



HARROGATE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Minutes of the Local Governing Body of

held on Thursday 26 September 2024 at 5.30pm

Present: Mr A Lindley (Chair), Mr N Renton (Headteacher), Ms J Watson, Dr J Featherstone, Dr T Stowell, Mr D Hurcomb, Mr C Howard, Miss O Charles, Mrs A Meacher

Apologies
Also present: Mrs K Moat, Miss K Smith

Minute No.		Action
LGB 1	<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>None.</p>	
LGB 2	<p>2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair</p> <p>Andrew Lindley was proposed and accepted as Chair of Governors. John Featherstone was proposed and accepted as Vice Chair of Governors.</p> <p>All Governors agreed these appointments.</p> <p>Mr Renton advised Governors that the safeguarding policy had been approved by Trustees. All schools in the Trust are moving to use the Governor Hub and passwords will be sent to you. The Trust Central team are finalising a list of Trust and school policies. The Trust are also working on centralised training for Governors.</p> <p>The platform for training Governors is being reviewed as we are no longer using the National College. We are likely to use the Governor Hub for this but it will be confirmed.</p> <p>There were no conflicts of interest.</p> <p>Mr Renton introduced Alison Meacher, the Data and Exams Manager who has agreed to be the operational staff Governor.</p>	

3. Minutes of the last meetings

The minutes of the meeting on 27 June 2024 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Actions

- Mr Renton advised that we have not yet found suitable training around gender identity. We will continue to look for this as we recognise the need for this training.
- We have added additional student joiner details to the Headteacher report, as requested.
- We do use recycled toilet rolls in school.
- Mr Howard has met with the Business Manager.

Mr Sheriff has provided an IT update.

There has been an investigation around the IT support for the A level computing exam. Mr Renton confirmed that the disruption did not appear to effect the results in this subject and indeed, one of the students came in the top 100 in the whole country and was invited to receive an award in Manchester. The steps that we put in place through exams, did appear to protect the students.

An investigation was commissioned by the Trust and the outcome was an honest reflection that there was a failing in the IT support that we needed. There was an acknowledgement that we do not have enough resources for the need that we have. We need more capacity. The Trust is not in a position to provide extra technicians. As a result, we intend to invest in our own HGS technicians out of HGS funds.

Since the September restart, all the desktops have been removed from classrooms. Despite extensive testing over a year, the IT system has ground to a halt. iPads are not connecting, particularly at lesson change over time. The Trust based the Deputy IT director at school and he worked very effectively with us and tried hard to resolve the issues. Unfortunately, the problems have persisted and we now have a third party specialist to try to resolve the situation. The issues have caused significant disruption and staff have worked with IT to identify where the problems are. Although there has now been some improvements, it is still not where we need it to be.

A Governor asked if the issue was around connection or the software. Mr Renton advised that it is difficult to say as there have been so many things not working and tests are being carried out. He is being assured that the IT team are trying everything.

Ms Watson advised Governors that there is no consistency, even in the same classrooms. Teachers are trying to have a calm and effective start to the lesson and the IT issues are slowing that down. The students have been very patient. Staff are frustrated as they have embraced working 'desktop free' and they all want to get it right.

A Governor asked if this was a gradual build up of slow service. Mrs Moat advised that this happened when we came back in September.

Mr Sheriff is organising a review of our network capacity and the service to schools. A group will meet in the next few weeks. As well as interested parties in the school and Trust, two external experts have been invited to contribute. The Trust have just appointed a Chief Operating Officer and the IT will be his main focus.

On the ground, we do not feel we have enough technicians to go around school and check rooms and ensure we have what we need for exams. There is also the bigger picture of

	<p>where we go next as a Trust with our IT service. The immediate issue is the disruption to learning.</p> <p>A Governor asked where the Trust IT teams are physically located. We have a senior technician and number of apprentices here but they are under resourced. The level of skill is not as high as we think it should be. They have also suffered from staff absence. There are other IT colleagues in the Trust office and other secondary schools.</p> <p>Mr Renton advised that he is reassured that they are doing as much as they can to resolve these current issues and he is receiving daily updates.</p> <p>Ms Watson advised that staff are appreciative of all the efforts that are being made to resolve the situation.</p> <p>Governors were deeply concerned about the impact to learning and questioned why it had taken four weeks for the Trust to bring in specialist consultants. It is unacceptable.</p> <p>Mr Renton confirmed that he would like to have additional resourcing in place as soon as possible.</p>	
LGB 4	<p>4. Headteacher's Report</p> <p>Student numbers</p> <p>The number of student leavers take account of Y13 and Y11 students.</p> <p>Year group totals have changed since the report was published and are very similar to last year. In the Sixth Form, we are under 650 students due to a number of factors but, it is not too far away.</p> <p>Data Dashboard</p> <p>Y7 look to be back in line with the higher levels we have seen in previous years. Y8 has a more mixed picture which is what we typically see in this year group. Y9 are broadly in line with last years cohort. There are no significant concerns in KS3.</p> <p>At KS4, Y10 have some very aspirational targets but is broadly in line with what we have seen in the past. There are a smaller number of students refusing school and more students that we are able to help.</p> <p>Y11 seems to be a more typical year group than last year.</p> <p>The new Y10 have had a great start with the least negatives ever for this year group.</p> <p>Y12 are broadly in line with this time last year. We do however see a pattern of some students who are 'new to' the school, not making as much progress as their peers who have been all the way through HGS. We are providing more to support these students as they adapt to our way of working and expectations.</p> <p>PP</p> <p>At GCSE grade 9-4, our PP students achieved 68%, the regional non PP was 64% and the national non PP was 67% so, our PP students achieved more that the non PP students</p>	

