

**THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting**  
**13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Time:** 6 pm  
**Place:** The Hub  
**Present:** **In person** – Kevin Eames (KE), Toby Corden (TC), Amanda McClean (AMc), Sophia Olezynski (SO), Daniela Coy (DC), Helen Kerr (HK)

**Via Zoom**

**Advisers:** Ben Rhodes (BRH), Abbie Clark (AC), Helen Kerr (HK)

**Apologies:** Sarah Marsh, Gemma Pugh

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Actions Agreed</b>	<b>Who</b>
5/24	S&C meeting 27.09.23 to finalise details of S&C focus group for the rest of the academic year	S&C members
8/24a (i)	SLT to report how many 'children of note' at KS4 entered 6 <sup>th</sup> form	BRH/AC
8/24a (ii)	Link governors to be invited to attend meetings with DLs/SLs	BRH/AC
8/24a (iii)	Postcards to be sent to staff	AC/TC
8/24c (i)	Update of governor area of school website to be updated following support from Equa and ES	LS
8/24c (ii)	Students and parents to be informed as to reasoning behind new fences	BRH
8/24c (iii)	Uniform policy to be updated and distributed to LGB	HK
8/24d	Attendance to be added as a standing agenda item to LGB meetings	TC

**1/24 Apologies and Welcome**

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were agreed and accepted.

**2/24 Election of Chair**

Toby Corden was unanimously re-elected as chair.

**3/24 Election of Vice Chairs**

Andrew Hawkins was unanimously re-elected as vice chair.

**4/24 Declaration of Business Interests**

No changes disclosed. Governors were reminded to declare any business interests at the meeting and to update them as necessary on Governor Hub.

## 5/24 Governor Admin

Meeting dates for the year were circulated and discussed. As a result of the school becoming a member of Equa, it was agreed that LGB meetings would continue to be held termly, whilst Student and Community meetings would take place during the school day with a focus group and a report of the meeting shared with the LGB. This will be refined at the S&C meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

## 6/24 Minutes and Matters Arising

- 70/23a – TC updated governors on the skills audit.
- 71/23d - TC reminded governors to access NGA training. Governors were also reminded of the Equa safeguarding training at 4.30pm on 14.09.23.
- 72/23c – The PEX process was completed without appeal.
- 72/23e - Messages re strike action were clear and timely.
- 75/23 - Postcards sent as agreed.
- 76/23 – Staff complaint now closed. Member of staff felt that they had been listened to.

The minutes of 10th July were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

## 7/24 Chair's Report

### a) Equa Update

TC/BRH explained that the current focus was on the Equa/Mead merger although it was expected that a group of four or five local primaries would be joining Equa as a local hub at some point in the future.

**Governors asked if this would have a negative impact on CSL and its offer to local schools.** BRH assured governors that local heads are committed to maintaining CSL.

**Governors asked if issues relating to staffing capacity had been resolved.** BRH shared that although there is still one vacancy to be filled, capacity has increased greatly. In addition to Nigel and Julie Gray, Jayne Bullock is now working 2 days per week for Equa and an additional 3 staff members of staff have joined the faculty admin team. Extra capacity for HR will also be realised when the Mead becomes a part of Equa.

The extended SLT is supporting workload of the existing SLT. Staff have been invited to engage in 'projects' such as reading and attendance to support NPQSL. These are linked to school improvement.

Job descriptions have been updated to reflect changes as a result of the above.

### b) Staffing Update

A member of staff has recently returned to school following a secondment to Lavington. A member of staff will be taking maternity leave from January.

## 8/23 Headteacher's Report

### a) Data and actions

**KS4** - AC explained the changes to grade boundaries this year and explained that the data shared is being compared to 'first rush data' collated from SISRA (collaborative data) and 2019. This data may change as a result of the outcomes of marking reviews.

Although this year bucks a rising trend and progress data is not as strong as in previous years. the school's results are not dissimilar to other local schools and are slightly below national overall. Children entitled to Pupil Premium however, are in line with national.

The impact of the cohort (24 students out of mainstream/accessing AP, students not turning up for exams etc) was discussed. The cohort had already been identified as a cohort in need of support – this was exacerbated by Covid-19. **Governors asked if this number of students reflected the national picture.** BRH explained that he was aware of schools with similar contexts who had similar experiences.

**Governors then asked how many children were in AP at this point in time in Y11.** AC responded that there were 12 children identified as having significant medical needs or in need of specialist provision as well as a number of children on school role who refuse to attend school. The school is working to support these children. The school have also received a significant number of requests for school transfers from parents of children with significant need. Even though the school cannot offer the students' preferred options, families still wish to progress their applications. As an inclusive school, these children will be offered a place however this may impact negatively on data for next year.

Performance of individual subjects discussed. **Governors asked specifically about results in Astronomy.** BRH explained that this was the first year that this subject had been offered. A significant number of children signed up but were not prepared for the fact that the learning was heavily science-based.

Expressive Arts featured on the SIP plan last year. Results show that positive actions were taken and embedded. In drama however, a number of children refused to perform in front of the moderator; this impacted on results.

