

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting
22nd May 2024

Time: 6 pm
Place: The Hub
Present: **In person** –Toby Corden, Amanda McClean (AMc), Daniela Coy (DC), Ben Rhodes (HT) Martin Sandford (MS), Pete Gear (PG), Sarah Marsh (SM)
Helen Kerr (HK), Abbie Clark (AC), Laura Rossiter (LR), Sarah Marsh (SM), Kevin Eames (KE)

Via Teams - Vicki Marshall (VM)

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

Apologies: None

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

36/24 Apologies and Welcome

All governors in attendance

37/24 Declaration of Business Interests

None disclosed.

38/24 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the LGB meeting of the 27th March 2024 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

An amendment was made to the names of attendees due to a spelling error.

39/24 Chairs Report

TC shared that the Equa Mead merger, which would result in the formation of the Equa Mead Learning Trust is progressing well following a recent meeting in which transfer documentation was signed.

TC reminded governors that the link to recent SEND training was now available.

TC also reminded the board that on Wednesday 3rd July, all governing boards are invited to attend a meeting at Dauntsey Secondary School, from 6-8pm. There will be a number of speakers as well as opportunities to meet the members of other LGBs.

40/24 Headteacher's Report

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

a) Attendance – Laura Rossiter

LR shared that although attendance is slightly below the NA of 91.2%, the school's actions are beginning to show impact. The gap between school attendance and national is beginning to close and now stands at 90.65%. Attendance in the south-west is currently 90.3%. **Governors asked if these figures represented a specific period of time or were cumulative.** LR explained that these were cumulative.

LR explained that the appointment of the new AAO has had a positive impact in enabling the school to be proactive and rigorous in ensuring that students are in school. Fifty-seven SAMs have been held in this term alone.

LR explained that new attendance guidance has been released; this has introduced new coding for registers (reasons for absence will be clearer as a result), as well as changes to penalty notices. Weekly reporting of attendance figures to the DfE is now required; it is therefore crucial that the correct attendance codes are used/amended as once data is sent, it cannot be changed. As a result, LR has attended DfE training in order to cascade information to staff.

See also, Confidential Minute 22.05.24 40/24a

Governors thanked LR for attending the meeting and for the information shared.

b) Quality of Education – Abbie Clark

AC reminded governors that the data shared related to the data drop carried out in March 24.

Headlines were shared:

- Progress 8 currently stands at -0.10 as a result of a number of students 'dropping off';
- The PP v non-PP gap has increased slightly (the students are mainly the same as above)
- EBACC numbers are down slightly but are expected to rise;
- English has seen a dip following external marking; it was felt that the marking was harsh and that students will perform better in exams, whilst boys are also under-performing in this subject;
- Focus groups have been held to interrogate data anomalies;
- Timetabling has been revised e.g. to ensure that double periods of specific subjects are not timetabled on Mondays due to TD days, Bank Holidays etc.
- Higher Prior Attainers are currently a focus as a 100% of this group should attain well.

Analysis of both attendance and attainment continues to show a strong correlation between the two.

The school continues to support the revision process and has made resources available to support revision at home. JOG continues to try to engage with parents to ensure that students are well-supported and attend exams. Students have been collected from home on a number of occasions to facilitate this. AC explained that like all schools nationally, JOG is still dealing with a 'habit hangover' from Covid, when the

perceived value of education dropped for both students and parents.

Governors asked if students were picking and choosing the exams they attended based on need.

It was agreed that this was the case – there have been a couple of instances where students have been in school and refused to attend exams.

When asked if students were overwhelmed by the exam environment, AC explained that the systems in place are currently under review as it would be beneficial for students to experience this earlier in the year.

Governors asked about the impact of the lack of SATs data on progress measures for the next two years.

AC explained that to mitigate this, the school had used CAT tests on-entry. This will be used as a baseline for these cohorts.

Governors thanked AC for her contribution.

c) Behaviour– Helen Kerr

HK informed governors that the changes made to support good behaviour in the school are having a positive impact. These include the restructure of the Behaviour Team and the change of lead in the PBSE. When compared to 22-23, suspensions this year have reduced by 50% and are now broadly in line with 21-22, despite a population increase of 283 students. HK emphasised that PP/SEND children are still over-represented in these figures (see table provided by HK). She also drew attention to the fact that one third of all second warnings are accounted for by students in Y9. She added that targeted interventions continue to have a positive impact on reducing repeat incidents.

