

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting
Monday 27th March 2023

Time: 6 pm

Place: The Hub

Present: **In Person**

David Whewell (DW) (chair), Jo Trigg (JT), Andrew Hawkins (AH), Toby Corden (TC), Amanda McClean (AM), Martin Sandford (MS), Sophia Oleszynski (SO), Sarah Marsh (SM), Daniela Coy (DC), Glyn Coy (GC), Pete Gear (PG), Kevin Eames (KE), Gemma Pugh (GP), Ben Pope (BPO), Sarah Bergg (SB) (member), Eleanor Shergold (ES) (clerk)

Via Teams

Abbie Lanng (ALA)

Advisers: **In Person**

Nigel Reeves (NRE), Ben Rhodes (BRH)

Apologies:

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
49/23 a)	To send a reminder to governors still to complete safeguarding training	ES
49/23 b)	To provide summary information re school priorities	BRH
49/23 c)	Skills audit to be carried out later in the year	TC
49/23 d)	To ask WW Headteachers for elective home education data	BRH
50/23 b)	Feedback from staff survey to be followed up and a governor T&F group formed	BRH/TC
56/23	Governor postcards to be sent to identified staff	DW/TC

47/23 Apologies and Welcome

DW welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

48/23 Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to declare any business interests and to update them as necessary.

49/23 Minutes and Matters Arising

- a) 29/23 a) – to complete Governor Services safeguarding training – ES to send **reminder** to those still to complete training.
- b) 31/23 – to provide summary information re school priorities for March board – **carried forward**.
- c) 39/23 d) – skills audit to be carried out later in the year – **carried forward**.
- d) 40/23 a) – to ask WW Headteachers for elective home education data – the last meeting was postponed – **carried forward**.
- e) 46/23 – feedback re governor postcards to be passed on to SLT **completed**.

The minutes and confidential minutes of 6th February were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

50/23 Chair's Report

a) Governors & Ofsted Expectations

Key Questions Ofsted Inspectors Might Ask Governors – document circulated in advance of the meeting. DW highlighted the importance of shared knowledge, that no one is required to know all of

the answers. The key questions document outlines the questions governors might be asked and gives reminders as to where the relevant information can be found. It is likely that Ofsted will carry out an inspection in the next 8-10 months.

There was a time of discussion. Governors were given the opportunity to respond to some of the questions.

SB joined the meeting.

b) Staff Wellbeing Survey

Sections 1-4 were circulated in advance of the meeting for governor information. Responses to the open comments section were not shared as staff had been reassured that the survey was confidential and some responses were written in a way that individuals could be identified.

Section 5 comments will be passed on to BRH in order to identify common themes. DW recommended that a task and finish group is then formed. It is important for staff to see that feedback from the survey is being addressed. **Governors asked questions to clarify.**

Action – staff feedback to be followed up and a governor task and finish group to be formed **BRH/TC**

c) Headteacher Resignation

Due to personal circumstances MWO has taken the difficult decision to step down as Headteacher and leaves at the end of this term. Parents and staff have been informed. BRH, Deputy Headteacher, has accepted the role of Headteacher with immediate effect. The gap in SLT cover will be addressed in due course. Paul Skipp (Equa CEO) will be supporting BRH and providing additional executive leadership. **Governors were positive about the way forward.**

d) Governor Resignation

GC has resigned. He was thanked for the positive force that he has been during his time as a governor. DW and JT have become Equa Trustees. JT will be the Equa link to JOG with DW covering when she is unavailable. All three were really positive about their experience of being JOG governors and their ongoing connections will the school.

The John of Gaunt School won't formally close as a business until the accounts have been signed off later in the year.

e) Governor Hub

Governors have been given access to Governor Hub – Equa's governance platform. Access was in place in advance of the meeting so that any concerns could be addressed.

GP arrived at the meeting.

f) Clerking Arrangements

The job description and advert are in hand for a clerk. Equa is recruiting for the role.

51/23 Headteacher's Report

Report circulated in advance of the meeting.

School Context – numbers on roll have gone up by 3 in Y11. EHCP numbers are still rising and this is expected to continue.

