



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board meeting

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 7:00pm

### MINUTES

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for non-attendance

The Chair welcomed all governors to the meeting. Apologies were received from Kiran Fernandes (work), Josh Stott (Covid), Matthew Bean (travel disruption).

Governors present:

Vicki Barton-Brown (VBB), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Steve Chaplin (SC), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) [chair], Robert O'Hare (ROH) Helen Stiles (HS), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Steve Williams (SW), David Winspear (DW)

Eric Medway (ERM) attended via MS Teams (detained in Orkney)

In attendance:

Graham Livesey (GL)

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

None

#### 3. Minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 20 June 2022

The minutes were approved – proposed by MB, seconded by HS.

#### 4. Matters arising and update on action points not otherwise on the agenda

- a. Estates Strategy – this is being worked up by SC and ROH and will be presented to the next meeting of the FGB following review by the F+P and Premises Committees.
- b. Committee Structure – related to the above, the terms of reference of the Premises Committee, which is likely to convert to the Estates Development Committee, will be presented at the next meeting with a view to approval. Following this a revision of the Committee Terms of Reference of the Board will be required. In the meantime, the presence of the reciprocating committee chairs on the Estates and Premises committees has been confirmed.

#### 5. Governor Vacancies

##### a. Parent Governor Elections

The meeting noted the parent governor elections were in progress – six candidates for three positions – with the closing date for voting being Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October.

##### b. Staff Governor Position

No nominations have been received for the staff governor vacancy. It was agreed that Richard Grime would be asked to support the process by encouraging staff to consider this via information provision.

**ACTION – EJ to approach RWG**

##### c. Governor Co-options

Andrea Edmondson submitted an expression of interest in being co-opted to the Board for 1-year tenure to continue her work in supporting the School's Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

Vikki Barton Brown submitted an expression of interest in being co-opted for a 4-year term to continue to support the work of the Finance Committee and bring her expertise to this.

Both nominations were unanimously approved. As per the standing order, both terms will run from 1 September 2022, AE for 1 year, VBB for 4 years.

There is one governor co-option vacancy. Suitable candidates will be considered once the parent governor elections are complete and the skills audit of the Board has been reviewed.

#### **d. LA Governor**

A nomination of a LA governor has been received from NYCC. The candidate has met informally with EJ and ERM. The application and references were made available to the Board. The skill set of the candidate is especially related to secondary education. Governors asked to seek a reference from the candidate's most recent education post. Subject to this being satisfactory the Board were happy to approve the nomination.

**ACTION – ERM to request reference**

### **6. FGB Self Review**

EJ thanked ERM for managing the governor self-review and for the unification of the process to capture data for all committees in one single MS Forms document. ERM summarised the document.

It was noted that there was one respondent who had scored the areas around meeting management and the chairing of the meetings at the lowest level. Scores from other governors were high. One free text comment described poor quality chairing of the Board with concerns around meeting management. Governors in the meeting offered their support to the Chair and Vice -Chair who both stated that they would be happy to stand aside if it was felt that their leadership was not to standard. There were no challenges put forward, but multiple favourable comments. ERM reminded the Board of their responsibility to challenge – and EJ confirmed that the culture of openness meant that she was happy to be challenged at any point.

### **7. Headmaster's Report**

The Head was thanked for circulating his presentation in advance of the meeting which was available within the meeting documents.

Areas of discussion included:

#### **a. Numbers on roll in Year 12**

The numbers entering Y12 are reduced compared to usual with a higher-than-expected number of students choosing to pursue studies elsewhere.

- *Governors were keen to understand why this was.*

The Head reported on the analysis of the data of leavers – some had left to pursue specialist skills – sailing, dance, and rugby – in specialist centres. A number had chosen to move to the independent sector. A slightly larger number than usual had chosen York College – citing the wish for 'a change' and 'more freedom'. The Head noted the challenges faced by students within this cohort (Covid) and the constraints they had faced. The expected number of students who did not achieve the admission requirements had left – with no surprises. No students left for differing academic offerings.

Governors were reassured that this analysis had been scrutinised in the Admissions Committee Meeting. Marketing of the sixth form is being prioritised, and in addition the Y12 open evening has been brought forward to the autumn term.

## **b. Admission Arrangements for Y7 and Y12**

The Head reported on the success of the Y7 entrance testing.

- *Governors were interested to understand what could be done to increase the uptake of the testing amongst in-catchment children – particularly in schools where the numbers taking the test are small.*

Extensive discussion followed regarding the need to ensure our accessibility and Governors were very supportive of the initiatives to take current Y7 students back to their primary schools, with the Head, to really spread the word.

In response to the lower-than-expected numbers entering Y12 governors were pleased to note that the lower sixth form open evening has been brought forwards to November, just after other competing schools.

