



Ripon Grammar School Governors

Full Governing Board Meeting - Minutes

Monday 21st June 2021, 7:00pm, MSTeams

MINUTES

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

1. In attendance

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) Chair, Eric Medway (ERM), Stephen Williams (SW), David Ball (DB), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Matthew Bean (MB), Stephen Chaplin (SC), Kiran Fernandes (KF), Richard Grime (RG), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Vikki Barton-Brown (VBB), Mike Chambers (MC), Helen Stiles (HS), David Winspear (DW), Jonathan Webb (JMW).

2. Apologies

None

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 22 March 2021

These were approved as a true and correct record (proposed by DB, seconded by ERM). There were no matters arising.

5. Governor Resignations

EJ reported the resignation of Kirsten Wood. She has thanked Kirsten for her work on the pastoral and boarding committees. Kirsten was an elected parent governor. A parent governor election will be held in the autumn term.

6. Headmaster's Report

The headmaster presented a full and comprehensive report. This was circulated prior to the meeting.

Points raised by governors included:

- a) *The increase in number of school officer posts this year* - JMW reported the appointment of 15 officers - the increase in number reflecting the growth of the Sixth Form. Additional roles this year have included enrichment, environment, inclusion, diversity. JMW supported the very strong field and the high quality of the applications and the interview performances.
Governors asked how unsuccessful candidates were supported - and were assured of the feedback and support from the sixth form team but also the additional opportunities for roles as school and pastoral prefects.
- b) *The numbers on role have reduced since the last FGB meeting*. JMW reported that a boarding student with significant health needs had been deemed no longer suitable to occupy a boarding place. Such is the severity of the health issues; it was felt that this represented an exceptional circumstance, and the student has been offered a day place.
Governors noted this exceptionality but also rehearsed the rules around boarding and day places - reminding all that a boarding place cannot be converted to a day place.
- c) Governors noted that the long serving staff member in charge of the management information system has retired. They were disappointed to hear that no replacement had been identified - with further interviews planned. The position is currently being covered internally.

Governors asked why the contract for non-teaching staff required only a 4-week notice period - which does not allow time to recruit and allow handover - which is a risk to business continuation. It was agreed that HR discussion was required to review this and adjust the contracts to extend the notice period for key positions to 3 months.

- d) The Early Career Framework which is the replacement for support of early career teacher was discussed. Specifically, the new framework provides a funded entitlement to a structured 2-year package of high-quality professional development.
Governors asked about the impact on school. JMW explained that the change required the induction period to be extended to 2 years and that early career teachers undergoing induction are now entitled to a 2-year training and support programme. To deliver this there will be an internal staff appointment of an early career framework mentor. The ECF funding will support this.

- e) *The introduction of the new CPOMs software and the impact on safeguarding*
JMW explained that is a central electronic record holding data on students - specifically relating to safeguarding and pastoral matters. It enables the transfer of data between and within establishments and enables a further assurance of safeguarding and child protection.

It was agreed that the safeguarding governor would meet with the DSL to review the package.

ACTION – DW TO MEET WITH DSL – July 2021

Governors asked how the system would be implemented and who would use it. JMW explained that all staff members were being trained on the use of this with completion planned by the end of term.

Governors asked of the impact of this on the management of safeguarding issues within school and were assured that this was an additional robust system which would ensure accurate recording of information and improve safeguarding.

- f) The development of middle leaders within school. *Governors asked about the development of middle leaders - which was one of the targets within the School Development Plan.* JMW described the encouragement of ambition and the culture of development that existed to promote this. Governors were pleased to hear of the numerous internal appointments to the recently advertised leadership roles within school, and the competitive nature of these. This contrasted with previous years, which JMW felt was related to making posts more attractive and manageable particularly about workload which meant that appointments were appearing more sustained, with a reduction in turnover. *EJ asked about the use of mentors for those taking on new roles* and were assured of this - bit to support performance but also in terms of wellbeing.

EJ thanked JMW for the report but also for his leadership of the school over year another challenging year. This was unanimously supported by all members of the Board.

7. NYCC Safeguarding Review.

The NYCC safeguarding review was presented.

Prior to the meeting the full report and the school action plan had been circulated. EJ summarised the background to the report. The review was triggered in response to several safeguarding concerns regarding the boarding facilities in the school which had been raised via various channels - and based on these and in partnership with School, the LA carried out a safeguarding review.