Senior Leadership Team – there will be some restructuring with VMA (SESCO) becoming a permanent member of the team (Assistant Headteacher) after Easter. From September 2023 the school is opening a resource base specifically for EHCP ASD students. This comes with additional funding for the school. Six students have been allocated places for Y7 with an initial total of 10 students increasing to a maximum of 20. The resource base will use temporary accommodation initially, looking towards a more permanent

solution. The person leading this needs to be a member of SLT. VMA is well respected by staff and by the wider community.

Vacancies in Staffing – BRH gave an overview of roles currently being advertised and those that are of a particular concern. **Governors asked questions to clarify.** Changes have been made to advertising, making it clear that Trowbridge is travelable from Bristol, etc. R&A approved an amendment to the Pay Policy, increasing the recruitment and retention allowance. BRH said that when schools find out that staff are leaving they are jumping on it straight away due to the challenges around recruitment at this time.

Data – the mocks have been pushed back due to staff voice to try and support workload, therefore there are no further updates on data until after Easter. P16 – governors updated re sociology – there is no teacher from Easter until May. BRH explained arrangements in place to address the gap. The curriculum content has already been covered.

Quality of Teaching and Learning – DDI (Developmental Drop In) cycles 3 and 4 have taken place. The outcome of this is that T&L is good overall. Work sampling highlighted ongoing areas for development – GEM work, student RTM and how that is being used. Student independent focus isn't as strong as it could be. The inset day on the 28th April will be used to feedback the findings from the DDIs and to do further training on areas that need to be tightened up. The JOG essentials are embedded. Modelling and scaffolding are going well.

CPLD – a number of people are working on their NPQ awards with additional staff applying. There was a joint inset day with Equa on the 20th February. Staff evaluation of the day is being collated.

Student Behaviour – there has been a spike in the number of suspensions. The main reason for this is due to a spike in verbal abuse towards adults. Pre-Covid JOG was well below national for suspensions and is now in line with local and national. The school continues to work with students to address this, continuing to push expectations. **Governors asked about the spike in Y8.** BRH – there are a number of students on managed moves and a number on flexi schooling. There are also issues around cyber bullying. Y8 is the biggest concern after Y11. Student welfare data discussed.

Attendance – Y10 is a particular concern, exacerbated by a number of reduced provisions or severe persistent absence. SAM and the pastoral team are working together to address this. Currently the school doesn't have an attendance officer in post. **Governors asked about possible alignment with Equa.** BRH responded. JOG is re-advertising and reviewing the distribution of tasks. **Governors asked if this is a national picture post Covid.** The school's data is dipping just below national at 90% year to date in comparison with 90.8%. There is a lot of great work going on.

Governors asked about contributing factors in attendance and behaviour, whether this related to a general slipping of leadership. BRH said that staff morale is a factor. The school is going through a reboot of expectations, reaffirming the basics – meet, greet, stand and seat, uniform and having basic equipment, etc. When getting the low-level stuff right things don't escalate. Pulling together as a staff team will have a positive impact on exclusions. A significant low number of students skew the data, making it look worse than it is. **Governors asked if some of the Y11 students are acting as role models in a negative way.** BRH said potentially this is the case but that the majority of students are doing the right thing and that it's important to celebrate this. Positive rewards points were discussed. Y7, 8 and 9 receive rewards points regularly with a drop off in Y10 and Y11. **Governors highlighted the need for consistency of approach for positive reward recognition across the year groups.** Role modelling was discussed and the need to be proactive.

For a number of students with PA this is due to medical reasons rather than behavioural. There are some issues around parents opting for elective home education to avoid fines. **S&C will continue to meet after the school joins Equa and will continue to have a focus on behaviour and attendance.**

Morning welcome and tutor time are being reviewed. BRH has done a stand-alone morning welcome with each year group. It is more impactful to have a year specific morning welcome. The next one will focus on

role modelling and celebration.

PE Faculty Review – a comprehensive review was carried. There is great work going on in the faculty and data is strong at both KS4 and KS5 in comparison to school and national results.

English Faculty Review – also received strong feedback.

ALA joined the meeting.

52/23 Affordable Schools

ALA is working with Wiltshire Council on the Affordable School's strategy and attended the meeting to update governors. ALA gave an overview of the aims of the strategy – to develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty; and to help schools make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of pupils and families, especially the most vulnerable.

The plan is to develop a working group next term to carry out an analysis of how affordable the school is. Governors, parents and staff will be sent surveys, which will also include student voice. The results will be published in term 6.

