



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board meeting

Monday 21 March 2022, 7.00pm, M3

### MINUTES

#### INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

##### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. She commented on the busy term. Since the last meeting she has visited the school on 9 occasions for governor business, and, in addition to the formal half termly meetings, she has had at least weekly contact with the Headmaster. She has been involved with the two recent visits from the SEA and met with the North Yorkshire Head of School Improvement and Deputy Director of Education. Governors have dined with the boarders on two occasions since Christmas.

In attendance:

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) [chair], Eric Medway (EM), Andrea Edmondson (AE), David Ball (DB), Steve Williams (SW), Matthew Bean (MB), Steve Chaplin (SC), Richard Grime (RG), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Robert O'Hare (RO'H), Josh Stott (JS), Graham Livesey (GL)

Apologies were accepted from:

Helen Stiles, Vikki Barton-Brown (isolating) Tom Cavell-Taylor (transport failure), Kiran Fernandes, David Winspear (prior commitments)

##### 2. Declarations of Interests

None

##### 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 December 2022

The draft minutes were approved – proposed by AE, seconded by RG and signed as a true and correct record by the Chair.

##### 4. Matters arising and update on any action points not covered by the agenda

None

##### 5. Governor Vacancies

The Chair updated the group on the current vacancies – we have no LA governor but have sought approval from NYCC for TCT to be nominated for that role. Councillor Mike Chambers has expressed a wish to return to the Board as a co-opted member, which will leave one vacancy. We will look to recruit to this in the Autumn to coincide with parent governor elections and an update on the skills audit.

**ACTION – EJ to coordinate recruitment of LA governor**

#### MAIN BUSINESS

##### 6. Headmaster's Report to the FGB

The Headmaster was thanked for his full and comprehensive report (paper 06) which was circulated prior to the meeting.

Specific attention was drawn to staff welfare. Staff absence remains high and staff continue to feel pressure with looming external examinations for Y11 and Y13 as well as an imminent Ofsted inspection.

Governors sought clarification on several matters

- a. *Student Behaviour – there is a rising trend of suspensions – does this represent a change in behaviour or the way we are issuing sanctions. Are our responses measured, or are we taking a tougher stance than other schools?*

Unsurprisingly during the period of lock down the number were low. However there does continue to be episodes of isolated behaviours which, in line with the behaviour policy, require sanctions. The school is focussing on restorative behaviour interventions and there has been just one second suspension. Our behaviour policy and sanctions are more consistent. Within school we try to avoid suspensions as much as possible, as removal from the educational setting comes with a cost to students.

- b. *Does the data from BromCom suggest any trends amongst year groups and whether specific interventions are required?*

There continues to be increased low level disruption in Y9 and Y10. During afterschool detentions there is a focus on restorative education. PSHCE is focussing on wellbeing and risky behaviour. Feedback from students has been positive.

- c. *How are the form tutors, HOY, pastoral leads working together?*

The HOY and tutors are now meeting regularly which enables triangulation of data and also consistency. JMW reported changes in behaviour and increasing positivity. Governors noted from the pastoral meeting that the Y9 and Y10 groups were those where wellbeing scores were lower. JMW reported interventions from the school councillor to support small groups where social challenges were felt to be troublesome.

- d. *Attendance is noted to be lower amongst FSM and SEND students. Is this a trend, and how are we ensuring these students are accessing education?*

Whilst this is the case it relates to one student among a small population and further analysis suggests that amongst the rest of this cohort there is no decline. JMW reported that the data was being prospectively analysed to look for any evolving trends which would trigger early intervention by the pastoral and inclusion teams. If students are sick, then we are very clear that their time at home needs to be utilised to enable recovery, and additional pressure of online learning is not helpful for this. On the other hand, if students are at home for issues relating to anxiety or longer-term issues, individual plans are in place to monitor this, which in some cases includes plans for work to be sent home, and interaction with staff. The HT commented that it is not feasible for staff to be in contact with every student who is absent from school, and so this approach is an individualised response. In addition, whilst students should stay at home if they are unwell, we do not want to promote a culture whereby home learning is seen as an option to attending school.

