



Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School

Educating Women of the Future

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GIRLS SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 5 December 2017

Parent governors:

Susan Cottam (SC)
Rebecca Hanley (RH)
(Chair)
Kim Longman (KL)
Rebecca Peer (RP)
(arr.6.45pm)

Co-opted governors:

Royden Gothelf (RG)
Debbie Lane (DL)
Uzo Nwamu (UN)
Penelope Martin-Smith
(PMS)

Staff governors:

Kay Excell (KE)
Heather Price (HP)
Jennifer Ford
Violet Walker (VW)
(Headteacher)

In attendance: Hilary Furey (Clerk to the Governors), David Jones (DJS) (Deputy Headteacher), Martin Duffy (DFY) (Deputy Headteacher), Susanne Barrow (SBW) (Finance Manager), Carrie Scott (Observer).

1. Welcome, apologies for absence, declarations of interest

- 1.1 Those present were welcomed to the meeting. The Chair introduced Carrie Scott whom, it was proposed, would be appointed as a Trustee upon reconstitution of the Governing Board.
- 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Alan Jenner.
- 1.3 No pecuniary or personal interests were declared in the business of the meeting by those present.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 Minutes of the Governing Board meeting of 19 September 2017 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.
- 2.2 The following action points were noted:

Item 6.4 – destination information, as requested, was tabled. The Chair told governors that she had met with VWR, DJS and MDY to discuss data in detail.

Item 6.5 – UN had visited the school to meet with the Head of Science and Assistant Headteacher with line management responsibility for Science and had submitted a report of the meeting to both.

Action: UN's science report to be circulated to all governors in due course.

Item 7.1 – the Clerk was in the process of compiling a policy schedule and governors heard that RP was the link governor with oversight for this area.

Action: Clerk to complete policy schedule.

Item 8.1 – the Clerk was requested to ensure that approved minutes were displayed in the Staff Room and on the school's website as soon as possible after being signed off.

Action: Clerk to display approved minutes, as agreed.

Item 8.2d – it was agreed that the reorganisation of the committee structure would allow the School Development Plan (SDP) to become the main driver of Governing Board meeting agendas.

Item 8.3c – the Clerk was requested to follow up governors' agreement to the NGA Code of Conduct with those who had been absent from the previous meeting.

Action: Clerk to pursue agreement to NGA Code of Conduct.

An outstanding item from December 2016 related to the suggestion of a Stand Alone Scheme of Financial Delegation. The Chair told governors that this had been completed with the exception of Terms of Reference for the Finance & Premises which was now presented for approval.

Action: The document to be formatted in line with other ToRs.

3. Report on Chair's action

- 3.1 Further to consultation with lawyers and the Charities Commission the Chair told the meeting that Article 4b, which stated that school buildings would be made available for community access, was an obstructive clause and which, due to the closure of the swimming pool and gym for necessary building works to be carried out, had resulted in a number of aggressive calls being received. Current Members had met to discuss the proposed Articles for the reconstituted Governing Board and agreed that the clause should be removed. Governors were told that other local schools, eg. QE Boys' and East Barnet School, did not have this clause. The Chair told governors that the school would need to generate income going forward and therefore it would be helpful if the principle of community use did not prevent a range of activities and organisations being considered for use.

ACTION: Chair to continue to liaise with lawyers.

4. This item number had been omitted from the agenda.

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5. Reports from Committees

- 5.1 Finance & Premises Committee – 26 September 2017

A document from the Local Authority was tabled showing that Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School was ranked second in the top 20 Barnet schools for Progress 8 results. A second tabled document showed the average point scores for students, broken into HAPs/MAPs/LAPs, and the Headteacher explained these acronyms and students' Prior Attainment to governors. A graph showing analysis of institutions favoured by QEGS students provided a breakdown of destinations with Woodhouse College being the most popular, followed by Barnet & Southgate College, Dame Alice Owens and Compton School. Governors were told that some of the most able students had elected to go to East Barnet School, which was second to bottom of the Progress 8 table shown and the Headteacher was concerned that this school, along with Friern Barnet School, was not achieving for its students. Governors wanted to