The detail of the review and the actions required were presented in detail to the Board by JMW and EJ. Governors were reassured that the School Advisor had already been into school for two visits, and the school were well on the way to achieving the targets set out.

It was noted that most of the issues were related to health and safety, record keeping and site security.

Governors were concerned to hear that one of the areas identified was around the challenge of visitors in school and asked how this was to be addressed. JMW confirmed that he was sharing his presentation with the entire staff team in groups, with an emphasis on the whole school responsibility for safeguarding.

Governors asked about the supervision of students at break and lunchtime and at the start and end of the day. JMW reported the robust reporting mechanisms for supervision duties, a new allocation framework and the availability now of walkie-talkies for communication between staff outside – and the clear identification of supervision staff by the wearing of Hi-Viz jackets. Staff are aware of the mandatory nature of the duties and robust audit measures are now in place to ensure standards are met.

RG discussed the need to focus on culture within the school - and emphasised the need to ensure ALL staff members felt this was their responsibility. He asked that the school use this as an opportunity to learn and develop.

JMW was asked how this would be achieved. He assured the Board that the induction programme was robust but agreed that staff would need regular updates. He described the need to raise the profile of the issues - and the fact that safeguarding would continue to be a fixed agenda item on all staff and departmental meetings.

MB asked how assurance could be given to the board of sustained improvements. It was agreed that the safeguarding and H&S governors would be interacting with staff members, but also the spot checks from SLT and external visitors, along with an increased visibility of the measures being taken should address this.

EJ reported her concern that the advisor, George Tyson, had reported to her that on completion of the actions, there would be no further input from the local authority. JMW assured the board of the ongoing internal audits planned.

EJ asked about the role of the school Health and Safety Committee and was assured by JMW that this committee would meet at the start of the new academic year with the remit of ensuring processes and procedures were maintained.

ACTION JMW (September 2021)

Within the safeguarding review it was noted that governor meetings did not all include health and safety and safeguarding as separate agenda items. This will be included from now.

It was also suggested that the minutes of the meetings must evidence the challenge from board members - again which has been noted and agreed.

ACTION - EJ AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Immediate)

8. Finances

a) Start Budget 2021-2022

SW asked governors to note the outturn as per the papers submitted and discussed in detail the start budget for 2021/2021 that was shared.

He noted that this year has seen a reduction in reserves to £85,045, with the projected out turn for next year being £103,537, based on an in-year balance of £18495.

The budget is based on the following assumptions

1. That covid will not jeopardise boarding income
2. That the 3G pith will be used at 50% letting capacity
3. That there will be 98 boarders from September 2021 (EJ asked the head for his confidence in this number - who reported to the board that 98 boarders have signed contracts and paid the deposit).

4. That this includes contribution to capital expenditure of £157k (which explains the in-year balance of 18.5k compared to balances of 159k for the following year where no capital expenditure has been included).

SW asked for an increase in the detail relating to capital plans and goals for 2022 onwards so that more financial planning could be employed.

ACTION JMW/Finance Manager/SW (October 2021)

EJ noted that for the next two years the revenue from lettings is only projected at 50% of total capacity and asked JMW to investigate marketing opportunities. It was agreed that the school marketing manager be asked to promote the facilities by social media as a start and explore alternative methods of increasing lettings income. It was agreed that this will a role taken up by the DSO eventually.

ACTION JMW/Marketing Manager (August 2021)

b) Capital Expenditure Proposals

Immediately prior to the meeting a proposal and plans for expansion of boarding accommodation to ensure appropriate provision for the boarders in September 2021 were shared.

It was noted that the finances for this were allocated within the budget for the year ahead.

Whilst all present felt that this was likely to be very necessary to support the increased numbers of boarders, they all also agreed that a proposal of such size needed to be evaluated and scrutinised carefully.

It was agreed that the responsibility of this should be delegated to members of the F&P and Premises Committee, who would meet separately.

