



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 24 April 2018

Parent Trustees:

Rebecca Hanley (RH)
(Chair)

Alan Jenner (AJ)
(arr.6.15pm)

Rebecca Peer (RP)

Co-opted Trustees:

Uzo Nwamu (UN)

Carrie Scott (CS)

Hannah Ross (HR)

Staff Trustees:

Violet Walker (VW)
(Headteacher)

In attendance: Hilary Furey (Clerk to the Governing Board), David Jones (DJS) (Deputy Headteacher), Justin Haines (JHS) (Assistant Head).

1. Welcome, apologies for absence, declarations of interest

1.1 Those present were welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Susan Cottam and Penelope Martin-Smith.

1.2 No pecuniary or personal interests in the business of the meeting were declared by those present.

2. Membership and Appointments

2a) The reconstitution of the Governing Board, separating Trustees from Members, was noted with Member-appointed Trustees being Violet Walker, Carrie Scott and Hannah Ross.

2b) As agreed at the autumn term Governing Board meeting, the Admissions Committee would be formed by the Headteacher, Chair of the Governing Board and Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee. Terms of reference were **agreed** by the Governing Board.

3. Election of a Vice Chair

It was agreed to defer this item to the July 2018 meeting.

Action: Election of a Vice Chair to be held on 3 July 2018.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

4.1 Minutes of the Governing Board meeting of 30 January 2018 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting. A trustee wondered if the minutes, whilst accurate, could be more succinct.

4.2 The following action points were noted:

RH

Item 2.2, information had been updated at Companies House. The Clerk was requested to circulate information to all Trustees regarding the use of the registered address rather than personal addresses.

Action: the Clerk to circulate information to all Trustees.

Item 7.1 – the Clerk and the Link Trustees would liaise regarding the policy review schedule.

Action: Clerk and Link Trustee to liaise regarding the policy review schedule.

Item 9 – Bitesize training on data would take place at this meeting.

Item 10 – it was agreed to defer discussion of Trustee Link roles to the next meeting in July 2018.

Action: Trustee Link roles as an agenda item for July meeting.

Bitesize Training – Data

DJS tabled a document showing Achievement versus Attainment, and provided an example to explain progress over 5 years. Trustees wanted to understand the eligibility for, and use of, Pupil Premium in closing the gap and this was explained by DJS and the Headteacher, leading to a discussion about encouraging and supporting parents to register where eligible. The Headteacher also explained that 6th form students were not eligible for Pupil Premium but that applications could be made to the Endowment Trust for 6th form Bursary support for which the application process had been simplified.

The ALPS report (page 2) provided an explanation of the average GCSE score and Trustees were told that the school had made enormous progress over two years which had put the school into the top 10% of schools nationally.

Trustees thanked DJS for data training.

5. Report on Chair's action

5.1 No action had been taken by the Chair.

The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee updated Trustees on the recent committee meeting discussions and outcomes, explaining that a termly budget monitoring and a dashboard showing the cash position and budget actuals would be used by the Committee. Trustees discussed the school's finances, noting that the school's funding had decreased by £0.5m over three years and that the Headteacher had brought down staff costs by £400k, leaving the school in a good position. However, the Chair of the Governing Board suggested that trustees consider inviting parents to make voluntary contributions either by Direct Debit or as a one-off payment. After detailed discussions, trustees agreed with the proposal and suggested that sending a letter was also a way in which eligible parents could be reminded to register so that the school would receive Pupil Premium income.

RH

Action: The Chair of the Governing Board would write a letter to be sent to new Year 7 parents.

Other items discussed were in respect of the school's Lettings Policy and a proposal for Members to consider a tendering process to appoint auditors. A suggestion was made that termly reviews and controls be looked at when audits are carried out.

Action: the Chair of the F&P Committee would write to Members in respect of a proposed tendering process.

6. Headteacher's Report

- 6.1 **SDP (School Development Plan)** - the Headteacher told trustees that the SDP had been re-ragged but was not very different to the previous version seen by trustees and suggested that the link governor for Teaching and Learning could test the evidence base. KS4 data drop information was tabled.

Action: Link trustee for T&L to review evidence base.