nationally. This is a significant achievement. Of the 27 students who did attend school, 14 achieved a positive P8 score and 2 were very close.

Suspensions

During 23/24 in Y9, there were 47 instances of suspensions including 2 permanent exclusions. Whilst this figure is higher than we would like it to be, we are still lower than other local schools.

A Governor queried the number of suspensions in Y7 and asked if this was normal. Mr Renton confirmed that this was a little higher than normal as there has been some challenging students in this cohort.

The current Y8 and Y9 are a focus. Miss Smith commented that there are some complex cases in Y8. Mrs Moat pointed out that these two year groups have the highest number of EHCPs.

Attendance

We are not where we want it to be. At the start of the term, we wrote a letter about attendance which was signed by the other local Head teachers. We have had a really good start and the attendance so far this year is 94.8% and is better than it was this time last year. It is an area of focus. Our attendance rate last year was above national but low for us as a school. We are using the correct coding methodology.

Persistent absenteeism is also lower compared to this time last year.

Safeguarding

We are receiving positive feedback about the safeguarding training from staff. The online course is much more engaging.

Alumni

A group of previous students are organising an alumni event in October.

Communication

A Governor commented that she had heard how fantastic the Y6 to Y7 transition programme is.

A Governor asked about the impact of VAT on private schools. We have not seen any changes in our admissions so far.

Finance

In July, there was a surplus of £60,000 which is lower than where we anticipated. This year in catering, the loss has been halved to £130,000 which is really good progress. The core schools budget grant came into school over the summer and this will cover the proposed teaching pay rise and gives us an additional £30,000. Since then, we have found that there will be an additional £119,000 due to the additional Sixth Form funding. The only risk is around the NJC and the operational pay increase and unions are balloting their members.

	<p>Reserves are £570,000. The revised surplus for last year is £150,000 and we are looking at a surplus of £217,000 for this year. We are in a really good position, however, we would like to update the changing rooms and we need to pay £50,000 so we can access the Wolfson funding for the science lab. The year after, we have to make a payment to Rossett of £125,000 relating to the funding for their Y12 students last year.</p> <p>A Governor asked if we had committed to new changing rooms and the Wolfson project. Mr Renton confirmed that we are in the early stage of planning, but it is our intention to complete this year.</p> <p>The windows at the back of school also need to be replaced and we have put a bid into the Trust for this, however, we are unsure if there will be enough funds for this.</p> <p>The PTA have been superb and paid for a new mini bus. We are fortunate to have this parental group.</p> <p>Any profit for the alumni event will be donated to the school.</p>	
LGB 5	<p>5. Policies for approval</p> <p>Mr Renton asked for comments on the 26/27 draft admission policy. He proposed that for Sixth Form admissions, we can strengthen the partnership with Rossett. One change relates to being very specific that HGS entry requirements must be met. We also propose to add a criteria for any child who has been at a Red Kite Secondary School in the over subscription criteria.</p> <p>Mr Renton and Mr Milburn will be writing a statement for Trustees so that it is clear what the partnership is.</p> <p>A Governor asked why this group would be a higher priority than staff children. Mr Renton explained that as the numbers in the first groups would be expected to be small, there would still be enough spaces within the PAN to accommodate children of staff.</p> <p>A Governor asked if this would have an impact on grades. Mr Renton advised that the potential impact on grades will not have an impact and is not a consideration. We are more interested in student progress.</p> <p>Governors agreed the changes on the proviso that the places of staff children are put above the Red Kite school criteria. This will now go to consultation.</p> <p>The HGS safeguarding policy was approved. Miss Smith was thanked for her work on this policy.</p>	
LGB 6	<p>6. Chair of Governors report</p> <p>The Chair had nothing to report.</p>	