ACTIONS EJ/SC/SW (July 10 2021)

9. Strategic Items

a) Strategic Development Plan

JMW presented the update on the SDP and the SEF. Governors noted the record of progress included within the document which helped assess progress but also inform further strategy development

Developments included

1. Introduction of A-level Politics from September 2021 - this has been accommodated from within the existing staff team
2. Introduction of GCSE PE from September 2021 - 21 students have opted for this.
3. The appointment of an EPQ coordinator to respond to the increased number of students who have opted for this programme of study within the Sixth Form.
4. The appointment of a Digital Literacy Coordinator
5. The progression with regards to the provision of pastoral care - which has been informed and supported by the outcomes of the LA safeguarding report. *(EJ asked whether staffing resource was sufficient to ensure sustainability of these developments and was assured by JMW of this).*
6. The appointment of HOY 10 and HOY 11 moving the pastoral support to these year groups in line with the rest of the school. JMW explained the year head model provides a better line of accountability and a more individualised response to student need.
7. The appointment of a school councillor - this is a part time role but has attracted a strong field.

EJ asked about the whole school strategy for the next five years and the need to respond to our SEF to deliver this. It was agreed that this would be discussed at a school/governor strategy meeting to be held in September 2021 (date tbc)

b) Estates Development Plan

The progress on the EDP was noted.

Governors noted the large number of projects listed and for the detail of this to be expanded -particularly with regards to priorities and the timelines.

All agreed that the areas on the plan relating to safeguarding and health and safety must be prioritised. It was agreed that this would be led by the Premises and the F&P committees, and this would be reported back to the next FGB meeting - enabling us to prioritise capital expenditure and forward plan.

ACTION JMW/SC/SW/EJ (October 2021)

c) 3G pitch

JMW explained to the Board that the noise mitigation measures had been completed and the 3G pitch was now in use.

Governors noted the reduction in lettings related to cancellations from customers seeking alternative provision because of the delay in completion.

d) Director of Strategic Operations Position

The job description and person specification for this post was shared with governors and the timeline shared.

EJ asked for approval of the appointment committee

Elizabeth Jarvis (Chair), Eric Medway, David Ball, Vicki Barton-Brown, Kiran Fernandes, Kevin Auger, Jonathan Webb.

The appointment process was described - namely a series of interviews and tasks over a two-day period, testing all facets of the job description and concluding with a presentation and whole panel interview. These will be held on 19 and 20 July 2021.

All agreed with this proposal.

e) Governing Board Strategy Event

It was agreed that an event w/c 21 September 2021 be held to discuss the strategy for the school for the next 5 years. Date tbc.

9. Election of Vice Chair of the Board - 2021-2022

Eric Medway was proposed by Tom Cavell Taylor and seconded by Helen Stiles. Eric was thanked for his huge commitment to the Board - and was elected for a further year.

10. Governor Complaints/Appeals

ERM reported that the Pupil Discipline Appeal Committee (now Student Exclusion Committee) had met to respond to appeals made by three sets of parents in response to fixed term exclusion sanctions delivered for the use of homophobic language. The decisions made by the school were upheld in all three cases.

11. Committee Membership and Vacancies

The committee membership was circulated - and it was noted vacancies on the Boarding and Pastoral Committees. It was agreed that no changes would be made until parent governor elections have taken place in the Autumn Term. It was confirmed that no committee had more than one vacancy and therefore business was able to be conducted robustly.

12. Reports from Governor Committees.

a) Admissions Committee

ERM presented a summary of the last meeting. Highlights included the decision to postpone the change in responsibility for the selection testing from NYCC to RGS for at least one year.

The admissions policy has been amended to bring the oversubscription criteria in line with those adopted by NYCC. The boarding admissions policy has also been adjusted to ensure it is compatible with that for day students.

b) Boarding Committee

MB discussed the recent meeting where in addition to receiving detailed and very positive operation reports from Mrs Day, there had been detailed discussions regarding the outcomes of the safeguarding review relating to boarding.

Governors had been assured of the changes made quickly – namely with regards to registration, house security and site security/supervision for boarders during the evening – and that the targets set had been met.

The issues relating to mental wellbeing were also being addressed with the deployment of additional external support but also increased internal training for mental health and wellbeing of students. The health number of boarders was applauded and the high retention rate of Y11 to Y12 was further evidence of the positive experiences reported by the boarders. Governor's plan to attend boarding teas and have more of a presence within the Houses when restriction permit.

c) Curriculum Committee

ERM reported the progress made with regards to the curriculum.

To increase the uptake of a second language at GCSE Y8 students will have a reduction in timetabled French and have the choice to take up either Spanish or German as the second language. It was confirmed that there would be no allocation of this language and it would be choice based.

