

**THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting**  
**27<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Time:** 6 pm  
**Place:** The Hub  
**Present:** **In person** –Amanda McClean (AMc), Daniela Coy (DC), Ben Rhodes (HT) Martin Sanders (MS), Helen Kerr (HK), Vicki Marshall (VM), Mark Lee

**Via Teams** - Abbie Clark (AC), Laura Rossiter (LR), Linda Baines (LB)

**Advisers:** Ben Rhodes (BRH), Abbie Clark (AC), Helen Kerr (HK), Vicki Marshall (VM), Laura Rossiter (LR), Linda Baines (LB), Mark

**Apologies:** Toby Corden (TC), Pete Gear (PG)

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed at Previous Meeting	Who	
16/24 f	Staff to inform governors of opportunities to capture student voice, one week in advance	SLT/SLs	Ongoing
23/24 d	Helen Kerr to send Behaviour Essentials to LS for distribution to governors	HK/LS	Completed
26/24 a	Parent Governor Vacancy to be advertised –See below.	LS/SN	Completed

**27/24 Apologies and Welcome**

AMc took on the role of chair in TC's absence.

AMc welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were agreed and accepted.

**28/24 Declaration of Business Interests**

None disclosed.

**29/24 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the LGB meeting of the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**30/24 Headteacher Report**

Governors had read the report prior to the meeting and had prepared questions in advance.

**a) Attendance – Laura Rossiter**

Although attendance remains a concern, the school's attendance figures remain in line with the national average including for persistent absence. Social anxiety from as significant number of students continues to impact attendance figures. New coding has been released by the DfE; this is very different to the current coding. Changes have also been made to referrals to the EWO; there is now an expectation that two

penalties will have been administered before referral. This will increase the workload however a new Attendance Admin Officer (AAO) has been appointed this week.

**Governors asked for clarification of the role of the new AAO.** LR explained that the AAO will be working 20 hours per week, across 5 days and will be responsible for truancy calls, registers etc and will support the attendance officer as required.

**Governors asked if analysis of attendance data still showed increased absence on Fridays.** LR explained that Mondays and Fridays remain an issue, the focus is on 'broken' weeks, where children regularly miss a day a week. This information is now shared in letters sent home to parents.

**Governors asked if home visits were still being made.** LR explained that these were less frequent due to the lack of capacity in school.

**Governors asked for clarification of the tutor group awards.** LR explained that students can earn rewards which lead to a box of rewards e.g. chocolate. The students have engaged with this.

**Governors thanked LR for attending the meeting.**

#### **b) Quality of Education – Abbie Clark**

AC shared that interventions continue to be delivered to support students in their learning. Raising Standards meetings have been introduced in core subjects, in order to personalise interventions as far as possible. P6 sessions are continuing, and holiday revision sessions have been planned; there has been positive uptake for these.

Attendance remains a challenge. Analysis of both attendance and attainment shows that there is a strong correlation between the two. Students with attendance above 95% are half a grade above that predicted, based on entry data whilst those students whose attendance is currently below 83% are at least one grade below.

A number of students have been withdrawn from exams which means that they will have an incomplete Progress 8 score; this will impact on the school's data.

The IDSR has just been released. This has emphasised the school's concerns regarding performance in a number of subjects including Child Development, Engineering, i-Media, Art and English Lit. A decision was made to have the English Lit papers marked externally however the papers have not yet been returned for scrutiny by the school.

BR shared that line management for engineering had been delegated to VM for 23-24. VM says that the team is working hard and has a strong development plan in place however, behaviour management is a cause for concern. I-media will not be offered as an option next year.

On a positive note, AC shared Computer Science, Geography, Music, Photography and Spanish are performing strongly.

**Governors commented that this appears to reflect student cohort rather than teaching.**

**Governors asked when the school expected to complete the Affordable Schools Award and if this was likely to impact attendance.** AC stated that the school is on track to achieve the Bronze Award by the end of the academic year. Parent Voice has been carried out; key points raised by parents included the affordability of trips and the cost of uniform as well as the fact that parents were sometimes unsure who they needed to contact for specific issues.

As a result, a pupilpremium@ email has been set up for parents to access. A page of the website will be dedicated to future planning for trips – this should be particularly useful for parents who are ‘just about managing’.

In addition, the school uniform policy has been tweaked.

**Governors asked if it would be useful for governors to have sight of subject-by-subject data.** AC explained that the data is currently being collated but that this could be arranged if governors wished to follow this up.

**Governors raised the point that historically, maths and Science data has been a concern and asked if this was still the case.** AC responded that although this was still a negative score, improvements had been made.