- 6.2. **Performance Tables** – the Chair said that the performance tables 2017 information made for heartening reading, noting that Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School was ranked third after QE Boys and The Wren Academy, with its English results better than both schools. Humanities was also an area of strength and it was agreed that areas to look at were Science and Maths with both performing well.

- 6.3 **Exclusions** – the Headteacher suggested that the number of exclusions had increased since her arrival due to raised standards although the numbers of excluded pupils was beginning to decrease. The graph showed that the number of fixed term exclusions in 2016-17 was 70 with just under 40 in the current academic year, and there were very few Permanent Exclusions. A trustee asked for clarification on the mobile phone policy and was told that students could bring mobiles into school but that they must be switched off when the student crossed the school boundary and any student in Years 7-11 seen with a phone or if their phone rang in their bag would have it confiscated. 6th form students may use a mobile in the Common Room. The Headteacher explained to trustees that students occasionally become drawn into social media issues which spill over into school. A trustee said that safeguarding training had highlighted the fact that if a phone is confiscated the school has the right to look at it. The Headteacher said in response that the only reasons she would look at a phone is if she suspected something and would let the student's parents know and/or get their permission, for example, if the Police were involved. However, whilst this was legal, the Headteacher said that she was still wary of looking at students' phones, adding that many students would alert a member of SLT and be cooperative if they were aware that something was happening. Whilst another trustee felt that this could throw up other issues, particularly about handling the implications of such action, the Headteacher said that she would only take such action if her suspicions had been raised.

- 6.4 **Data Drop – Progress 8** – a report was tabled showing Data Drop 3 predictions with Progress 8 predictions to 2016-17 using the previous year's benchmarking, although the Headteacher was almost certain results would be

above 0.5 and most likely above 0.6, it was understood that there was some anxiety about predictions within the Maths Department and, whilst it was not possible to know how students might perform staff were being cautious with predictions. All subjects would be graded as 1-9 so, for example, students who would have achieved A* (top 20%) would receive a score of 7-9, with those in the top 5% achieving a 9. A trustee wanted to know what had changed since the previous year. The Headteacher explained that there was currently an interim Head of Maths and a Director of Maths Development, providing consistency across the department in terms of understanding data, predictions and benchmarking, and with a better grasp of interventions. Trustees were told that the Director of Maths Development had found that students had finished Year 10 with current and predicted grades and found current grades to be inflated so the department has been working under her direction to plug any historic gaps in current Year 11 students' knowledge.

A trustee wanted to know if students understood the predictions given, and whether they were stretching themselves or were being complacent. The Headteacher said that Maths departments everywhere were seeing question papers which were more concerned with problem-solving and this required more language input and methods not so clearly visible. A trustee asked what the school could say in relation to continuous assessment and where students are currently. The Headteacher said that students were in a reasonable position but that the leap that had been hoped for had not manifested itself. Whilst outcomes would be above average it might be necessary to wait until next year to see the benefit of impacts and interventions. In response to a further question about predictions, trustees were told that the Edexcel pass rate for re-sit papers in November 2017 was 18%, whereas the mock exam in school was 20%. As the paper was very new it was not yet known where the pass rate would be. Heads and seconds in English, Maths and Science Departments were Year 11 tutors and could provide extra support for students in both morning and afternoon registration periods and tutor groups were more fluid to allow students to access the specific subject support required. The Headteacher said that the school was doing all it needed to do and, in response to a query, said that only one specimen and one practice paper were available. Trustees wanted to know if there was any anecdotal evidence of the quality of teaching and the Deputy Headteacher, a Maths teacher, said that the department meetings feel completely different to the beginning of the academic year but that time was needed to reap the benefits of changes made. Bitesize CPD was ongoing and covered topics such as subject expertise, pedagogy and software systems and analysis. Most teachers were very positive about CPD with the Maths department being very receptive. Some teachers did not necessarily agree that their practice needed to change and Science needed more encouragement to move forward. Individual Teacher Development Plans (ITDPs) would be used to monitor individual teachers over a 6-week period where required. The Headteacher told trustees that an advert had been placed for a Head of Mathematics but added that she did not want to appoint the wrong person and was also interviewing for Maths teachers. There were currently no vacancies in Science but one or two Physics teachers were being interviewed. Groups were doing well in Maths with HAPS not doing quite as well as MAPS and LAPS, but there was a focus on stretching and supporting HAPS and LAPS. Trustees were assured that LAPS were doing very well at school now as opposed to some years ago and the Chair of the Governing Board congratulated the school on its achievement for disadvantaged students. A trustee noted that a lot of research had been carried out on

Science and Maths teaching and girls, and the Headteacher said that there had been a big push on STEM in the last couple of years to ensure consistent teaching quality across all subjects.