**Governors asked if there was anything specifically that the school was disappointed in.** BRH replied that he was disappointed that the school had not been able to overcome the challenges in turning the children who needed emotional support or lacked resilience. **When asked if he could identify why this had proved to be difficult,** BRH shared the impact of long-term staff absence, the impact of the death of a well-loved teacher, the impact of challenging children on the learning of others and Covid-19. He added that some students love a particular subject at KS3, citing history, but lose their passion for the subject as a result of the literacy demands in KS4. He also questioned whether analysis of last year's results had been granular enough.

**Governors asked if this year's results had impacted on the number of children entering 6<sup>th</sup> form and would this have a financial impact on the school or mean that fewer subjects could be offered.** BRH replied that entry level criteria remains rigorous. Despite this, 50 children have been offered a place (five fewer than last year). The only subject not offered this year is Computer Science however, this was due to lack of interest rather than capacity. The school has some concerns around a number of girls for whom persistent absence is an issue however strategies have been put in place to support attendance as children dropping out mid-year has the greatest financial impact. **When asked how many 'children of note' were entering sixth form,** BRH/AC did not have numbers to hand. This will be shared at the next meeting.

Proposed actions were shared with governors: see HT report.

- Meetings have been planned with Department Leads and Subject Leads and, which governors will be invited to attend, to analyse data more forensically and to formulate strategies for development. It was agreed that governors with limited capacity would prioritise attendance at English, maths, science and EBACC meetings. Attendance would also help support governors during Ofsted;

**KS5 Results** - the school performed slightly better than in 2019. BRH reminded governors that this cohort had TAGs at GCSE level hence data is not easily comparable.

98% of the students have places on university courses of their choice including two students attending Oxford. **Governors queried if aspiring Oxbridge students are given additional support.** Amy Evers, an Oxford graduate, provided specific support.

Proposed actions were shared with governors: see HT report

**Governors asked for advice as to who postcards should be sent to.** AC suggested that she email TC with a list of names.

## **b) School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

The one-page ABC School Improvement Plan 23-26 was shared and discussed (Attendance, Behaviour and Expectations, Curriculum). These targets also reflect the data for the 22-23 academic year. Behind this sits a more detailed plan of actions needed to achieve the ABC criteria for success.

**Governors asked for clarity around these planned actions.** BRH explained that the SIP is underpinned by the school's core values: kindness, positivity and belonging. These have been revisited frequently already this term. These will be enhanced by a key focus on character education led by LRO. This will begin in January and aims to develop resilience for example. KP, a member of extended SLT, will focus on the implementation of a KS4 tutor programme. This will incorporate revision techniques and positive strategies for mental health and well-being.

**Actions:**

- Governors to familiarise themselves with SIDP.
- BRH to provide crib sheet to support governors in preparation for Ofsted.

**c) Start to the school year**

**Governors complemented the school on the update to the school website in preparation for 23-24**

BRH explained that the website was still missing key governor information required by Ofsted as a result of clerking issues during the last academic year. The clerk is meeting with ES and DLC (Equa) to update at the earliest opportunity.

**Governors asked how split lunches had been received.** BRH explained that it is difficult to measure impact after only one week however tweaks have been made to ensure the smooth running of lunchtimes. BRH listed the strategies currently in place advising that there had been a very positive atmosphere across the school.

**A governor observed that a child had reported concern about the number of new fences in school.** BRH explained that these had been installed for safeguarding purposes as there are fewer staff available at lunchtimes and that children still had frequent opportunities to mix and use a greater space at breaktimes. **Governors suggested that this is explained to the children and that parents are informed via the newsletter.** BRH to action.

HK shared that during the recent hot weather, the school had received numerous enquiries re uniform and what was considered to be appropriate. It was proposed that students be offered the opportunity to wear tailored shorts in terms 1,5 and 6. **Governors agreed with this proposal.** HK to update uniform policy for distribution to governors.

**A governor asked where the 'Equa Essentials' came from.** BRH explained that many of them would be recognisable as those previously used at JoG however these had also been added to and tweaked.

Transition was very positive this year as a result of changes made. Students were engaging in learning far earlier as a result.

New staff have also settled well following the two TD days.

**d) Attendance**

Although overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average (91%), persistent absence is above national average (26%). As mentioned previously, there is a focus on Y11 persistent absentees and students accessing AP. LRO is focusing on attendance as part of her project. **Governors asked what qualifications/experience LRO had in this area.** Support is being provided by ROH. **Governors agreed that due to the proposed change in frequency and format of S&C meetings that attendance should be an LGB agenda item.**

**9/24 Discussion on the responsibility of the LGB**

Section 4.13.4 of the Scheme of Delegation was distributed and discussed. Governors were asked to reread and familiarise themselves with the information.

#### **10/24 Governor Training/Development and Link Governor Visits**

None since previous meeting July 23. TC reminded governors to look at the Equa CPD programme and those provided by the NGA and the LA Governor Services.

#### **11/23 Policies**

- SEND policy – there are no changes to the policy. Policy was agreed by the LGB. Proposer – TC, Seconded – SO

**Governors asked if the consolidation of JoG and Equa policies had been completed.** BRH explained that NR was still going through these as Equa was in the process of updating the trust's policies.

#### **12/23 AOB**

None raised.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm. Date of next Board meeting: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_