## **c. Public Examination Results**

The provisional data regarding the exam results is extremely positive – with exceptional results at A level and GCSE. Governors noted that the detailed analysis would occur at the meeting of the Curriculum Committee. Progress 8 scores are high (between 0.78 and 0.98) and though girls have outperformed boys, the gap has closed. The performance of the middle achieving students was exceptional, as was the progress of the SEND students.

## **d. Behaviour**

HKE has stepped into her new role as Deputy Head (Pastoral). Behaviour across the school continues to be good, and challenge and interventions have been implemented in response to infringements.

- *Governors asked about the impact of the interventions – have we seen a reduction in the numbers of incidents?*

The Head confirmed that we have and will be reporting the detail of this to the Pastoral Committee.

- *Governors wanted more information on attendance – and the impact of the new school welfare officer.*

The Head reported the positive influence – and the ability to respond proactively and keep students in school. Feedback from families has so far been positive in response to contact and conversations.

- *Governors questioned the ability to extract data from Bromcom and CPOMS to evidence the changes and detect patterns of behaviours – across the school and within year groups.*

This is going to be presented to the Pastoral Committee and the summaries will be available for the next meeting of the FGB.

## **e. Staffing**

Governors were concerned that there are ongoing staff vacancies – with the failure to recruit to both the chemistry position and the Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator role.

- *Governors asked how we are marketing our positions?*

They were assured of the advertisement within TES but also local publicity via social media.

- *Governors asked if the challenges to appoint were a regional issue or localised to our School?*

It was felt this was a national issue – with a shortage of science teachers.

## **8. Safeguarding**

The LA had visited school on the day of the meeting to review safeguarding. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive which was reassuring to hear. The LA advisor was impressed with the feedback from students, both day and boarding. The PSCHE curriculum delivery was praised. The LA had observed the relative lack of diversity within the school. Governors were keen to understand how we could influence this. The Head referenced our Equality and Diversity Policy and our report – acknowledging that whilst the nature of the catchment is less diverse than, for example, an inner-city school, the school remains accessible for all. Governors noted the increasing number of BAME students across the school. The Head reported the focus on inclusion and accessibility within the PSHCE, tutor time and assemblies.

DW reported his meeting with HKE. HKE has a 90-day action plan which was well received and is focussing on safeguarding. The new safeguarding team with DSL and deputy DSLs is working well.

## 9. Financial Report

ROH presented an update on the financial position, supported by GL. The monitoring reports were available prior to the meeting for governor review. Despite the support with energy costs, there are significant financial pressures exacerbated by the unfunded pay award and the increasing energy costs. The increase in expenses has been offset, in part, by the energy cap measures, a rise in letting and the government grant towards the teacher pay award.

The changes in the monitoring reports since August illustrate the volatility of the financial situation. The in-year deficit predicted at the start of the year meant that all financial reserves would be consumed. The savings and interventions have brought us back to an in-year deficit of £63k but governors noted this was without any form of capital spend.

- *Governors were keen to learn how school were planning to mitigate against the risks.*

GL confirmed that the all-capital expenditure programmes were currently on hold, but also described the risks - including erosion of managed reserves, such as the sinking fund set aside for the management of the 3G pitch and those funds previously allocated for spending.

GL presented paper (09.1c) which is a decision management tool, describing the hierarchy of financial mitigation measures which may need to be implemented to achieve financial safety. Governors welcomed the production of a financial risk register to run alongside this.

- *Governors asked if the lack of appointment of staff to vacant positions was a cost saving initiative*

The Head confirmed it was not.

- *Governors asked about the impact of the financial status on curriculum delivery and the budget management of departments.*

The Head confirmed that there had been no curriculum cuts, but HODS have been asked to operate a 'zero budgeting' system and will have to seek approval for spends. Governors were supportive of this.

- *Governors asked about how the parent body were being engaged. Concern was expressed at the lack of awareness amongst parent groups and the relatively low contributions to the school and activities funds, with a consensus view that many parents would contribute, if they were aware of the gravity of the situation.*

The Head confirmed that he would be writing to parents to ask for support. GL confirmed that the process for donating was going to be made more streamlined, as a matter of urgency.

- *Governors asked how the school was ensuring that grants and local funds are being exploited to the maximum.*

GL confirmed his pursuit of this, and is currently, along with the Head, in discussion with the Jepson and Wolfson Trusts, locally.

ROH confirmed that he has asked for members of the F+P committee to receive monthly monitoring reports as soon as available, rather than waiting until the next F&P meeting, and that the committee has agreed to adjust meeting frequency to ensure we can respond to changes.

## 10. Strategic Matters

### a. SDP, SEF, and Governor Acton Plan

The updated SDP was reviewed. The priorities were agreed - the new format, which includes description of impact, success measures and the evidence of success, was welcomed.