Year 13 ALPS – a paper was tabled setting out Year 13 ALPS information and trustees were reminded that, at the previous meeting in January 2018, the ALPS score had been 5 and this was now predicted to be 3. New specifications at A Level and GCSE with linear exams now covered a whole raft of subjects. As mentioned previously, this could lead to a degree of caution in predicting the unknown and an example was given of Psychology and Biology papers appearing too difficult. The syllabus provided guidance only, with the Psychology questions seeming more suited to Science, but students were not disadvantaged and achieved good grades. The ranking of subjects had been a result of meetings with Heads of Departments and trustees were told that extra Maths sessions were being provided.

- 6.5 **Vulnerability Index** – as requested, information about the vulnerability index was included with the Exclusions information and trustees learnt that there were 22 factors which could have a negative impact on progress. The index was assigned to students to ensure appropriate support is provided, including discussion about individual students at meetings with relevant professionals.

7. **Pupil Premium**

- 7.1 There was no additional information about Pupil Premium and trustees were assured that the current formula appeared to be having an impact on achievement

8. **Feedback from Surveys**

- 8.1 **Staff Survey** - Trustees had been given a copy of the staff survey powerpoint and email explaining the methodology used. The Headteacher told trustees that she had invited more staff voice and feedback and had asked for an indication of those interested in participating with a deadline of Friday 27 April 2018. The evaluations from the survey had been analysed and the results explained. There had been lots of positives and areas for further work flagged up, focused on developing change management and workload. The findings reflected national trends and aligned with schools that had required rapid change. The demographics of respondents showed 50% at over 50 years of age and having been at the school for a long time. The number of responses within the first deadline had not met the threshold of 70% for analysis but, following an extension, this threshold had been met with 50% of respondents having management responsibility. A trustee raised a query with regard to middle leaders' responsibilities. The Headteacher said that a non-teaching middle leader might be a Finance Manager with a supervisory role of two members of staff. On the teaching side a number of middle leaders had been in position when the Headteacher arrived and many were part-time. This raises issues regarding availability to quality assure Teaching and Learning throughout the two week timetable. Middle leaders were more aligned to staff than to middle leadership and trustees discussed their buy-in to the school and what it was doing. Training has been commissioned for middle leaders on influencing decisions and for SLT with middle leaders on managing change. A trustee wanted to know about performance appraisal and capability procedures and was told that the school had been paying attention to change management and middle leaders with some embracing change.

Trustees heard that departmental meetings had been held today and had provided opportunities for questions to be raised following the survey and it was hoped that a spread of teaching and non-teaching members would look at positive workplace research and how to build this capacity. The Chair of the Governing Board was keen to ensure that there were opportunities for staff feedback particularly as there were no longer staff governors, apart from the Headteacher, on the Governing Board. The Headteacher told trustees that a Wellbeing Group and a Health and Safety Committee existed, although neither had met for a while, and it was hoped that different staff members would put themselves forward for the new working group.

It was queried whether the survey would be run again in the following year, perhaps with an incentive. The Headteacher felt that it was good practice to repeat the exercise but did not want to impose this on staff. It was agreed that middle leaders were an important layer in school and a trustee wondered if it might be possible to see the questionnaire. The Headteacher said that the questionnaire was conducted online and the organisation had mentioned copyright in its correspondence. The Headteacher told trustees that SLT cascaded weekly or fortnightly information to middle leaders in individual meetings and through a group bulletin, to share with departmental and line management teams and that middle leaders were encouraged to challenge SLT but this was not evident. Whilst the Headteacher was not present at all SLT/middle leader individual meetings, the survey indicates that the SLT is very aligned and much more so than other SLTs nationally.

Action: the Headteacher to present an update to the Autumn term Governing Board meeting.