Governors asked if this will focus mainly on PP students or if it will have a wider focus. ALA – this will look at all students and the affordability of the school. It will focus on where support can be given and where costs can be reduced, with the most vulnerable at the forefront, making sure that every student has the right to succeed. **Governors asked about the squeezed middle.** ALA said that this will be looked at holistically – different ways that things can be done that reduces costs for everyone – e.g. school uniform. **Governors were really positive about barriers being removed. S&C have discussed the possibility of behaviour points being used in the canteen for students who can't afford to buy food.** The school started a breakfast club this term which has been successful.

ALA left the meeting.

53/23 Reports from Committees

a) CLES

Feedback was received from the PE and English faculty reviews. **Governors were impressed with the broadness of the PE curriculum** including aspects of health and social wellbeing. English has a solid SPI. **Governors raised a question in relation students reaching "expected grades" (grades predicted from KS2 data) and departmental success in English. Overall there are groups that the school still needs to target.**

Teaching and Learning Strategies – 'Closing the gap between boys' and girls' performance at GCSE'. This was an informative document that in part set out to challenge subject-gender stereotyping. **PP students discussed.** BRH – DS students are achieving better than national. The school has worked on the quality of T&L, which means that P8 has improved overall, making it more difficult to close the gap.

PP Funding Plan – the document and presentation made clear that there are few activities solely directed at PP students. The JOG approach is focused on providing high quality T&L for all students through such work as Talk for Writing, GEM learning cycles, and Reciprocal reading. Some interventions do disproportionately involve PP students, generally because of their lower prior attainment at KS2: e.g. enhanced transition arrangements, the Nurture Group, and the use of KS4 mentors.

Reweighting of curriculum timings in English, maths and MFL discussed. The key priority is to work on literacy skills and the ability to retain students in MFL.

A question was raised about the contact between JOG and partner primary schools, whether there are plans to make sure that KS2 standards at primary are the same as discussed at JOG. BRH – the school continues to have links with partner primary schools and a number of learning communities

through CSL, these are co-chaired by secondary and primary schools. Discussion is ongoing. The key challenges are around languages and humanities. It is a challenge to have a parity in what the schools deliver.

b) R&A

Site Update – MDO and the team continue to do great work. A quote has been obtained for a secure biking area.

ASD Support Base and Potential Funds – section 106 funding gives the potential for exciting long-term plans.

Draft 5 Year Budget Plan – the next 5 years continue to have a financially secure outlook.

HR Report – EGR updated governors on the challenges around recruitment. The school is doing everything it can. Other schools are in similar position.

c) S&C

Y7 students attended the meeting. There was a discussion around positive behaviour points. Students will feedback to the school council and follow up with HKE.

Attendance and Behaviour – as per discussion at tonight’s meeting. **Governors suggested possibly working and aligning with EQUA and having a strategic MAT approach to attendance, including charities and outside agencies.** Consideration is being given to the structure of the pastoral team.

Governor Postcards were sent to JMO and SSC for successfully attaining the Rainbow Award.

Uniform Consultation – this is due to come back to the next S&C.

Safeguarding Audit – MS (safeguarding governor) completed this with HKE.

54/23 Governor Training and Development and Link Governor Visits

MS attended a training session this term on LAC and Governors’ Responsibilities. PG is due to attend a Focus on Pupil Attendance

55/23 Policies

Policy spreadsheet – updated spreadsheet circulated for governor information. Some policies will be replaced with Equa’s. Further information to follow.

Exams

Exams Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown

Exams Equality & Access

Exams Malpractice

Exams Whistleblowing

Non-Exam Assessments

Staff Code of Conduct

Antibullying

Online Safety

Pay Policy (amendment re recruitment and retention allowance)

All policies were approved. Contingency Plan and Internal Appeals & Complaints – updated procedures noted.

56/23 Governor Postcards

Discussed and agreed.

57/23 AOB

Local Governing Body – all governors will be automatically transferred to Equa. Roger Townsend, chair of

trustees, sent a letter welcoming everyone.

BRH – a question was raised about ongoing support for BRH as DW has given valuable support to Headteachers in his role as chair of governors. PSK will become BRH’s line manager as of the 1st April.

The meeting closed at 8 pm. Date of next Board meeting Monday 22nd May 2023.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____