

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting
Monday 10th December 2018

Time: 6 pm
Place: The Hub
Present: David Whewell (chair), Paul Skipp, Jo Trigg, Liz Summerson, Andrew Hawkins, Debbie Youngs, Pete Gear, Sarah Bergg, Sally Andrews, Kevin Eames, Pamela Raymond-Heath, Glyn Coy, Nigel Reeves, James Gare (Monahans), Eleanor Shergold (clerk)
Advisers: Ben Rhodes, Louise Hamilton
Apologies: Jordan Mockett, Andy Williams, Sarb Gill, Helen Thorne

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
24/19	Governors to be given the opportunity to review committee membership	DW
24/19	Annual Statement of the GB to be circulated by email for governor input	SB/ALL
24/19	GB Objectives to be circulated for governor comment - to feedback by next Board	JT/ALL
27/19	Opportunity given to meet with PSK for further discussion re the wording of the behaviour policy	PSK

20/19 Apologies and Welcome

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

21/19 Declaration of Business Interests

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

22/19 Monahans - Review of Year End Accounts

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 August 2018 circulated in advance of the meeting. JG (Monahans) presented the accounts at the meeting, giving further explanation re the depreciation of assets, creditors and debtors, the pension liability and movement in funds.

In year deficit of £117k includes some one off expenditure re fixed assets - e.g. investment in IT equipment. Otherwise the school almost breaks even, which is a fantastic result in the current climate. Year end cash and cash equivalents - £1.2m.

Benchmarking information provided comparing JOG to 31 stand-alone secondary schools in this area. JOG is in the upper quartile in terms of days running costs, with an above average level of reserves. There is capacity for emergencies.

Days running costs discussed - this is forecast to be 28 days by 2022 in comparison to current 67 days. Governors asked questions to clarify their understanding.

Governors asked about staffing costs. JG - this is not out of kilter. The decision to maintain the quality of the school would explain that proportionately staffing costs would be higher. As a school JOG has run a tight ship - there is scope to invest in this way.

Audit process - went well with minor recommendations, all low risk, demonstrating that the schools' finances are well run.

Governors approved the accounts, thanking JG for his clear presentation.

JG left the meeting.

Governors thanked NRE and the finance team for all their hard work, noting that it was good to hear the auditor's confidence.

23/19 Minutes and Matters Arising

14/19 - Two dates have been arranged for governor safeguarding training

15/19 - Discussion re stakeholder engagement is ongoing

17/19 - Discussion of articles with Stone King - this will be followed up as appropriate

The minutes of 22nd October were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

24/19 Chair's Report

Audit and Resources Committees

SB, GC and NRE met to discuss the option of combining Audit and Resources. A separate audit committee is no longer a statutory requirement and there is much repetition between the two committees. The only concern is the potential overload of agendas, which would need to be monitored.

Discussion also took place at Audit and Resources - the recommendation from both committees to Board is that they combine to form a Resources and Audit committee. Governors approved the proposal.

Terms of reference have been combined with no other amendments. NRE is putting together an information pack re legal requirements, including a timetable of events. Additional meeting(s) will be scheduled as the workload determines. The committee will meet as per scheduled dates for Resources.

SB highlighted the opportunity for governors to review their committee membership.

Action - governors to be given the opportunity to review committee membership **DW**

Annual Report - draft Annual Statement of the Governing Body circulated at the meeting.

Action - annual statement to be circulated by email for governor input **SB**

Chairs' Meeting - date changed from 7th to the 8th January at the same time of 5.15pm. DW outlined the focus of the meeting - all governors are welcome to attend. The purpose of the meeting is for reflection and discussion, not decision making.

Governor Objectives 2018/19 - draft objectives circulated in advance of the meeting and are a reflection of governor discussion that took place in June/July. Objectives are linked to the SIP.

Action - document to be circulated for governor comment - to feedback by next Board **ALL**

Governance Discussion - documents related to future governance circulated in advance of the meeting. DW acknowledged that becoming a co-operative academy may not be the right way forward but expressed concern re potential changes that the DfE may make. There is a need for governors to be proactive in this, ensuring that local, democratic involvement and control of the school is retained.

The purpose of the discussion was to establish if governors thought it worth exploring further and to seek comments and observations.

After a time of discussion it was noted that

- This would be another way of encouraging stakeholder engagement
- There is a need to look up and forwards
- There needs to be clarity around a potential new funding agreement - older agreements are thought to benefit schools more - Stone King to be asked to look in to this
- Currently JOG is in a luxurious position - the DfE cannot instruct the school to do anything as an independent charity
- DfE position on not having staff governors considered to be a backwards step
- A new model would sit alongside the current model
- Some schools have adopted the model and values of co-operation, which could be a way to avoid a change of funding agreement

Governors agreed to explore the way forward. Legal advice to be sought from Stone King. The first hour is free - governors were happy to cap spending on this once the position re costs is clarified.

