some catering equipment and the changing rooms. We hope to have £20,000 saved from the Burns night towards the changing rooms.

A Governor commented that is important to get the right balance between our spending and reserves and, where possible, investment in the school should continue. During a recent Sixth Form lunch with students, the Governor had been asked about the possibility of providing all weather playing surfaces. Mr Renton advised that one of the things we are working on is the Astro and we have started talking to Harrogate Hockey club who have some funds to contribute towards the Astro being re-surfaced. These discussions are at a very early stage. We can also apply for some additional monies from the new build funds which could also help contribute to the Astro. However, we would only replace the surface and this would be at a cost of approximately £300,000+.

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	<p>The other thing we could do would be to ask Rossett if we could utilise their sporting areas, as the two schools continue to work together.</p> <p>We do recognise that we have some fantastic facilities with the first team rugby pitch and the new netball courts, however, our changing rooms are in need of attention.</p> <p>A Governor asked about the revenue that Rossett receives from their sporting facilities and if any similar revenue from HGS could be used towards the changing rooms. Mr Renton advised that we already lease out the facilities and this has significantly increased over the period of the last year, however, unfortunately the leasing does not bring in the amount of money that would be required to update the Astro surface. It is however, an area of development.</p> <p>A Governor commented on the significant turn around in the catering financial position following the large deficit last year. Mr Renton confirmed that the impact has mainly been through staffing and the slight increase in cost to parents. We have also moved Sustain which is now open all year round and it takes approximately £1000 per day.</p> <p>Development plan</p> <p>Mr Renton confirmed the changes to the progress in the development plan.</p> <p>Governor training</p> <p>A Governor asked if all Governors had completed the required training. Governors confirmed that they are happy to receive reminders, however, could it be specific about what is required and where to find it?</p>	
LGB 4	<p>4. Policies for approval</p> <p>Policies were approved with some small alterations.</p> <p>Mrs Moat advised that we have a GDPR audit in March and one of the actions is for us to have a school CCTV policy which has been written but, unfortunately, was not ready in time for this Governors meeting. Governors confirmed that they were happy to check this policy prior to the audit taking place.</p>	Send CCTV policy to Governors
LGB 5	<p>5. Chair of Governors report</p> <p>We have already discussed the Independent Review panel.</p>	

LGB 6	<p>6. Link Governors</p> <p>Dr Featherstone attended the Sixth Form lunch and attended a Sixth Form meeting. He gave a brief update on Oxbridge offers, UCAS progress and apprenticeships, as well as the focus on the gap between students who were new to the school compared with students who had been at HGS previously.</p> <p>Dr Featherstone had also attended a careers meeting and gave a brief update - however, he will submit the link report in time for the next Governors meeting.</p> <p>Mr Renton updated Governors on the success with the number of Oxbridge offers received by students this year.</p> <p>Dr Stowell confirmed that she attends the safeguarding meetings half termly.</p> <p>A Governor asked about the careers fair and how we can further publicise and contribute. Mrs Hinkins has a clear plan of expansion and if Governors would like to help, they can contact her directly.</p> <p>A Governor asked if we will be publicising the success of the Oxbridge offers. Mr Renton confirmed that we had put the successful Oxbridge offers on social media however, we have an article that typically goes in the local press at a later stage, once we have received all the university and apprenticeship offers. We think that it is important that we celebrate all students achievements in a measured approach. The students have been praised in school and we are very proud of them.</p> <p>The staff Governor confirmed that the Sixth Form team have worked very hard to promote all post 18 routes. The Oxbridge offers come in very early in the process so we want to wait and celebrate all achievements and offers together.</p>	
LGB 7	<p>7. Risk register update</p> <p>Mr Renton advised Governors on the areas of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disadvantage progress • There are a small number of staff who were working in terms of developing performance • There is a slight risk attached to our careers advisor and the succession planning in this area • Learning support are under pressure with the increasing number of EHCPs • Deputy Head appointment • Attendance • Safeguarding audit • Recruitment • Fire alarm • Financial pressures • There are some risks with the current levels of IT service 	
LGB 8	<p>8. KS4 update</p> <p>Mr Mason gave Governors an update on the work that is being done currently with KS4, particularly Y11, to optimise their progress. The successful interventions will then be used as a template for next year.</p>	

Disadvantaged students are always a priority.

Y11 students will sit further mock exams in English, maths and science in March.

Following data meetings with faculty leaders and programme leaders, we have identified groups of students where we feel we can impact their progress.

To date, we have offered a series of additional support sessions in various subjects including subject master classes and we have set up a Showbie folder which includes important information and resources for students.

At the start of September, parents were invited to a supporting success evening which outlined key points for the year ahead and recently, we have had a 'reaching for success evening', which has provided information about how parents can support students prior to the exams. We have also engaged a company called Elevate Education, who will run a number of seminars for 100 of our Y11 students. We have also run assemblies for students which has included items such as the science of learning, how to make learning stick, attendance, motivation, careers and planning for success.

Mr Mason talked about the importance of attendance, how this effects student progress and the strategies that are being used to improve Y11 attendance.

Some targeted groups of students have withdrawn from their core PE lessons for specific intervention sessions up to study leave.

There will be additional study sessions after school every day in G2.

The LRC will still be available for Y11 students to study in during lunchtime. We are also looking to launch a Saturday morning study session after half term. Easter revision will take place, as it has done in previous years.

Mr Mason explained the student ambition card and how this will be used. We will also be using our social media channels to send positive and encouraging messages.

Mr Mason also explained his longer term plans in terms of the transition from KS3 into KS4 and being able to identify students who may need additional support, at an earlier stage.

A Governor queried the process around when parents contact school to advise that their child will be off. Mr Mason confirmed that there are a number of questions that are asked and that clarification is requested in relation to when the child will be back in school.

A Governor gave some feedback on three Y10 maths classes that she had observed today and commented that the young people had been fantastic.

A Governor asked if we had considered introducing a buddy system with older students. Mr Renton explained that this does take place but we will develop this further next year.

Mr Mason was thanked for his presentation and efforts.

LGB 9	9. AOB Mr Renton gave Governors an update on the Deputy Headteacher interviews that are taking place.	
LGB 10	The next meeting will take place on Thursday 9 May at 5.30pm at Harrogate Grammar School.	

Action Points

LGB3 Send complaint response to Governors

LGB4 Send CCTV policy to Governors