Governors asked for specific examples of how changes had impacted. HK provided a number of examples i.e. this year has seen a marked reduction in threatening behaviour and abuse towards adults as a result of the change in the school ethos, linked to the relentless focus on school values and the introduction of character education. This is mirrored by a reduction in incidents involving physical abuse. She advised that although there had been a small increase in incidents of racist abuse, this was believed to be linked to students' perceptions of current national/international events.

Governors noted that the number of incidents in November seemed disproportionate to the rest of the year. It was felt that this was linked to the fact that due to the weather, the students were unable to go outside and release pent up energy. This also coincided with the beginning of the mocks season.

KE commented that several of his former colleagues have visited the school recently and have commented on how calm the school is when compared to other schools visited.

Governors asked if staff voice had been captured re the decrease in PEX/suspensions, as this could be perceived as a positive or as a lack of support from SLT. HK explained that although staff voice had not been captured formally, staff are positive about the fact that there is a clear behaviour strategy in place where unwanted behaviours are challenged and staff feel supported.

Governors asked if the drop in numbers of students attending the school could be caused by a lag linked to the disruption/behaviour prior to the change in leadership. HK agreed that this may indeed have an impact, particularly because of how the school was portrayed on social media, including by those without links to the school, however this is also strongly linked to a drop in local population growth.

HK shared the 'Starters and Leavers' Report which included students at JOG, on a managed move, who subsequently returned to their home school.

Of the 61 actual leavers, a significant number are no longer attending school due to moving to EHE. Although these students are now the responsibility of the LA, the school continues to support the students as appropriate. This may be through signposting, the provision of resources etc.

10 students from 6th form have found courses more appropriate to their need/returned to their home school.

HK was asked to explain the success of managed moves. HK stated that the majority of managed moves acted as a six week circuit breaker to enable students to return to their home school as a fresh start. HK confirmed that although the school appeared to have lost a significant number of children from roll, they continue to take in more starters than leavers.

Governors asked if numbers could be driven up through work with the local primary schools who are about to join the MAT. HK shared that a pilot is currently in place with both Southwick and Studley Green Primary Schools, which will be rolled out further if successful.

Governors thanked HK for her contribution.

d) Safeguarding – Helen Kerr

MS shared that he had met with HK to discuss Safeguarding on 20.05.24 and asked her to share some of her successes and challenges.

HK shared that using CPOMS to record safeguarding concerns was working well, however to ensure best practice, the school was continuing to refine its use in school.

HK also explained that the team is facing some difficult challenges linked to county lines and female exploitation. In order to support the team, clinical supervision has been commissioned through CSL.

Governors thanked HK for the work she carries out to ensure that safeguarding is highly effective.

e) SEND – Vicki Marshall

Governors noted that the data showed a large increase in numbers of children with SEND from T1. They asked VM if the two students awaiting specialist placement had been discussed previously or were 'new' due to a rise in need.

VM responded that these students were the same as discussed previously, however, specialist placements had not yet been sourced due to complexity of need. It is unlikely that a KS4 student will be allocated a placement and it will thus be the responsibility of the school to meet need through an enhanced package of support, if possible.

A place for a second student has been identified however, as this is out of county, this has returned to panel for a review of an independent specialist placement. A further student is also at panel as a result of AP placement breaking down. A search for an independent specialist placement is being carried out.

Governors asked if the creeping number of students turning to EHE contained students with EHCPs.

VM explained that due to the need for parents to show that they met a very specific set of criteria which would enable them to meet the specific needs of their child, this was not the case.

BR reminded governors that an increase in EHE was very much reflected nationally and that he expected a number of students who were currently accessing EHE to return to school. This impacts on the student and the school's data due to the quantity of learning missed.

Governors asked if there were any families who had chosen EHE for their child, returned to school and then chosen to access EHE again. BR/VM explained that although this is very rare, there have been a couple of instances where this has happened. Other agencies are involved with the students.

VM shared an update regarding the RB. The new build is still going through planning, although the provision is due to start in September. A RB lead and 2 RB TAs have been appointed (subject to references) but a second teacher has not yet been found. **Governors inquired if the opening of the RB would be deferred due to the building not being in place.** VM explained that the students would start in Sept regardless of the building work not having started.

Governors expressed their concerns regarding the impact/pressure this would have on timetabling, staff etc. BR explained that staff are aware of the difficulties, as they have been open and transparent with staff throughout the process.