- 8.2 **Parent Survey** – a Year 10 parent survey had thrown up a response stating an 80% satisfaction rating for how well children were looked after at school and a trustee queried what this might relate to. The Headteacher wondered if it might have been a concern at the beginning of GCSE courses but would look into the query and would look to see if any comments had been included with the response.

Action: Headteacher to follow up query with Justin Haines.

The Chair of the Governing Board wondered if the school should undertake a pupil survey. The Head said that she had looked at the feedback from 6th form on Survey Monkey with the positives being a very high bar in lessons and students being coached and developed. Students felt that they had good relationships and that resources were matched to their ability. It was also considered that students used their time proactively with preparation for tests and exams being helpful and the Headteacher wanted to continue to seek feedback to support work being done in school and to develop opportunities for 6th form student to be integrated into school life.

A survey for KS3 and KS4 would be available at the end of term and the Headteacher said that the minutes of School Council meetings would also reflect student voice. The Chair of the Governing Board suggested that Student Council members be invited to speak to trustees at the beginning of the next Governing Board meeting.

Action: Student Council members to be invited to speak to Trustees at 3 July 2018 meeting.

RH

9. Curriculum Offer

- 9.1 A Curriculum Plan 2018-19 had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Deputy Headteacher told trustees that there would be two good-sized groups for Sociology, a group of Photography A Level, and Government and Politics which had previously been offered and was being reinstated. A BTEC Health and Social Care would be available with slightly lower entry requirements than A Levels. This latter had been offered in the previous year but had low uptake and there were now good-sized groups. Further to a query trustees were told that there were two teachers in school who could offer sociology and that the subject had already been offered.

10. Proposed Staffing Structure

- 10.1 The Headteacher told trustees that the deadline for resignations was 31 May 2018 and staffing was currently in flux. If gaps emerged there were possibilities to move things around as she knew staff well and who might be able to teach a second subject. There was not a lot of surplus built into staffing and the budget needed to be carefully managed. Responding to a query regarding MFL the Headteacher said that the timetable was currently short of approximately 11 hours teaching over a two-week timetable with an NQT having 31 hours, as opposed to a qualified teacher teaching 41 out of 50 lessons. It was possible that an additional part-time teacher may be needed depending on whether any resignations were received but it was confirmed that exam classes would be covered. A trustee wanted to know why, if there was such a large shortfall, there was not a vacancy at present. The Headteacher said that the shortfall was small, possibly one day per week, and that there were different ways of managing that. At present, one agency staff teacher was looking for a permanent post and, if he were to remain at the school, he could fill the 11 hours and be used as a cover supervisor which would avoid having daily agency cover.

11. Pay and Conditions

- 11.1 Following a request for an update on the Performance Management Cycle the Headteacher told trustees that the school's payroll provider, EPM, had sent pay negotiation information for non-teaching staff. Unison and GMB unions had voted to accept employer proposals of approximately 2%, which were rejected by Unite. EPM was now waiting to hear whether this would go ahead, as with Local Authority schools which would follow the pay spine. Trustees heard that when the school had TUPE'd its staff, national pay had been agreed for teachers and the Headteacher would need to find out if a similar agreement had been made for non-teaching staff, but felt that the same should apply to support staff. In response to a query, the Headteacher said that the school had not budgeted for this pay increase but that it would not have a significant impact on the budget. It was agreed that the Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee would look at this with the Finance team and it would be backdated to April 2018. The Chair of the Governing Board felt that it was the morally right action to take to avoid creating a rift between teaching and non-teaching staff but would take note of the impact from the budget point of view. In order to become effective in the May payroll EPM

would need to have this confirmed by 27 April 2018 and it would be a 2-year agreement for the current and following years.

Action: The Headteacher and Chair of Finance & Premises Committee to consider the budget implications with the Finance team.

12. Review of Policies

- 12.1 Trustees had received a copy of the Pay Policy and Performance Management Policy for approval. The Headteacher confirmed that staff received performance feedback throughout the year as part of Individual Teacher Development Plans (ITDPs) as well as feedback from students, peers and parents. Policies had been drafted by the legal firm, Collier Bristow, and reviewed by a second legal firm, Veale Wasborough Vizards (VWV). A Trustee queried whether the staff consultation was a union consultation and was told by the Headteacher that the consultation process on the suite of policies had been drafted by VWV and was a formal consultation. Having responded to various issues raised by individual members of staff, via their own union representatives, it was now for the Board of Trustees to approve and adopt the policies. Some concerns were raised in relation to the drafting of points 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5 of the Performance Management Policy and it was suggested that minor amendments be made to wording on 13.4 which, it was believed, had been inaccurately drafted in respect of categories/characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The suite of policies were approved, including the **Pay Policy** and **Performance Management Policy** pending amendments. A longer version of the **Attendance Policy** would be circulated to trustees. The Data Protection Policy would need further updating to accommodate GDPR and an updated policy and associated privacy notices would be sent to trustees for approval by email.