Governors noted the alignment of the key priorities to the governor action plan and confirmed that the delivery of the priorities will be monitored through the committees allocated. It was also agreed that the agenda of next FGB meeting will prioritise the review of progress and the priorities for the next year.

The SEF was reviewed.

- *Governors noted the rise in rating of Student Behaviour from 2 to 1 - asking for the evidence for this.*

The Headmaster described the behaviour strategy and shared with the Board the views of the LA advisor; who confirmed that the grading was based not only on the high standards of behaviour within the school, but also the clear strategies in place to ensure improvement in the low level disruptive behaviour that has been described to governors. Governors noted that detailed analysis of behaviour reports and other markers of student wellbeing would be reviewed at the forthcoming meeting of the Pastoral Committee.

EJ presented the Governor Action Plan. This is unchanged from that previously agreed. Actions from this will be prioritised in the forthcoming committee meetings, and a full review will occur at the next meeting of the FGB,

### b. Staff Wellbeing

AE reported the work she was leading to develop the wellbeing strategy. She has been able to meet with 27 staff in school and deliver a questionnaire specifically around wellbeing, challenges, and their ideas for improvement. A further meeting is planned next week, following which a sub-group will be arranged to develop the wellbeing strategy for the school

### c. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Governance arrangements (see separate Minutes)

## 11. SCR Check

DW confirmed that he had met with Mrs Hargraves and undertaken a full SCR check, the report of which was available to governors in the meeting papers and had been uploaded to the relevant area of SharePoint.

EJ will liaise with the data manager to gain assurance regarding verification of destiny of students leaving the school.

**ACTION - EJ**

## 12. Website Compliance

EJ confirmed she had completed the audit of website concordance with DfE requirements. Again, the results were available to governors. She will follow up with the Head the small areas where there may be deficiencies.

**ACTION EJ**

## 13. Membership of Governor Committees

It was agreed that this would be reviewed at the December meeting when new governors are in role. Any governors wanting to change committee should inform the Chair before that meeting.

**a. Appointment to Complaints Committee**

Given the skill set of the members of the board, the diverse but infrequent nature of complaints and the unpredictable availability of governors, it was agreed that all governors would be listed for the complaints committee, but any appeal panel must include a governor who has undertaken training. Governors were encouraged to undertake complaints training.

EJ, MB, TCT and ERM have completed this already.

**ACTION – EJ to circulate dates for complaints training and list to be updated**

**14. Governors Committee Meetings**

**a. Admissions Committee**

The committee had met on 28 September where the main areas of discussion included the Y7 entrance testing – and how as a school we widen access and ensure that as many Y6 in catchment students take the test. There was detailed discussion around Y12 numbers and reasons for Y11 students not staying for the Sixth Form with decisions to really analyse the detail of this and ensure that next year Y11 students considering leaving are spoken to and supported with decisions.

**b. Finance & Personnel**

No additional items to report

**c. Staff Pay Committee**

ERM reported on the last meeting and described in some detail the operational aspects of the work of the committee, and particularly how far from being a 'rubber stamping' forum, there is detailed review of each case with justification for decisions regarding pay awards. Whilst the detail of the meeting is confidential governors were assured of robust processes.

**d. Boarding, Curriculum, Pastoral and Premises Committees**

All scheduled for later in the term

**e. Urgent business from Committees – none**

**f. Health & Safety Issues – none**

**15. Governors with Specific Areas of Responsibility**

**a. Child Protection & Safeguarding**

DW reported that he had met with the new Deputy Head Pastoral and shared the 90-day plan. He had met with the LA SEA as part of the safeguarding review earlier in the day. There were no other safeguarding issues to report.

**b. CEIAG Governor**

TCT reported that he had met with the careers team at the end of last term. Whilst the Head of Careers Position remains vacant, Tom was assured of the competence and capacity for Mr Walker to continue to deliver the high level of service and was also pleased to report that expertise will be 'bought in' as needed. Mock interviews are in process, and the work experience programme is strong. There is particular emphasis on non-University options – including apprenticeship schemes – where students are being given access to all opportunities.

**c. H& S Governor**

This position is currently vacant, and governors were asked to inform the Chair if interested. New governors coming into position may be well placed to support this. GL reported that the H&S committee would be meeting later in the term, but there were no incidents to report.

**d. Inclusion Governor**

HS had prepared a written report which was available to governors prior to the meeting (paper 16c). She has met with the Inclusion Manager and would be repeated the exercise she undertook last term of observing and meeting students accessing support within school. She was pleased to report the embedding of the teaching strategies; evidenced by strong scores for progress and attainment in the recent examinations.

**e. Staff Welfare**

Covered in 10c

**16. AOB**

None

**17. Next Meeting – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022, in school (with MSTeams option) starting at 7pm**

The meeting closed at 2115 hours

APPROVED 5/12/22

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