- e. *In the report you described the student survey results – with very positive responses in Y7 and Y8 but less reports of happiness and positivity with increased reports of discrimination and lower response rates overall in Y9 and 11. What are we doing about this?*

The PSHCE interventions and tutor programme are targeting these areas. We have set up an anti-discriminatory working group and will be producing an action plan. We are engaging the student voice in this and trying to kindly target those groups we feel did not respond. This requires engagement of the form tutors and pastoral leads. The culture within school is palpably changing with a real buy in from staff and students to ensuring that adverse behaviours are reported and dealt with supportively but consistently. The survey will be repeated next term to ensure we are seeing an impact.

- f. *NYCC SEA visits*

The headmaster reported on the ongoing relationship with the NYCC Senior Educational Advisor, Louise Wilson. We have been offered a total of 6 days of support, and the most recent visit was a focus on curriculum – where a review of the science department took place. The outcomes of this were incredibly positive, with feedback to the school of strong QA processes, and assurance of quality teaching and learning. JMW, RG and the SEA had discussed triangulation of evidence of curriculum intent and delivery. Previous decisions to formalise meetings between the SLT line professional manager and the HOD was supported, with the addition of direct interactions

between each HOD and the academic deputy head to further triangulate evidence supported by data. JMW confirmed these meetings will now be formally diarised and minuted.

*g. Ofsted Boarding Inspection*

The formal report from the inspection was not available at the meeting, but a provisional judgement of 'Good' after a rigorous and thorough 2-day inspection process. Staff felt this was a fair judgement. Governors asked of areas for improvement. A robust process of medication management needs to be formalised, but otherwise the only areas of concern were around the fabric of School House, and the proximity of the 3G pitch to the Johnson House. Post inspection, screening has already been procured, with planting of rapid-growing hedging. Governors noted that this should be accounted for before any decision re extension of letting hours for the 3G pitch. Governors awaited the formal report, but thanked JMW and asked him to pass on our congratulations and gratitude to all staff and students involved.

*h. Governors asked how we would achieve 'outstanding'.*

JMW will pursue this and agreed to undertake a benchmarking exercise to analyse recent Ofsted gradings of other state boarding schools, and report back to the Boarding Committee.

## **7. Safeguarding**

### **a. Safeguarding Annual Report**

The annual safeguarding report (paper 07a) circulated before the meeting was presented. Board members noted the detailed discussion surrounding this at the recent pastoral committee meeting. Attention was drawn to the requirements for governors to maintain up to date knowledge on the KCSIE documents. EJ confirmed that she had undergone safer recruitment training. The document was approved.

### **b. Interim Safeguarding Report**

The interim safeguarding report (paper 07b) had been reviewed in detail at the pastoral meeting. EJ reminded governors of the confidential nature of the report – and whilst no names were mentioned, small numbers could result in individuals being identifiable.

Governors noted the 14 incidents of bullying reported over the year – spread throughout the school.

Governors sought more information:

*a. Do these numbers represent the true extend of the issue or is this the tip of the iceberg?*

No – this is true – staff are utilising the reporting mechanisms to enable information to be safely gathered. I am confident that our interventions have sent a clear message that such behaviour is not tolerated in school, but also that we have been able to focus pastoral and teaching staff attention on addressing this through consistency and reminders.

*b. How are we assured of information being collected accurately?*

We have procured the CPOMS software – central record for safeguarding information. All staff have received training on this but also ongoing supervision, with the use has been reinforced through departmental meetings, weekly briefing, and staff bulletins. We are seeing a steady spread of the use – rather than pockets of activity. EJ and TCT confirmed that staff had articulated to them the usefulness of this. TCT reminded governors that CPOMS would be used to provide data for the pastoral meetings to analyse trends and see the impact of interventions.

*c. How do we know that staff are aware of the importance and their responsibilities regarding safeguarding?*

Staff and governors have completed online training and a questionnaire relating to the updated version of KCSIE. Staff have attended a briefing session on safeguarding in September and January – with additional training delivered by external providers on IT safety.

A further single A4 guide has been given to each staff member highlighting key responsibilities.