Action - Legal advice to be sought from Stone King **NRE/DW**

Governor Training - updated training report circulated in advance of the meeting. Governors were reminded of the opportunity to access online learning re GDPR and also of the need to sign up for safeguarding training.

Right Choice - governors now need to log in to access information circulated via clerk's mails - to let ES know if having difficulty with this. Governor services training for the spring and summer terms highlighted as well as online learning with Modern Governor.

25/19 Head Teacher's Report

Report circulated in advance of the meeting.

Staffing - PSK updated governors on recruitment and staff absence. Only two days of external supply have been required to date.

Pupil Stability - numbers continue to be relatively stable, including Y7.

School Improvement Plan - this has now been populated with data re success criteria/milestones. Full version will be uploaded for governor information.

Stakeholder Communication - will include a parents' forum in the form of a termly drop in.

Attendance - the procedures for following up students who are absent has become much more rigorous. Attendance is 0.56% up on this time last year. This includes the higher number of exclusions compared to last year. Y10 remains a concern with a range of complex needs within the year group. The target for attendance has been raised to 96% this year, with letters and phone calls home taking place much earlier. This is moving in the right direction.

Governors asked if the data is broken down into reasons for absence - BRH confirmed that it is and that he has met with PG (link governor attendance) to discuss this further. It is also discussed in more detail in S&C. A huge amount of detail sits behind the data.

Fixed Term Exclusions - this has reduced considerably after an initial spike in term one related to issues around school uniform being addressed.

Behaviour Summary - The vast majority of incidents have decreased overall. Refusal to follow instructions continues to be the highest recorded incident. Information included re behaviour by department.

Disruption Free Learning - implementation of the behaviour policy has been postponed to later in the academic year. There is more work to be done in ensuring that parents are on board and also that school systems are in place - e.g. software systems and logistics around operation. Parent forums will be scheduled.

Governor ratification re policy sought so that procedures re software and operational can be put in place.

A question was raised re the nature of the policy - whether it is intended to be punitive or supportive. PSK explained that it is intentionally both and that policies from three outstanding schools had been considered when drafting it. At the recent inset day staff expressed overwhelming support re the clarity, consistency and certainty in the policy.

The wording of the policy was discussed - PSK welcomed further feedback on this. The structure re support and challenge was highlighted by governors and further questions asked re the school's implementation plan.

LS left the meeting.

Safeguarding - resume of current child welfare concerns shared with governors (numbers of students only).

Tracking point 1 Subject Attainment and Progress - basics 4+ in English and maths (58%), 5+ (40%). This is up on last year. P8 is 0.1, in line with average. The target is to be above 0. This is a challenge, although in year progress is significant. PP - last year P8 was -0.49, Y11 this year is predicted to achieve a positive P8 Score. A significant shift.

Post 16 - tracking point 1 figures are broadly in line with national.

Admissions for 2019 are particularly pleasing. PSK said that the work staff put into open evenings can be underestimated. LA thinks that the school will hit PAN, which would require a feasibility study.

Governors asked how confident the school is re tracking in comparison to this time last year. BRH - some subjects are just through the first year of the new specifications and are still settling. This has been discussed further with DLs. Some faculties have staff who are exam markers. TP2 will be representative of the first mocks, with two sets of mocks planned for this year.

CIF Bids - summary of tenders for site security and reception circulated in advance of the meeting. There is more confidence in awarding bids where the school can commit finance towards the project. Surveyor has recommended JOG offers £20k toward the cost. Governors approved the recommendation.

Schools Forum - LA high needs funding overspend. The Schools Forum agreed to give permission to the LA to seek to recoup up to 1% of funding from schools. This could be as much as £70k for JOG and will impact the budget for Sept 2019. The likelihood is that this will be £50k-55k, approximate to the 'little extras' funding. This reduction will apply to every school.

26/19 Reports from Committees

Resources - everything is on track with the accounts.

Clarification sought re confidential minute.

S&C - Safeguarding audit completed with an excellent outcome. Attendance and behaviour policy discussed. Update given on student leadership. S&C will continue to involve student voice.

CLES - KE will circulate summary of meeting.

Audit - site visit went well. Grassy area outside the turtle becomes very muddy in the winter - a quote is being sourced to fence the area.

27/19 Policies

Behaviour - Governors were asked to approve the procedures that underpin the policy so that the school can progress the operational. Governors were supportive of the new policy and the right of students to learn.

Action - opportunity given to meet with PSK for further discussion re the wording of the policy **PSK**

Appeals policy
Information (Data Handling) Security Policy
Leave of Absence Policy
Trips Policy

All five policies were approved with the reminder that information data handling also applies to governors. All need to be familiar with the contents of the policy and the potential for the school to be fined if data handling procedures are breached.

28/19 AOB

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm. Date of next Board meeting - Monday 11th February 2019.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____