know whether the reason for these choices was related to subject offers. The Headteacher did not think that was the reason and said that QEGS offered a broad range of subjects and would also offer Photography next year. Governors were told that, due to insufficient take up and financial viability, French had been dropped although originally offered as an option this year. Governors wanted to understand student choices and the Headteacher said that both schools mentioned had previously out-performed QEGS at KS5. It was therefore important that 6th form results improvement was now married up with GCSE results to assure students that excellent teaching at KS4 was equalled at KS5. **Governors wanted to know how the school was getting this message out to students.** The Headteacher said that all year groups were being spoken to in assemblies about the results in 6th form, and banners stating the school's outstanding results were visible both in assemblies and outside the school. The strengthened leadership in 6th form, respected by students, photographs of inspirational women on display throughout the school and guest speakers and ambassadors for the future, as well as a refreshed 6th form Common Room with its own café, were popular improvements. The Chair suggested that the close attention to individual performance and pastoral care might be the 6th Form's USP. In addition, all 6th form tutors were subject teachers in 6th form option subjects and were able to provide support with UCAS applications and future career decisions. A Taster Day would be held in January for Year 11 students whilst 6th form students were on study leave. Further to a query concerning **indications about the number of students that might stay on into 6th form** the Headteacher said that Year 11 students were currently sitting mock exams which would make them start to consider their future choices and, whilst there might not be overnight changes, she was confident that numbers would improve in the following year. The Headteacher said she would discuss student numbers further as AOB item.

5.2 Finance & Premises Committee – 28 November 2017

The Chair summarised the discussions points of the meeting, the main point of which was receiving a report from the school's auditors. Governors noted that the school's budget was still in deficit, although reducing, and this was in part due to reduced GAG funding in respect of lower pupil numbers in the previous year. The school was now full and funding would be received accordingly, however the Headteacher told governors that funding was a borough-wide concern. A capital grant had been received for roof works which were due to be completed on 19 December 2017. Works were currently under budget and the Headteacher reported that additional roof project related works would require those funds to be available. For example the remaining funds could be used on roof-related interior damage refurbishment, for example on the double doors in the corridor and damaged walls and ceiling due to a number of leaks. The mechanism for supporting tiles had been replaced and skylights fitted and the Staff Room is due to be redecorated in January 2018. In response to a query the Headteacher was hopeful that the swimming pool and sports hall could be re-opened by the end of January 2018.

MDY tabled a Pupil Premium statement, as requested, showing a breakdown of funding received and actual costs for 2017-18. MDY explained that pupil premium funding was not ring-fenced for pupils in receipt of funding, so long as they were making sufficient progress, but was attributed to a variety of interventions such as coaching and teaching and learning which had an impact on achievement. Responding to a query MDY explained that whilst controlled assessments were carried out in a different way to that previously used for

legacy subjects, PE needed significant time with associated costs. Whilst expensive, at £46k, controlled assessments were believed to be of great benefit to students. Without using some pupil premium funding, enabling some teachers to be taken off their usual timetable for exam preparation lessons, Easter Revision and Exam Revision days would not be possible. A governor wanted to know if exam revision was only for pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. MDY said that all pupils received exam revision lessons although these had been bespoke in the first year of PP funding and further personalised interventions might be used going forward. Approximately 40% of Year 9 and almost 50% of Year 11 students were in receipt of PP funding therefore it was important to look at the longer term and building in English and Maths, with 4 pathways and Ebacc in Year 10. A large amount of PP funding was allocated to Pastoral and Wellbeing provision, including mental health support with a school Nurse and Education Welfare Officer, and in-house Careers Guidance with a member of staff with TLR responsibility to support the PP population.

A further approximate figure of £4k was allocated to PIXL membership and courses, including revision guides provided to Year 11 students, with other bespoke and aspirational activities, eg. mentoring from industry leaders, including TfL, for Year 9 girls. Lamda confidence-building and oracy for KS3, and Elevate, a programme looking at life beyond school and run by top universities, were also provided. MDY said that PP funding was also used for bottled water and breakfast club during exam periods and, whilst it might be used differently, it was felt that it was being used well.

The Chair thanked MDY for his report.