There is now a half termly safeguarding bulletin produced for all staff

Staff training, discussion, reports outs are occurring in pastoral, academic and briefing meetings.

Check-ins for the information given to visiting staff is happening regularly – GL, the DSO, recently talked to catering and cleaning staff who were able to tell him about safeguarding issues and how to respond.

**c. Update on Safeguarding Action Plan**

JMW confirmed that the only outstanding aspects of the safeguarding action plan related to site security – and the need to consider security fencing. JMW reported that the recent visit from the LA H+S officer, Terry Bland had gone well and there were no further immediate concerns. The LA Deputy Director of Education, Amanda Newbold, had confirmed in a telephone meeting with EJ and EM that safeguarding was now satisfactory in RGS and the LA had no further concerns. Whilst governors were pleased to hear this, they asked JMW to continue to reference the safeguarding action plan and ensure no slippage.

*Governors asked about the process for lunchtime supervision during inclement weather conditions.*

JMW stated that during adverse weather conditions, students do stay in school, and use the classrooms. The geography of the school and number of staff undertaking lunchtime supervision mean that there cannot be a staff member in each classroom. However, he reported that staff are distributed in the different areas, along with the prefect team. Whilst not every area is always observed, this compromise enables the community and culture within school to be maintained whilst assuring pupil safety. There have been no adverse incidents this term. With the anticipated improvement in weather all students will be expected to be outside, or in the library.

**d. Governor Assurance of Safeguarding**

The safeguarding governor, DW is planning a visit to school before the Easter Holiday. During this visit he plans to talk to staff and observe student behaviour around school.

EJ confirmed that whilst in school on 21/3/22 she had observed lunchtime supervision. She confirmed the presence of staff in Hi-Viz jackets around the site with whistles and radios. She confirmed that the allotment and farmyard gate were locked. She witnessed signing in and out of sixth form students.

EJ reminded governors that governors will be meeting with Y9 parents and Y13 students to hear their views – and this would include the pastoral issues discussed and asking specific questions regarding safeguarding and the reporting incidents.

**8. Financial Matters**

**a. Budget 2021-2022 –monitoring reports and update on any major expenditure items**

SW presented a detailed update on the current financial situation following the recent F+P meeting. Whilst the current in-year balance was likely to be favourable, largely due to the diligent management of the budget, concerns were expressed regarding future financial procedures.

SW noted the need to be prudent in financial planning with a more strategic overview of major capital planning projects to enable the financial accountability. It was agreed that we should review processes for decision making particularly in this regard to ensure timely and effective decision making with full information available. Additionally, there was discussion of exactly how we account for the charge made by the school for boarding. It was noted that last year there was significant work put into this to support the decision around boarding charges during the pandemic, it would be helpful to improve the transparency.

**ACTION – EJ/EM/JMW/GL**

**b. Start Budget 2022-2023**

Governors were advised that the start budget was not yet ready for presentation, following short notice changes to revenues. An additional meeting of the F+P committee has been arranged for 31/3/22 for further discussion to

enable a recommendation to the FGB. A short FGB meeting will be convened on 27 April, prior to the strategy evening, for the this to be discussed and the start budget approved.

It was noted that the completed SFVS document would also be discussed at the meeting on 31/3/22 with submission, assuming approval, on 31/3/22.

**ACTION – SW/EJ**

**c. To note the agreed Boarding Fees for 2022-2023, and to determine timing of decisions for year 2023-2024**

An urgent decision regarding boarding fees was required prior to the FGB. The decision had been deferred at the previous meeting, pending the Boarding Strategy Event, which had been delayed. This had been discussed in detail by governors within the F&P and Boarding committees. A decision on a 5% and 6% increase in fees (termly and weekly) had been proposed and approved by the Chair. Governors were all in supportive of this.

It was agreed that future decisions re boarding fees would be made at the December FGB meeting (as usual).

**ACTION – JMW/GL**

**9. Strategic Matters**

**a. To review the School Self Evaluation Form**

The updated SEF was presented (paper 09a), and discussed in relation to the school improvement priorities. It was agreed that the priorities should be aligned to committees:

**I. Quality of Education – Curriculum/Pastoral**

Effectiveness of middle leadership – progress against this was noted.