**Governors thanked AC for her contribution.**

#### **c) Safeguarding, Vulnerable Learners and Behaviour– Helen Kerr**

**Governors asked if onsite AP was working and having a positive impact..** HK explained that the students attending onsite AP fall into two distinct groups: a small number of children with extremely challenging behaviour and those with EHCPs. The students are receiving their full curriculum entitlement (5 core GCSEs, Careers, RE and PSHE, supported by ASDAN. The students attend breakfast club, tutor time and lessons and leave school at the end of P4. Both the academic and social needs of the students are being met. There has been a very positive response from parents, which was discussed at length with Ofsted.

**Governors noted that the number of students accessing Elective Home Education (EHE) had doubled and asked if the school were concerned.**

Although this has an impact on school roll, HK advised that this is a national trend. Parents are more aware of their rights to EHE. All procedures are adhered to, though the school strongly encourages HK also shared that parents to leave their children in school. Their school place is held until the following term.

**Governors asked if the rise in EHE linked to PEX/suspensions.** HK confirmed that this was not the case. The students accessing EHE are those with poor mental health/anxiety who cannot cope with mainstream and who do not have access to services. Flexi-schooling has been offered where possible.

HK shared that research suggests this may be linked to Covid and a growing distrust in public services which will take a minimum of 10 years to address. HK also shared that she has sent in a FOI request for Wiltshire’s EHE data to enable her to compare JoG with other similar schools.

HK informed governors that the annual safeguarding audit had been completed. The format had changed this year adding to workload.

HK also shared that suspensions have significantly reduced this year. Despite this, behaviour will still be a focus for the school.

Governors thanked HK for her contribution.

**d) Post 16 – Linda Baines**

**Governors asked LB to expand on how the school is preparing students for exams.** LB explained PSHE sessions are being used to help prepare the students. Students have been supported to create a purposeful revision timetable and provided with meaningful revision strategies including 'phone hygiene' (ensuring phone is not a distraction). Uplearn, the online platform purchased by the school, is being used relatively well. Some students continue to work with their mentor on areas such as exam anxiety. The mentor is currently working with department leads to provide focused mentoring.

LB explained that 81% of students had applied for a university place whilst career service intervention had taken place for the remaining students.

**Governors asked if applications for post-16 for 24-25 were lower than expected.**

LB responded that numbers were as expected but numbers may change based on results, number of external applicants who take up a place etc.

LB added that music and business studies will be reintroduced next year.

**Governors asked how the government's aspiration for students to access maths until 18 was being received.**

LB stated that the Advanced Baccalaureate, which includes maths and English, is not compatible with the timetable. The 'Maths for Life' programme, introduced by the school however was well-received by the students.

**Governors thanked LB for her contribution.**

**e) Mark Lee - Personal Development**

**Introductions were made.**

ML reminded governors of the Ofsted target relating to the students needing to take ownership of their own learning to increase retrieval of information. ML shared the feedback from recent drop-ins regarding student attitudes to learning.

Already the school has introduced a range of strategies to support engagement; these have been implemented and observed during Developmental Drop-ins (DDIs).

The development of personal learning skills will be a focus for T4 INSET. Following this, the school will target home learning launching in T6.

**Governors asked if this would be launched across the whole school.** ML explained that the introduction of the programme would be phased. Staff are currently pre-populating the learning booklets with challenging

expectations and will begin by targeting Y10s. The current completion rate is currently better in KS3 and this will be monitored.

**Governors asked if this was cohort specific or if it was linked to expectations of destination placements.**

ML stated that behaviour was much better this year, but learners remained passive in the learning process even though some students are aspirational.

**Governors asked if this passivity was subject driven.** ML responded that it was cohort driven and links to fear of failure, linked to poor attendance. The students need to build resilience through developing perseverance and independent learning skills hence the focus on learning at home.

VM shared that she felt this passivity was partly linked to destinations as student aimed for the minimum grades needed.

**Governors asked what was expected of parents following the launch.** ML shared that there is a need for a shift in culture, including parental engagement. Following the launch, completion of homework will be monitored across the week. Where work has not been completed in the previous week, detentions will be issued. Initially, there may be a rise in negative feedback as a result.

**Governors thanked ML for his contribution.**

**f) SEND – Vicki Marshall**

**Governors asked about the reading interventions currently taking place and if anything could be done about the Y7 intake.** VM explained that discussions are held with SENCOs prior to entry where reading is not identified as an additional need. It is hoped that when the trust merges the same RA assessment will be used across the trust in both primary and secondary phases.

**Governors asked if staff had been recruited for the RB.** VM shared that a new RB lead had been appointed this week. In addition, a TA has also been appointed. Due to the proposed expansion, a further teacher will be needed. There are two further positions to fill.

**Governors shared their concern that the RB had caused extra workload for VM.** VM explained that a deputy SENCO had been appointed for September.

**Governors asked VM to describe how students were supported through attendance at Lackham College and if this has had a positive impact on attainment.**

VM stated that Lackham have allowed JoG to commission education solely for a group of nine students from JoG, who are currently attending on-site AP. This is funded from EHCPs. The students have attended since September and are currently working towards ASDAN qualifications. Several students have declared an interest in attending the college post-16. A member of staff attends with the students; this has also benefitted the school as skills learned have transferred to use in the Forest School.

