

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Curriculum, Learning and
Educational Standards Committee Meeting
Tuesday 10 May 2022

Time: 6 pm
Place: The Hub and via Zoom
Present: **In person**
Helen Thorne (HT), Martin Sandford (MS), Eleanor Shergold (ES) (Clerk)
Via Zoom
David Whewell (DW), Ben Pope (BPO), Sarah Marsh (SM)
Advisers: **In person**
Ben Rhodes (BRH), Linda Baines (LBA), Abbie Lanng (ALA)
Via Zoom
Stuart Gray (SGR) Director of Learning (Humanities)
Apologies: Kevin Eames (KE)

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
43/22	To refer the need for drinking water availability in the humanities faculty to resources	HT/ES
46/22	Agenda item on assessment update to be picked up next time	BRH/ES
48/22	CLES to recommend course of action re policies to Board	HT/BRH
49/22	To send Governor Postcards to identified staff	HT

41/22 Apologies

Apologies were agreed and accepted. It was agreed that HT would chair the meeting in the absence of the chair and vice chair.

The committee did not meet last term due to extra-ordinary circumstances – it was necessary to have a full board meeting to ratify the appointment of the new Headteacher. Due to time pressures this clashed with the scheduled date for CLES and the committee was unable to find another suitable date. The agenda for tonight’s meeting included the items planned for the 5th April.

42/22 Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to declare business interests as necessary.

43/22 Faculty Reviews – Humanities

Report shared in advance of the meeting. SGR had considered what the faculty needed to get out of the review. The team have been working on improving consistency in teaching and assessments as this had varied with different assessments being used and topics being taught in different orders. The review was a good opportunity to investigate as to whether this was happening and to stress test for Ofsted. Scrutiny was provided by external specialists for both history and geography.

In the main both specialists were happy with curriculum coverage. Areas for improvement (history) included the need to continue to develop the number of topics that tackle the history of various ethnic groups and the contributions/impact made to our society, both globally and within the UK. New curriculum guidance in 2023 will also point towards this.

Areas for improvement (geography) included the need to consider developing fieldwork studies post Covid and skills at KS3 and to investigate the potential of cross-curricular work with the science faculty.

The review was generally sound with some identified areas to work on. BRH – ATU and RDA have worked hard along with SGR to get it right. Thought and intent are really clear and consistency has been worked on

over the last couple of years.

The faculty are starting to use booklets with KS4 rather than students having to take notes. There has been a mixed reaction to this nationally. The team will carry out self-evaluation and review to what extent the booklets are an effective manner of teaching.

Staff voice was joined by link governor Pete Gear. Generally, this was very positive with staff feeling accountable for results and lesson delivery and also supported and listened to. There was a small point re communication which SGR taken on board. Staff said that the physical environment could be improved but understand the challenges around the age of the building. Frustration was expressed re time given to photocopying resources and the benefit of newer resources highlighted.

Student voice – there was an interesting difference between when lessons were being observed and student voice. During observation several students struggled to explain why they were learning what they were learning. During student voice the students all gave good answers. Students gave positive feedback around enjoying the subject and feeling well taught and well supported.

Governors asked if there has been any costing of any of the improvements highlighted. SGR – there is no safe drinking water. In terms of the paintwork and flooring staff appreciate that JOG is an old building. **Governors asked about the priorities for any physical improvements.** SGR – things change quickly. New resources would help reduce time taken up with photocopying. BRH will look at this with SGR in term 6. **Governors asked about the teacher who is isolated by teaching in a class elsewhere in the school.** This is down to there not being enough space to have all the humanities and social sciences together. Challenges around space discussed.

Action – to refer the need for drinking water availability to Resources

HT/ES

DDI Assessments – on the whole gave a really solid picture. There are some things that staff are working on.

In summary, things are looking strong and the review reflected progress made over the last couple of years. SGR thanked BRH for his input into the process, making it supportive of the team. BRH re-iterated the progress that has been made with a team of great practitioners travelling in the same direction. **Governors thanked SGR for attending.**

SGR left the meeting.