*Governors asked about the training and support to the pastoral leaders.*

There has been external and internal training of the new DDSL, the pastoral team meetings. The DSL and DDSL are aware of the CPD available, and training is balanced and recorded.

*What about the heads of year?*

The HOY positions and job descriptions were reviewed in the pastoral meeting and pastoral appraisals will occur to evidence progression and performance.

**II. Behaviour and Attitudes – Curriculum/Pastoral**

Governors noted this moving to Grade1/2 in response to an increase in low level disruption but also some racial/homophobic behaviours post Covid. The student survey highlighted these areas and governors asked for this to be repeated next term.

*Governors asked of the evidence and interventions*

This is being seen through regular CPOMs reports. This is assuring of consistency. The interventions – which include restorative work in tutor time, PSHCE and detentions.

An anti-discrimination working group has been set up, led by SLT, and outcomes from this will be reported back to the pastoral committee.

**ACTION – JMW/TCT**

**III. Personal Development – Pastoral**

Governors noted the Grade 1 assessment.

*Governors asked about welfare and wellbeing of students. How is this being monitored?*

The input of the school counsellor has been welcomed, and student feedback has been positive. Attendance data, health worker engagement, tutor monitoring, behaviour and CPOMS entries plus teacher global assessments are all used to track. The student survey focussed on this and will be repeated next term.

*Governors asked about staff wellbeing*

AE described the interventions she was hoping to see put in place, plus the additional support and actions in school (carparking, opening of the swimming pool, yoga). The reprovision and development of a new staff room will provide additional space for work but also rest, with private bathroom facilities. The staff voice is being considered to support this. Workload continues to be cited as a challenge, and governors asked SLT to continue

its work on ensuring this is prioritised. It was noted the supply budget had been increased to support staff absence and ensure curriculum delivery to students.

Governors asked JMW to report on the staff survey to the pastoral meeting.

**ACTION – JMW/TCT**

IV. Leadership and Management. - F+P/FGB

Governors noted this was Grade 1 and noted the changes of the SLT planned for September. Developments embedded now include the DSO and a new Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning).

EJ reminded governors of the planned governance health check undertaken by NYCC.

V. Sixth Form Provision – Curriculum/Pastoral/FGB

VI. Boarding

The recent Ofsted judgement was favourable – but will be used to re-evaluate the grading of boarding. Aligned to this will be a boarding strategy meeting, with the updating of the boarding development plan

**ACTION – JMW/MB**

**b. To review the updated Strategic Development Plan**

The Strategic Development Plan (paper 09b) was reviewed. Governors were pleased to be able to see the progress of this over time within the document. The SDP objectives are closely aligned to the SEF. It was decided that the SDP objectives aligned to each committee would be embedded within the agendas of each meeting to prompt governors to monitor and ensure progress towards the targets.

A Governor Action Plan is required – this will be discussed at the strategy evening – but again should align and influence the SDP.

**ACTION – EJ**

**c. To receive update on the Estates Development Plan**

The EDP is currently being reviewed by GL. Governors asked how this will be shared and how governance of this will be assured? GL explained that the EDP will be expanded to include capital project needs, funding sources (beyond NYCC to include alternative sources) and be linked to the SDP and boarding development plans to allow alignment of decision making and a strategic direction that is uniform.

The EDP will be discussed at the estates development group meeting but will need to be taken to both the premises and F+P meetings for detailed discussions.

SW highlighted concerns of a risk of ‘working in silos’ which was supported by all.

**ACTION EJ/ERM/SW/JMW/GL to further discuss process to ensure streamlined but effective management of this.**

**d. To discuss future options for governance arrangements for RGS**

EM described the current national agenda for academisation which suggests all school will need to be academised by 2030.

This was explored by the FGB 4 years ago and all agreed, after discussion on the subject, this should be reviewed again, in detail.

It was agreed that a small group would be formed, chaired by EJ, to review the current situation, evaluate options, and present proposals back to the FGB.