**Governors asked if the students had opportunities to integrate with other students.** VM replied that when there is low attendance, the group has merged with another secondary school successfully.

VM went on to inform governors that this year has seen the highest number of applications from SEND students for education post-16. This includes students from other schools and a student who has been EHE since Y1.

**Governors thanked VM for her contributions.**

**g) Additional Information from HT Report – BR**

BR explained that three Trust Collaborative Reviews (CR) had taken place recently in DT, Maths and PSHE.

**Governors asked how the school benefitted positively from these.** BR described how a CR review had led to visits to schools in Bristol to observe practice. This provided JoG with strategies to use to promote the students' ownership of learning.

**In the light of a falling roll, governors asked how the recent Ofsted could be used to promote the school and whether Equa had its own marketing department.**

BR explained that local primary schools had been asked to add their voice to this issue. Comments were made regarding the differing approaches to promoting the school to the children; this was felt to influence the children's decision-making (a significant number of parents allow their children to choose their secondary school).

MDM, a digital media company has been employed to help publicise the school using social media in T5 and T6.

**Governors asked if MDM will ensure the school is able to reach the widest audience possible.** BR agreed that this was the case.

**Governors suggested that it would be beneficial for JoG to attend key public events to raise the school's profile.**

**Governors went on to ask if the school were now satisfied with their HR allocation and access to Ellie Green.** BR explained that they were used to the 'new' system. Some roles had been delegated to other admin staff, so the school had no concerns. BR also shared Equa's intention to strengthen HR following the merger.

**Governors asked how the pushback regarding period 6/work-life balance had been dealt with.** BR explained that staff voice had been listened to and attendance at P6 was now voluntary, as is leading extra-curricular activities, revision sessions etc.

**Governors commented on the ongoing staffing needs of the school.** BR informed governors that interest had been shown in the vacancy for AHT. Recruitment is proving to be difficult nationally; many teachers are leaving the profession, so the field is smaller for a greater number of jobs.

**Governors asked if the LGB were fulfilling their governance structure.** LS updated the governors on the recent parent governor elections. Although the deadline was extended and prospective candidates were e-mailed following the closing dates, no forms were received. Governors now need to make a decision as to whether to co-opt prior to re-advertising. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Governors requested that the uptake of extra-curricular activities be discussed at a forthcoming meeting.**

It was agreed that this would take place in T6/T1.

In addition to the information shared by HK, BR iterated that in-house AP was effective. Only two students have been PEX'd during this academic year to date. He added that there has been some pushback from GPs who are advising parents that a managed move is not in the best interest of the students. **Governors thanked the staff for the hard work and planning that has gone into this.**

BR thanked governors for preparing their questions in advance as this contributed to the work-life balance and well-being of staff.

### **31/24 Governor Monitoring/Link Governor Visits/Governor Training**

The following have taken place or are planned before the next LGB meeting:

- MS met with HK and IT to complete the 360 Online Safety Review Tool
- SO to meet PP Lead in April
- DC to meet SEND lead in April
- DC has watched the trust Safeguarding video

### **32/24 Policies**

It was proposed (AMC) and seconded (DC) that the policies relating to Examinations were approved.

### **33/24 Multi-factor Authentication (MFA)**

IT support has provided a step-by-step guide to MFA, which had been distributed prior to the meeting. Hard copies were also available. Governors were advised that this would be live from the 28<sup>th</sup> March. RW (IT Support) will be available to answer any queries as needed.

### **34/24 Postcards**

**Governors agreed that they should express their gratitude to EB and AH** for the support that they have given to the school over a significant period of time and to the staff to thank them for their contribution to the school's successful Ofsted. It was agreed that LS would email the staff on behalf of governors, with a particular mention for EB and would purchase cards for EB and AH for governors to sign at the next meeting for EB and AH.

### **35/24 AOB**

- **Parent Governor Elections** – See above
- **Pupil Voice** – A governor raised concerns that due to the change to the structure of committees, opportunities for pupil voice had been lost and asked how this could be captured going forwards. BR stated that governors were welcome to attend Student Council Meetings. It was agreed that governors should consider the topics that they would like to discuss with students. This will form part of the next meetings agenda.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Actions Agreed</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>30/24g</b>	A discussion re take-up of curricular activities to be discussed in T6/T1. Clerk to diarise for agenda	Clerk
<b>34/24</b>	Email to be sent thanking staff and EB as outlined above Cards to be purchased for governors to sign at next meeting	Clerk
<b>35/24a</b>	Clerk to investigate co-option of governors.	Clerk
<b>35/24b</b>	Clerk to add Student Voice to next agenda. Governors to consider topics in advance of the meeting.	Clerk/ Governors

The meeting closed at 7.56pm. Date of next Board meeting: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 6pm

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