5.3 Achievement & Behaviour Committee – 21 November 2017

The Chair of the Committee reported that the meeting had reviewed results for both GCSE and A levels, and thanked RH for her work in understanding data across subject areas. The Headteacher had highlighted changes to the curriculum, which could be seen in the documentation provided, and the Curriculum Policy had been approved.

5.4 Staffing Committee – 2 November 2017

RH reported on the Staffing Committee meeting in the absence of the Committee Chair and told governors that staffing levels were roughly right at present, whereas previously the school had been overstaffed. The committee had discussed CPD and other training, with the Headteacher outlining the nature of bite-size sessions on various topics.

The Pay Committee had met on 17 November 2017 to receive and agree the Headteacher's pay recommendations, further to the backdated 2% pay increase for all teachers on the Main Pay Range and the backdated 1% increase for all teachers on the Upper Pay Range. The Pay Committee had approved the Headteacher's recommendations for teachers on the mainscale and for one application to move from MPS to UPR. There were no questions on this matter.

6. Financial Matters

- 6.1 The Finance & Premises Committee had discussed the accounts in detail and, following recommendation, the Governing Board approved the accounts for the year ended 31 August 2017. Auditors had suggested that the limit of expenditure for which three quotes were required was unrealistic at £5k. It was recommended that this be increased to £25k which would be helpful to the school as recent experience had shown that quoting for the work involved could be off-putting for contractors. A governor queried the status of financial requests of £5k and was told that this could be changed with committee approval.

Action: agreed to amend the authorisation limit for quotes for expenditure on items up to £25k.

7. School Policies

- 7.1 Curriculum Policy – DJS told governors that changes had been agreed in the previous year regarding 4 pathways in KS4, as well as Health & Social Care, and only minor tweaks had been made to the updated policy. Technology had been reduced slightly with this time being allocated to Science in Year 9. PSHE for Year 7 would now be delivered during dropdown days and would ensure that a number of surplus staff could be used elsewhere. Changes had already been agreed by the Achievement & Behaviour Committee and, subject to minor amends, the Governing Board **agreed** the Curriculum Policy.

ACTION: DJS to amend Arts KS4 from 3 options to 4 each for 5 hours, not 6 hours (p.6).

- 7.2 Safeguarding Policy – the Link governor for Safeguarding was not aware of any significant changes that had been made to the Safeguarding Policy which was **agreed** and the policy would be reviewed in the following year. Staff governors had no queries.

ACTION: the Clerk to ensure that the approved Safeguarding Policy is uploaded to the school website.

8. Strategic Planning

- 8.1 Governors were told that the SDP had been ragged in November and would be reviewed in January 2018 and the document circulated to governors included the actuals for 2017. **The Chair of the Achievement & Behaviour Committee had raised a query as to whether the 2017-18 targets would be raised due to the results and another governor wondered whether targets should be higher if it was hoped that Maths and Science results would improve.** A suggestion was made as to the target being set at 5.2, instead of its current 4.9, and after discussion this figure was **agreed**. In response to a query, the Headteacher said that all aspects were Amber as this was the first ragging of the academic year, and this was an improvement on the same period in the previous year. It was considered that a rich variety of afterschool activities were embedded in the wider offer although some facilities, eg the swimming pool and sports hall, were not currently available, with many activities being curriculum-related, such as drama.

- 8.1 A query was raised regarding governor training. The Chair hoped to hold a training day to include basics on data, which all governors needed to understand as this was the school's driver, strategic governance and Health and Safety. SC had attended Safeguarding training as the Link governor and said that Tracie Parker, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, had offered to hold a training session for all governors. SC referred governors to 4.2 of the school's SDP which referred to the school's development as a centre of excellence for Wellbeing and said that the school had mechanisms in place for student and parent voice. Whilst the school had made nothing short of astonishing progress, **SC queried whether there was any record of girls reporting pressure on them to achieve higher expectations.** The Headteacher said that for some girls expectations may seem high although the current Years 7, 8 and 9 were already aware of the expected standards. A Student Voice survey had been carried out and a Staff Voice survey would be launched in January by the EAP service. Work on wellbeing had been recognised by external agencies and the school was working towards accreditation as a centre of excellence in this area. As had been previously noted, the school had already done groundbreaking work in having recruited a child-trained and qualified Nurse, and the extended pastoral care afforded by 10 minutes at the end of each day provided opportunities for feedback on student experience of their school day and assurance that students were going home with everything they needed for homework and with no unresolved issues. Feedback from Years 12 and 13 on vertical tutor groups in 6th form had proven popular with students and MDY said that the school was not resting on the progress made but had a 12-point action plan with an evidence-based approach to improvement.