**ACTION EJ/ERM/JMW**

**e. To plan gaining parent and student feedback**

Governors agreed that we should be seeking feedback from parents and students. EJ asked for volunteers for each of these.

It was suggested we should add in a session for discussions with Y7 parents.

**ACTION EJ to arrange meetings with Y13 leavers and Y9 parents.** Depending on governor numbers, a Y7 parents discussion meeting will be set up

**ACTION Governors willing to be involved to email EJ by 10/4/22**

## **ROUTINE BUSINESS**

### **10. Membership of Governors' Committees**

The committee membership was agreed as per the circulated document (paper 14).

### **11. Governors' Committee Meetings – Update on items for discussion (Note full meeting minutes uploaded to SharePoint)**

#### **a. Admissions Committee**

Two meetings of the admissions committee have taken place since the last meeting, during which the Y7 and Y9 testing procedures had been reviewed, the Y9 offers approved, and the sixth form admissions policy revised.

#### **b. Boarding Committee**

The boarding committee has reviewed the provisional Ofsted report in detail and will be using this to inform the boarding development plan. Other matters discussed included the parents' forum – which has been developed to gain feedback. The chair of the boarding committee will attend these meetings.

The impact of lettings was discussed – with a need to ensure the health and safety of boarding students on site. This has been discussed at the H&S committee and is a standing agenda item for the boarding committee to ensure the impact is continually monitored.

Governors agreed that before any proposal to extend the letting hours for the 3G pitch, an impact evaluation exercise must be undertaken.

#### **c. Curriculum Committee**

EM provided notes summarising the curriculum minutes (paper 15c) and emphasised the focus on inclusion in the last meeting by talking to Samina O'Brien (inclusion manager) and Helen Stiles, who, as Governor for Inclusion, meets regularly with Samina.

- The committee followed up the concern about performance of some students in English and will continue to do so.
- A scheduling arrangement for a parents' evening will be trialled with a year group this year.
- Progress with the Academic Priorities in the SDP was monitored and discussed.
- There has been an extraordinary demand for cover for absent teachers and the availability of supply staff is inadequate. Teaching and education support staff have stepped in and in Years 7-11 at least 95% of lessons have been covered.
- The committee received a detailed description of Learning Walks and the committee discussed and agreed with SLT the arrangements to give governors a much clearer understanding of the quality of teaching and learning through more detailed reports of Learning Walks and Departmental Reviews.
- Governors continue to monitor progress with Lesson Registers. While there had been some improvement and the mechanisms had been refined, the headmaster was urged to keep up the pressure on this important safeguarding procedure.
- We received the regular reports on H&S incidents in curriculum time and Pupil Premium spending, with a detailed analysis of how the funding had been used
- The Appendix to the Curriculum Statement has been updated to indicate recent revisions to the curriculum.

**d. Finance and Personnel Committee (24/1/22, 14/3/22)**

The minutes of the meetings were available for discussion (papers 15d I and ii)

Key items were

- Budget monitoring had been undertaken in detail and the outturn was favourable
- An agreement that the cleaning contract will be formally re-tendered towards the end of the academic year.
- The projected increase in utility spends for the next year c80k which will be included in the start budget
- A high spend on supply staff compared to usual which is unlikely to change and therefore an increase to be included in the start budget
- Lettings were discussed and the review of fees to ensure maximum income
- There are no overdue boarding fees.
- The SFVS is being completed and will be approved and submitted by 31/3/22
- An ambition to focus on longer term financial planning and aligning this to the SDP and EDP to ensure that appropriate budgetary decisions are made. This includes the capital development plans.
- A decision to develop a contract management policy.

**e. Pastoral Committee**

The minutes for the pastoral meeting were reviewed in TCT's absence. Key issues from the recent meeting were

- A plan for governors to receive regular reports on pastoral matters using data from CPOMs. This will enable tracking of data overtime and will be aligned with other sources of evidence.
- The suspension and exclusion data and attendance data were reviewed.
- The school survey (in place of the Kirkland Rowell Survey) provided a wealth of data that exceeded that previously generated. It will be repeated next term to assess the response to the interventions.
- The roles and responsibilities of the HOY and pastoral teams were reviewed.
- The safeguarding review and safeguarding report were reviewed in detail and approved.