Governors thanked VM for her contribution.

f) Additional Information from HT Report – BR

BR shared that a decision had been made to support students by extending the normal school timetable for Y11 students into the beginning of T6. The ICT suites are also being made available for students to use following the completion of exams. **When asked how students were responding to exams** BR explained that, on the whole, the students have been fairly positive and have been turning up to sit the exams.

BR returned to the governors comments re marketing earlier in the meeting, explaining that he was continuing to work with Createworks to improve the school's marketing, particularly through the use of social media to extend reach. BR emphasised that there is much to celebrate within the school and applauded the staff for their academic and extra-curricular support and provision for the students. As engaging students in enrichment/extra-curricular activities is a focus for the school, the newly appointed AHT will be asked to take responsibility for this. The school are currently looking at creative approaches to facilitate this e.g. beginning activities in P5 to end in P6.

Governors commented on the ongoing staffing needs of the school. BR informed governors that staffing was the school's biggest challenge at this point in time. The school has filled several positions only to have the successful candidate pull out at a later date, despite having accepted the post. The school has advertised a number of posts unsuccessfully and have gone back out to advert.

Current concerns revolve around MfL, maths and PSHE. Strategies have been discussed to enable staffing of subjects to take place where possible. E.g. historically, maths and science class sizes have been kept to a minimum thus, classes could be merged. The careers lead has capacity to pick up some teaching of MfL and as the English Department has extra capacity, this could be used to support PSHE.

Governors asked why such limited numbers of teachers were available. BR explained that despite the pay and holidays, teaching was no longer considered to be an attractive profession. Young people are drawn to jobs where they can work from home, the rurality of Wiltshire does not encourage young people to move here and teaching has had a bad press recently.

Governors commented that they believed that one of the benefits of joining a MAT was the support available in times of need and asked if any was forthcoming. BR explained that the other secondary schools within the MAT were currently experiencing similar issues and emphasised that a discussion re the lack of staff had taken place at WASSH due to this being a local if not national picture.

Governors asked if any of the primary schools within the MAT were able to provide additional teaching capacity. BR explained that primary staff were primary specialists with a full-time teaching commitment so this was not an avenue to be explored.

Governors went on to ask if there were any other areas to consider which might impact on staffing such as maternity leaves. BR replied that JOG was experiencing more requests for maternity leave than in a normal year and reminded governors that this can also impact on a member of staff's return to work as flexible working may be requested. Conversely, a return to work following maternity leave could reduce pressure on staffing.

41/24 Election of Vice Chair

PG was nominated for the role of Vice Chair by SM and seconded by SO. PG accepted the role.

42/24 Policies

It was agreed that LS would inform BR of the need for policies to be reviewed following each LGB meeting.

These will be brought to the next LGB meeting for ratification.

43/24 Co-option of Governors

LS updated governors on next steps. It was agreed that an advert would be placed on the website governorsforschools.org.uk and that feeder schools joining the MAT in June would also be approached.

43/24 Governor Monitoring/Link Governor Visits/Governor Training

The following have taken place since the previous meeting:

- MS met with HK to discuss Safeguarding
- SO met PP Lead to discuss disadvantaged learners
- TC attended Equa SEND training

44/24 Student Voice

Governors shared a number of suggestions for areas in which to capture student voice: extra-curricular activities, rewards and their impact and gender issues. It was agreed to make this a standing agenda item. **PG stated that he felt that KS5 could have a stronger voice in school based on their experience.** He will discuss this at his upcoming meeting with LB

45/24 Postcards

Governors nominated JMC and SGR.

46/24 AOB

Governor Whats App Group – It was agreed that a What’s App group would be established in the event of the need for urgent communication, a message could be sent signposting governors to their emails.

Leavers – a number of longstanding members of staff are due to leave the school. It was agreed that a supply of thank you cards should be purchased and made available at each meeting.

47/24 Agreed actions from the meeting

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
39/24	Information to be sent to governors prior to July meeting of LGBs and confirmation of attendance sought.	Clerk
42/24	Policies in need of review to be sent to SN/BR following each LGB meeting and brought to the following meeting for ratification	Clerk
43/24	Clerk to place advert on governorsforschools.org.uk Clerk to contact feeder schools joining the EMLT re role of co-opted governor	Clerk
44/24	Student Voice to become a standing agenda item	Clerk
46/24	Establish LGB What’s App group	Clerk/TC

The meeting closed at 8.14pm. Date of next Board meeting: Wednesday 10th July at 6pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____