A governor asked how staff were feeling generally in terms of work ethic and wellbeing. The Headteacher said that staff were generally very purposeful although it was coming to the end of a long term and she was conscious of individuals' wellbeing. Some departments were very positive following summer results whereas others had much to do and it was important for everyone to be aware of anything that might arouse concern. It was hoped that individuals were attuned to any issues so that they could be supported and/or managed in an appropriate way, although the priority was to ensure the personal and educational development of the students.

- 8.2 In response to a **query regarding staff reaction to the additional 10 minutes of tutorial time** the Headteacher said that one of the unions has started a survey and the staff survey, as mentioned previously, would be launched shortly. 200 students had provided feedback, mainly KS3, **and the Chair asked for a presentation on staff feedback at the next Governing Board meeting.** **A governor asked whether the changed lunch time trial would revert in January** and was told that it was intended as a term's trial and would be reviewed in January alongside the results from the survey. MDY said that the trial also supported operation of the RFID doors lunchtime which, in turn, meant that students could not freely ask teachers for support at lunch and break times as they also needed a break. The Headteacher said she appreciated the efforts of teachers in dealing with the pressures in the education world.

ACTION: MDY to follow up on staff survey and lunchtime trial feedback.

9. Headteacher's Report

- 9.1 The Headteacher reported that the school's self-evaluation showed that all areas were still Good and said that, during her recent Headteacher's performance management review, governors had queried why the school had not been evaluated as Outstanding. The Headteacher told governors that there were still variations in departments and, despite outstanding results in KS4, the caveat remained that there was still work to be done to justify a grade of Outstanding. **A governor wondered about the timing of any future visit from Ofsted inspectors** and was told that schools judged to be Good should be inspected every 3 years and but this was currently at a 5 yearly intervals and there was an ongoing consultation to bring this down to 3 years with feedback due in January. Since January an inspection dashboard showing pre-analysis data would be viewed prior to an Ofsted decision to carry out a Section 5 inspection with the potential to award an Outstanding judgement. The Headteacher said that QEGS was not due for a further Section 5 inspection until January 2019 but that the current categories were due to change, at which point the Outstanding award would no longer be available. As a consequence, the Headteacher told governors she was considering whether to invite Ofsted to come in to inspect the school early in the new year as this felt like the right thing to do for the school in order to be able to call itself an Outstanding school. However, this would require a lot of work for some departments and it was a balancing act whether or not to do this. In response to a query the Headteacher said that she was reliant on incredible staff to do the necessary work and that she would talk more fully to governors later in the spring and once more information had been forthcoming from Ofsted.

ACTION: Headteacher to report back to governors on Ofsted changes in the spring term.

10. General Governance Matters

- 10.1a) Meeting dates for 2017-18 had been circulated for Governing Board and Committee meetings. The Admissions and General Purposes committees were no longer required on a regular basis although an Admissions Panel would be convened when required to review the Admissions Policy. Going forward, other than the Finance & Premises Committee, all other committees would be subsumed into the main Governing Board meetings and minutes of all meetings would be circulated to all governors to allow them to keep abreast of all information. In response to a query the Chair told governors that the Full Governing Board meetings would meet less often but would be longer at 2-3 hours and also said that meetings were held on Tuesdays as this was the most convenient time for her, although governors were given the opportunity to express any preferences.

ACTION: Suggestion that refreshments be provided for Full Governing Board meetings.

- 10.1b) Amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Premises Committee had been circulated in advance and was **agreed**.
- 10.1c) Governors had **agreed** at the meeting on 19 September 2017 to adopt the NGA Code of Conduct.

ACTION: The Clerk would follow up with those not present at the autumn term meeting.