**f. Premises Committee**

Key issues from the Premises Meeting included

- Review of progress on the EDP and the ambition to define the premises priorities for the next year – this will be undertaken by GL and the committee
- An update on the engagement with architects for the major estates' projects. References are being sought but pending this, agreement for this company to proceed with initial scoping exercise using previously allocated budget
- Discussion of detailed paper on the implications of exit from the NYCC MASS scheme. GL has undertaken a review of this, and the school is now in a strong position, understanding the arrangements and impact of the new scheme, which the committee believe will result in increased value for money.
- The Fire Safety and Health and Safety Policies were reviewed in detail and approved.
- The NYCC safeguarding review action plan was reviewed – most issues re site security have been completed. A satisfactory second review by NYCC has been completed. Discussions are ongoing regarding the funding of any further security measures suggested by the LA.

The committee will undertake a walk around of the site in the next meeting



- g. Any urgent business from other committees not already covered by the agenda**

None.

- h. Health & Safety issues arising from any Committee that needs to be brought to the attention of the FGB**

None.

## **12. Governors with specific areas of responsibility**

- a. Child Protection & Safeguarding Governor (DW)**

No report – DW was not at the meeting but will be undertaking a safeguarding visit prior to the Easter holiday

**ACTION DW**

- b. CEIAG Governor (TCT)**

TCT reported, via letter, that he had met with the careers staff in the weeks prior to the meeting. All careers' activities are proceeding this year albeit with covid adjustments, and work experience is also going ahead. Louise Howard has taken over from Anne Richie as external careers advisor and has maintained the excellent standard of advice that Anne had established. There is a careers fair planned for April of this year.

- c. H&S Governor (DB)**

DB reported his attendance at the termly Health and Safety Committee Meeting. GL described the welcome challenge that DB brought to the meeting, which enabled evidence to be triangulated. Staff responses aligned with reported information and confirmed the further commitment and culture of H+S being a responsibility for all.

DB reported the clarity of the new H+S responsibilities, and praised the efforts of GL in achieving this. There were no new concerns to be raised

- d. Inclusion (HS)**

HS was not able to attend the meeting. She reported verbally that she has met with the inclusion manager on 3 occasions this term, has worked on the SEND and Inclusion Policies and Report.

- e. Staff Welfare Governor (AE)**

AE reported on her commitment to embed the culture of staff wellbeing within the school. She has met with members of the SLT and has further meetings planned. Funding for a wellbeing initiative has been secured, and she will present an update on this to the Governor Strategy Evening.

## **13. Complaints**

There have been no complaints to governor appeal panels since the last meeting.

EJ reported that a complaint had been made to Ofsted, and another to the DfE. Neither complainant had followed the school complaint procedure. The school had responded to both. There were no themes or trends.

## **14. Governors' Training**

EJ circulated the latest NYCC training calendar prior to the meeting. Any governors wishing to undertake training should book via the Finance Office. EJ suggested that training in complaints management would be helpful and urged for expression of interest.

The FGB strategy event will be held on 27 April 2022, starting at 6.30pm. This will be held in school and an agenda will be circulated by 10/4/22.

**ACTION EJ**

**15. Policies for approval by the FGB**

None

**16. Off-site visits and activities: for information and approval where necessary**

There were no off-site visits for approval. Governors were pleased to hear of overseas trips being offered. It was noted that the Y7 water sports trip to France for July was significantly oversubscribed. EJ thanked RG and colleagues for the clarity of communication and the fair process put in place for allocation.

The inevitable disappointment by those students not offered a place had been managed well. It was suggested that for future years additional places should be sought, to avoid any culture of elitism.

**17. Calendar - School Events to the end of Term**

Beauty and the Beast Musical - 22/3/22 - 25/3/22 - School Hall (Ticket only)

Easter Music Concert - 05/04/22 - School Hall (Entry on the door)

**18. Any other business**

None

**19. Date of the next meeting**

Monday 20 June 2022 - 7.00pm

**Approved 20/6/22**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'EJ' followed by a long horizontal line.