The committee heard of the rigorous processes in place for public examination grade allocation for GCSE and A level this year – and were confident of accurate and robust grading relating to ability and performance only.

The use of the pupil premium funding for the last year had been discussed – HKE had assured the committee that whilst not all funds had been able to be spent, no needs had gone unmet – and that funding was planned to be appropriately used to support those students who required it.

d) Finance and Personnel Committee

Budget matters were discussed in detail as the major agenda item. In addition, the committee had discussed again the mechanisms in place to mitigate risks relating to non-payment of boarding fees and agreed a mandatory direct debit arrangement that has been implemented.

An external financial standards audit has been commissioned and will be undertaken over the summer months.

The need for a more strategic approach to capital planning was discussed with a view to being able to plan for major projects.

e) Pastoral Committee

The committee had met with the pastoral leaders and heads of years and heard of the work done over the last term. Focus had been on student and staff wellbeing. *Governors had asked how vulnerable students were identified and supported and how we could be assured that no student went unnoticed.* Staff members had described robustly the reporting mechanisms, the escalation pathways, and the secure methods of information transfer.

HOY7 had reported on the positive interactions she encountered on her visits to the Y7 students for September 2021. She confirmed all students would be visited. *Governors asked of the impact of the last*

18 months on those students particularly relating to emotional development – and the staff team confirmed their awareness of the issues and their plans to ensure robust support.

f) Premises Committee

Matters discussed included a detailed review of the safeguarding review outcomes – at the time of the report the full report had not been received by the committee was committed to working with the premises manager and the school to support the delivery of the targets raised. The EDP was reviewed again and a suggestion of re-prioritisation of work schemes according to need but also with a view to long term planning of this and building the planning into the schemes of work.

There is ongoing interaction with the architects appointed to develop a proposal for the new dining facility/performing arts area – with a decision needed as to next steps. SC, DB and JMW will be meeting with the architects to discuss this further.

13. Committee Chairs for 2021 -2022

The following have been nominated as committee chairs for 2021-2022

- Admissions - ERM
- Boarding - MB
- Curriculum - ERM
- Finance and Personnel - SW
- Pastoral - TCT
- Premises SC

These were proposed en-bloc by AE and seconded by MC - and unanimously approved. EJ thanked the chairs for their ongoing support to the work of the Board.

14. Safeguarding

DW, the safeguarding governor, described his half termly meeting with the DSL and the progress being made within school.

He described the evidence he had accumulated on the progress being made and highlighted the planned review of the SCR, his engagement with CPOMs and his safeguarding training.

Given the detail discussed re the safeguarding review there was no further discussion.

DW confirmed no new safeguarding incidents.

15. Health and Safety

DB described his half termly meetings with the premises manager to discuss H&S. This had been covered in detail within the safeguarding review.

It was agreed by all that the school health and safety committee needed to be prioritised. *DB asked that the safeguarding review outcomes be addressed within this and suggested that the terms of reference, reporting structures and outputs be clearly defined.* It was agreed that this group should meet at least termly, and governors urged JMW to prioritise this and suggested it would give a strong signal to the whole school community of the collective responsibility for H&S.

ACTION - JMW/Premises Manager/EJ by December 2021

16. Policies for Review

The updated Committee TOR was discussed. Changes relating to the Pupil Discipline Committee was discussed - this has now been changed to the Student Exclusion Panel. This was approved.

17. Governors with specific areas of responsibility

- a) Staff Welfare - AE has agreed to take on this role following the resignation of Kirstin Wood. She has arranged to meet HKE.

- b) Inclusion - HS has not been able to meet with the SENCo due to logistical challenges but plans to meet formally prior to the next FGB.
- c) CEIAG - TCT has a planned meeting with the careers team before the end of term - but reported on the positive work being delivered by the team relating to careers advice and work experience.

18. FGB Self Review

ERM has kindly agreed to circulate the review questions via MS Forms and asked governors to complete this before the end of term.

ACTION - ALL - by 24 July 2021

19. Governor Training

The NYCC training opportunities have been shared by email.
TCT and DW have both subscribed to the safeguarding training.

20. Off-site visits

None

21. Calendar

Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions, the Commemoration Service in Ripon Cathedral has been cancelled.

22. AOB

None

23. Date of next meeting

4 October 2021



Approved 4/10/2021