- 10.1d) It was **agreed** that Carrie Scott would be appointed as a Trustee to the Governing Board at the meeting on 30 January 2018. The Chair told governors that she was still awaiting comments and approval from the ESFA and Charities Commission on the proposed Articles for the reconstituted Governing Board and would write to all governors regarding this process.

ACTION: The Chair would update governors in due course.

- 10.1e) SC reported that, as the safeguarding link governor, she had attended high quality safeguarding training at the school. The Headteacher told governors that almost 80% of students returning questionnaires agreed that they felt safe in school and this was supported by almost 100% of parents who attended Parents Evening. TPR, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, controlled and regularly checked the school's Single Central Record which held DBS and other confidential details for all staff and regular visitors, including governors, and which was a key aspect of an Ofsted inspection. On that note, it was suggested that a governor undertook Safer Recruitment training and it was agreed that the Chair would do this. The Headteacher told governors that a partial emergency lockdown of classrooms exercise had been carried out and another full practice would be held in the spring term. Governors were told that everyone involved had felt very safe and that a recent safeguarding audit had been carried out.

ACTION: The Chair to attend Safer Recruitment training.

ACTION: KL to send a link re safeguarding training to the Clerk for circulation.

In relation to the SEND report governors were told that the SENCo offered ongoing CPD sessions and consultancy to staff teaching the curriculum through differentiation and that specific needs training was in place. SC wondered whether differentiated teaching for SEND was a target for all teachers and noted that progress was lower for Year 11 SEN students than across the school but that this was a small cohort therefore variation was inevitable. The Headteacher said that all teaching was Quality First for all pupils in the classroom, adding that SEN students in Years 10 and 11 were guided towards extra English and Maths lessons rather than additional subjects, whereas Years 7, 8 and 9 students had already had the benefit of additional interventions and the impact of that would be seen in future results. The Headteacher explained that the school used a vulnerability index, first begun in 2016, which used a broad range of indicators to identify individual student need. The document was populated by the Heads of Year and SLT members, resulting in an overall score to indicate level of need and this work would rollout in January 2018 to all staff.

ACTION: MDY to manage rollout of vulnerability index.

SC wanted to know what parents thought of SEN provision and wondered if this might be an additional question in the parental survey. In addition, SC queried SEN provision in 6th form. The Headteacher said that teachers were aware of SEN students throughout the school so support was in place in 6th form. A graduate had been appointed in the Inclusion Department with a particular interest in this area and governors heard that there had been valuable

external CPD for Learning Support Assistants during the term and lots of parents had provided feedback expressing their appreciation of SEN provision.

- 10.1f) Governor vacancies and succession planning would be discussed at a future meeting of the Governing Board following reconstitution.

- 10.1g) Hilary Furey was nominated and appointed as Company Secretary.

ACTION: The Clerk to update Companies House register.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Headteacher told governors that at a recent Headteachers Network meeting the idea was raised of some schools voting to increase admissions numbers in 2018 for the purposes of both securing greater funding and to attempt to reduce the potential numbers of new schools that might open within the borough. The LA representative had told headteachers that additional funding was not available to schools who increased their roll, but was top-sliced for new schools. The Headteacher said that it had become apparent that some schools had applied to the LA to increase their admissions numbers for September 2018 and proposed that, as an increasingly oversubscribed and sustainably outstanding school, Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School should consider increasing its Year 7 intake by 16 more pupils. This would allow for 7 groups of 28, rather than the current 5 groups of 26 and 2 of 25 students. Replying to a governor's query the Headteacher said that, whilst no additional funding would be received in the first year, thereafter the school would benefit. It was not envisaged that the school would need additional teachers and the Headteacher was waiting for information on ratios for students and classroom sizes. Governors heard that Copthall School had suffered a reducing roll due to the Saracens School opening in September 2018 and that another new school is due to open near Totteridge Academy. It was the Headteacher's concern that QEGS could be left behind in terms of admissions. **A governor queried the school's infrastructure capacity.** The Headteacher said that the school could cope well with 16 extra students in the first year and, depending on 6th form growth, it could decide whether to increase year on year or reduce its intake and this might be a way of not being cut out of additional funding.