LGB 7	<p>7. Link Governors</p> <p>Mr Howard has met with the Business and Operations manager and they discussed flexible working and how this is proving successful as a retention tool for teachers.</p> <p>Mr Renton gave a brief summary of the flexible working project that he has been working on with colleagues.</p>	
LGB 8	<p>8. Risk register update</p> <p>Mr Renton advised Governors on the areas of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors – we need an additional two Governors • IT • Financial situation – need to keep 25/26 under review. <p>Mr Renton advised that as a school, we have started to talk about the next Ofsted visit under the new framework, which is due in March 26.</p>	
LGB 9	<p>9. Results</p> <p>A Level</p> <p>On results day we were really pleased and were optimistic that we would not have many students in clearing, partly due to what we were hearing around the availability of university places. Most students gained their first or second choice.</p> <p>There is a pattern of high performance at the top end with many A*s and As. There were 22 students who achieved 3 or more A*s. The targets were very aspirational and we exceeded that target at A*-A. The A*-B is lower than target but, it is where we thought it would be. There were 8 students who achieved their Oxbridge offers and this is the highest it has been. There were 5 medics and a number of students who achieved great apprenticeships this year.</p> <p>In A level Art and Photography, Mrs Moat reported that the moderator had reduced the grades, as they had last year. As a result of last year, the team had undertaken extra training and the Faculty Leader had become a moderator for the exam board. We applied for remoderation and the grades were reverted back to the original ones. We intend to stay with the current exam board for another year, but we are looking at alternatives.</p> <p>A Governor asked what the explanation from the exam board had been. Mrs Moat advised that the exam board said the grades had been harshly reviewed.</p> <p>A Governor said it was a credit to the team that they had done so much work to get things right for our students.</p> <p>Of the approximately 90 remarks that we have requested, a fifth have come back to us where the grades have gone up.</p> <p>Mr Renton and Mrs Moat have almost completed the exam review meetings with Faculty Leaders. The one issue that we have looked at in particular this year is the gap between existing HGS students and students new to school. Geography has the smallest gap and they are meeting one to one with every new to student to find out more about them and how they can support them. This is a model that we are hoping to replicate in other subject</p>	

areas. We need to embed our habits and routines with students who are new to us in Sixth Form.

Ms Watson explained the new induction day for Y12 that had taken place at the start of term. This gave students a good sense of what the expectations are and how we can support them.

We will also be focusing on Psychology, Sociology and Business, where they have large cohorts but results have been lower than expected. We have triggered peer reviews of these areas.

Mrs Moat talked through individual subjects.

BTEC results were strong but we think we have room to improve this further with Drama and Music. We are also exploring if we should change the Digital Media course.

A Governor asked about Music. Mr Renton confirmed that this was a concern and there are plans in place to strengthen this area. We are monitoring this area closely.

A Governor asked if we have taster sessions. Mr Renton confirmed that we do and we also have the Encore! provision. There are national issues with music in that it is a very academic, traditional qualification.

A Governor asked if it is sustainable to teach A Level Music. Mrs Moat advised that we can only run it with teaching Y12 and Y13 together.

A Governor commented on the wide range of subjects on offer in Sixth Form and asked how students decide which to take. Mr Renton advised that students choose three and a half subjects and the process starts in Y11. If we offered less subjects, this would reduce the number of students in Sixth Form.

All four Ukrainian refugees were able to go to their first choice university.

GCSE

Mr Renton advised 38% of our grades were between 9-7; in Yorkshire, it was 18%. At 9-4, we achieved 88% and regionally it was 64%. It is important to be aware of this context.

Mrs Moat advised that we have been happy with the results and, as with A Levels, we have submitted a number of reviews that have come back with improved grades. There have been 7 uplifts in Maths and some of those are life changing for students.

Whilst English have higher grade percentages, Maths have a higher progress score.

There are a phenomenal number of grades at 9 and 7 which is up 10% on the previous year.

The projected P8 score is 0.50 which is very good considering the number of students who did not take exams or did not attend school. Last year it was 0.48 at this time. Mr Renton stressed that this had been a real area of focus with the additional revision sessions that took place. The only subject which has negative progress is RS. We do this subject as it is important to give the breadth of education to our students. We know that some children do not prioritise this subject for revision outside of school.

	<p>A Governor asked if there had been reflection on the revision package and what would be offered this year. Mr Renton confirmed that we will do it again and we have started it earlier. He pointed out that there will be no progress measures for the next 2 years as there was no KS2 STATS data for those cohorts. We will set aspirational attainment targets.</p> <p>Mrs Moat explained the back story for the students who had taken Russian, Persian and Arabic.</p> <p>The other subject that has slightly lower progress is PE. It is really difficult to get the top grades at PE as student have to be very good at three sports. We have introduced a new level 2 BTEC course to run alongside GCSE PE as this has less focus on the practical element.</p> <p>A Governor asked about the students who are in the middle of the grades. Mr Renton confirmed that one of the focus for this year is work ethic. From Y7, we have increased the amount of home work. We are also looking at writing stamina and this is now incorporated in all lessons.</p>	
LGB 10	<p>10. AOB</p> <p>None</p>	
	<p>The next meeting will take place on Thursday 28 November at 5.30pm at Harrogate Grammar School.</p>	