44/22 Minutes and Matters Arising

- a) 32/22 – To discuss SEN policy with HKE and feedback to MS – MS is following this up with VMA
- b) 36/22 – Circulate PP Strategy Statement to governors – the Strategy Statement was circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no follow up questions.

The minutes of 11 January were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

45/22 Progress

KS4 Tracking Point 3 and Mock 2 Update

Progress 8 – is 0.25 overall with girls tracking higher than boys. P8 is above national and progress is reflected across high, middle and low with only one area that has dipped. ALA said that there are not any huge discrepancies. There is still a gap for DS but progress is being made. SEN support is 0, in line with national but there is still a gap between overall P8 and SEN.

English is looking really positive at 0.33, though this is a slight dip from TP2. Maths has had quite a dip and is down to -0.24, though data from mock 1 to mock 2 shows progress is up by half a grade.

EBacc is showing a nice improvement from TP2. The open bucket has contributed to this as well as science and humanities.

ALA – overall the data is looking quite positive, especially some of the mock grades.

Progress indicators

- there is a gap arising between PP and non PP with KS2 prior attainment being higher for non PP
- 5 GCSES 5+ including English and Maths – Maths have been putting in loads of intervention and have seen an improvement in data since the tracking point
- Students entering EBacc includes a couple of Polish students taking Polish
- EBacc strong pass 5+ is mainly being held back by maths
- Average point score for English and Maths 4+ has dipped since TP2 due to maths 4+ decrease
- English data is looking very strong, slight dip since last TP – Literacy is a focus area based on mocks
- Focus groups – boys, higher, PP+ and SEND

Governors asked if students know what they need to be revising. ALA – DLs have collated information and shared it with students. DLs use this to help shape revision sessions as some content is no longer included in exams.

Governors asked about the potential impact of Covid on exams. ALA – there are 10 days between exams for the same subject. Students need to have covered 25% of the course as it has to be externally assessed to some degree as there will be no teacher assessed grades. There is nothing in place for long Covid, which may also be reflected in lack of course work for vocational courses. Challenges around Covid guidelines were discussed.

Staff absence leading up to deadlines, including marking and moderating has an impact and staff are bending over backwards to accommodate, though it was noted that this comes at a cost. It is a bit of a crunch time for staff.

The school is looking at how students can be best supported over the exam period due to the impact of Covid over the last couple of years. TLC as well as pushing them to do their best. **Governors asked if students will in school.** ALA – confirmed that they will be until the last exam has taken place. APE has done a revision timetable for all students shaped around exams.

Subject SPI Data – this is looked at in depth by SLT and was shared for governor information. ALA gave an overview of SLT discussion and action points.

Governors asked what evidence the school has that removing students from particular courses is not removing them for the benefit of school results. ALA – this will not change the data for the school. The action will hopefully allow these students to improve their progress in English and maths. **A question was asked if iMedia is too rigorous.** BRH – it is more a case of students choosing it because they think they can access it. Another factor is whether they have any interest in the subject. Removing some students from some of the courses is to try to support them by having less courses. Intervention was tried initially. **Governors asked if there have been any student or parent complaints.** BRH – no, all were happy with the decision. LBA – with iMedia students had not engaged with the course work component and the rules are very strict around this.

KS5 Tracking Point 3

The pass rate remains the same as TP2 at 99.6%. The aim is to try to be where the school was at pre-pandemic. If data comes into fruition then it is looking not too bad. A*B – 57%, A*C – 86.1%. AS at TP3 is also looking very positive. LBA summarised the challenges for students in terms of exam literacy and exam readiness alongside the conflict of paid work. Tracking looks favourable.

Value Added – is also travelling in the right direction. The average grade is B- in comparison to C in 2019. The APS is also comparing favourably. This is largely down to entering more students in the extended project qualification. Students do well in this and it is well recognised and appealing to universities. A solid qualification.