Governors were told that a decision would need to be made soon as the LA would need to be notified by the beginning of the new year. One governor expressed concern about how staff and students would manage the increased pressure and wondered if there might be a tipping point, adding that there was a strong sense amongst parents of the school's reputation of having smaller and more nurturing class sizes. Another governor was concerned about the size of classrooms and the Headteacher said that each room had capacity for 32 students with more able groups being of that size. In terms of pressure on staff, the Headteacher felt that these would be new expectations and would soon settle down and that new staff coming into the school would not be concerned by this. A third governor suggested that the increased numbers might affect the quality of work, for example there were 28 students in art classes. The Headteacher said that this was intuitively correct, and agreed that small rooms were prohibitive, but added that lots of A Level lessons were very small and that one or two subjects with small groups, at KS3 in particular, did not do well. MDY said that research indicated no discernible difference in quality and learning opportunities between group sizes of 24, 26 and 28, however a governor said she was concerned about the stress levels and culture

which might be difficult for staff to manage. The Chair said that she understood the need to get the balance right but, from a financial point of view, the school would receive £200k less this year than last year and suggested that the school needed to access funding where possible. The Chair stressed that increasing PAN (Pupil Admission Numbers) was one of the few ways the school could increase its income and that the financial benefit needed to be considered as part of a larger political picture, however noting that it was important that there was a guaranteed limit on the number of students per class. A governor noted that lots of good points had been made and asked whether the school prospectus included anything to suggest that class sizes might increase or whether parents might be likely to complain. Another governor was interested to hear that the quality of teaching was more important than class size particularly in respect of wellbeing and the school's development as a centre of excellence. In reply to a question about in-year growth, MDY said that the LA could insist on the school going over its admissions numbers in exceptional circumstances but that the school would have full control for Health and Safety matters. In summary, the Headteacher said that she did not want to force governors into a decision, however as the deadline for submitting the application to the LA was by January 2018 the Chair suggested governors come to a decision at this meeting as they would not meet again until the end of January. **A governor wanted to know about the operational aspects of such a proposal** and was told that permission to increase admission numbers was for the Governing Board to agree. The Headteacher said that it was possible that a wider consultation would be required for 2019 but it was **agreed** to pursue further information and the process involved.

12. Items for future meetings

- 12.1 No items for future meetings were agreed. The date of the next Full Governing Board meeting was Tuesday 30 January 2017.

Part 2 (Confidential) business

13. Confidential matters

- 13.1 There were no confidential matters to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Summary of action points

Action (and relevant section of minutes)	Owner
UN's science report to be circulated to all governors in due course (Item 2.2, 6.5).	UN/Clerk
Clerk to complete policy schedule (Item 2.2, 7.1).	Clerk
Clerk to display approved minutes, as agreed (Item 2.2, 8.1).	Clerk

Clerk to pursue relevant governors for agreement to NGA Code of Conduct (Item 2.2, 8.3c)	Clerk
The Finance & Premises Terms of Reference document to be formatted in line with other ToRs (2.2 – outstanding December 2016 item).	Clerk
Chair to continue to liaise with lawyers (Item 3.1)	Chair
It was agreed to amend the authorisation limit for quotes for expenditure on items up to £25k (Item 6.1).	Susan Barrow
To amend Arts KS4 from 3 options to 4 each for 5 hours, not 6 hours (p.6) (7.1)	DJS
To ensure that the approved Safeguarding Policy is uploaded to the school website (Item 7.2).	Clerk
To follow up on staff survey and lunchtime trial feedback (Item 8.2).	MDY
To report back to governors on Ofsted changes in the spring term (Item 9.1).	Headteacher
Suggestion that sandwiches be provided for Full Governing Board meetings (Item 10.1a).	Clerk
The Chair would update governors on reconstitution and membership of the Governing Board in due course (Item 10.1d).	Chair
The Chair to attend Safer Recruitment training. KL to send a link re safeguarding training to the Clerk for circulation. (Item 10.1e).	Chair KL/Clerk
MDY to manage rollout of vulnerability index.	MDY
The Clerk to update Companies House register.	Clerk

Chair: 

Dated: 