LBA gave an overview of subject performance. Things have improved in sociology. There is some tutoring

taking place in maths and chemistry. Physics reflects how difficult the subject is. Tutoring is going well. Chemistry is slightly higher up the list with lots of tutoring in place there too. Chemistry tuition will come to an end this year as the tutor will no longer be available. Hopefully it will continue for physics and maths. The school would like to have it in place for Biology. LBA expressed concern re Geography. The larger number of students taking the subject will skew data if it under performs. The faculty is making sure that NEAS are where they should be.

Y12 – AS tracking is looking positive. EPQ – if marks are upheld lots of students should do quite well. The vast majority of Y12s should get a result this summer.

Y13s – are having as much help as possible through period 6. Lots of nurturing is taking place. Some students are in situations where they are the first sibling going through exams because of the pandemic. These are unique times.

46/22 Assessment – Update on the Embedding Phase and Future Developments for 2022/23

Due to staff sickness this agenda item was postponed till the July CLES meeting. Assessment information continues to be reported to parents

Action – agenda item to be picked up next time

BRH/ES

ALA left the meeting.

47/22 KS4 and KS5 Options and Numbers

K5

There have been 94 applicants, 80 of which are internal. LBA gave a breakdown of subjects. Psychology continues to be very popular and will have 2 classes. As per recent years music and drama have attracted few applicants. The school would like to be able to have this in its offer but is in a Catch 22 situation – as long as they are not running students aren't seeing role models of what good drama in a school might look like. JOG is doing some work with St Augustine's re shortage subjects, however, this is a challenge as the school days are very different.

The option block column structure reflects the subjects that are running in September where work has been put in to try to ensure the least clashes possible. The school wants to get photography off the ground so are prepared to run with lower numbers and is running it alongside art. There is much independent work in both subject areas.

BTEC/Cambridge Technicals – HSC – is nice to see this up and running as the labour market needs more carers. Sport – students tend to go to college to do this.

Governors asked questions to clarify, including further information about numbers for September in comparison to the current Y12.

LBA left the meeting.

Y9 Options

Over the last couple of years the focus has been on students choosing the subjects that they want to study rather than from option blocks. This worked well last year, though there have been a few more issues this year with a number of subjects proving to be very popular. There have been some conversations with students around not being able to access the course. This may mean follow up conversations with how courses are pitched, reflecting the reality of what's involved.

EBacc entry numbers are going down again due to the low number of students selecting MFL, possibly not helped by not being able to run the Spanish trip. It could also be said that numbers have been decreasing since the decision was made not to make it mandatory. The school could argue that P8 continues to improve, reflecting this decision. However, the national agenda is to aspire to 70% of students entered – which is not possible when not taking a language. **Governors asked if any students had chosen French.**

BRH – only 5. There is no French class.

Governors were pleased with the subjects being delivered and happy with the school having better results due to curriculum choices. Student voice had reflected resistance to being made to take a language. BRH – Ofsted will question this. **Governors asked if this is the same nationally.** BRH – national average is 40 % (JOG 23% for next year's Y10). **A question was asked about implications.** BRH – the school has been advised that Ofsted will look at this and it needs to have a good reason for numbers decreasing, including how the school is going to turn it around. It could be argued that more hours could be given to cover French and Spanish sooner but the difficulty is to know where to take them from.

Textiles numbers have increased. This is the second year for this course. Photography is also strong. The school now has a number of subjects more suited to the skills and abilities of students. Vocational subjects are still strong and there is a high number of applicants for drama. There is a good range and breadth of subjects as well as academic subjects. History is more popular than geography – opposite to last year. This is a more literacy-demanding subject and will need to be monitored.

48/22 Policies

Policy spreadsheet – discussion took place around work done on this previously where the policies had been narrowed down. Some documents are about processes rather than policies and some are policies that can be merged. Governors agreed to recommend these changes agreed previously to full board later this term. Plans can then be made for reviewing the remaining policies.

Action – CLES to recommend course of action re policies to Board

HT/BRH

Equality and Diversity – agreed.

49/22 Governor Postcards

This was discussed and agreed.

Action – postcards to be sent to identified staff

HT

50/22 AOB

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8 pm. Date of next CLES meeting – Tuesday 12th July at 6pm.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____