Action: Headteacher to ask VWV to review the wording on 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5.

Action: The Clerk to forward the longer version of the Attendance Policy and updated Data Protection Policy to trustees.

13. Admissions

- 13.1 Trustees were advised that there had been an increase in the number of 1st choice applications, now totaling 690, for 196 Year 7 places. Three appeal meetings had been held on 23 April 2018 with the possible acceptance of one student at the school.

14. Trustee Link Visits

- 14.1 The 6th form Link trustee reported on her visit to meet the Head of 6th form which had been very positive overall and trustees were pleased to note a sharp increase in the number of students indicating their intention to stay on into 6th form. The Link trustee said that she would like to follow up with the Head of 6th form and the Headteacher with an update at the next Governing Board meeting on post-graduation outcomes and destinations, with some comparison over previous years.



Action: Update on 6th form outcomes and destinations and comparison with previous years.

- 14.2 The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee had met with the school's interim Finance Manager and external Financial Consultant to discuss an initial review and handover following the departure of the previous Finance and Operations Manager. The Headteacher told trustees that she would like to continue to use the external consultant which was fully supported by the Chair of the Committee. Trustees heard that the school's staff costs are reducing and a focus for the next Governing Board meeting would be on the budget and how it impacts cash reserves. Trustees asked a number of questions regarding the use of cash reserves and about the Endowment Fund. The Headteacher told trustees that she had had to write a lengthy explanatory letter to the ESFA in the autumn term regarding the planned deficit budget. After further discussion it was agreed that a sensible cash reserve of approximately £500k should be retained as a buffer, bearing in mind that school funding was reducing at around £200k each year. The Governing Board proposed that benchmarking against a standalone academy be carried out, prior to implementing a process of voluntary contributions as discussed in Item 5.

Action: The Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee would work with the finance team and Headteacher to implement a cash reserves policy.

- 14.3 A report by the Link trustee for SEN had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

15. Public Sector Equalities Duty

- 15.1 Further to discussion at the previous meeting, the Public Sector Equality Duty statement was agreed.

Action: the Public Sector Equality Duty statement would be added to the school website.

16. Meetings Schedule

Outstanding meetings for the current academic year are as follows:

- Finance & Premises Committee (budget) - Wednesday 27 June 2018 –
- Governing Board meeting (incorporating Achievement & Behaviour and Staffing Committee) - Tuesday 3 July 2018

17. Any Other Business

- 17.1 There was no urgent business to discuss.

18. Items for future meetings

- 18.1 The following items for the next meetings were agreed:
- Budget (Chair of F&P Committee)
 - 6th form destinations (Link Trustee)
 - School Council attendance (Headteacher)
 - Trustee Link Roles (Chair of the Governing Board)

Part 2 (Confidential) business

19. Confidential matters

19.1 The Headteacher reported a confidential matter.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

End 9.45pm

Chair:

Dated:

Summary of action points

Action (and relevant section of minutes)	Owner
Election of Vice Chair of the Governing Board (Item 3)	Clerk
Clerk to circulate information to all Trustees re use of personal address at Companies House (Item 4)	Clerk
Clerk and Link Trustee to liaise regarding policy review schedule (Item 4)	Clerk/RP
Letter to new Year 7 parents to encourage sign up for Pupil Premium, where eligible.	Chair of the Governing Board
Tendering proposal in respect of auditors to be sent to Members (Item 5)	Chair of F&P Committee
Link trustee for T&L to review evidence base (Item 6)	Link T&L Trustee

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Update on staff survey findings and Positive Workplace Team's role (Item 8)	Headteacher
Follow up on parent survey response re how well children looked after (Item 8.2)	Headteacher/Justin Haines
Student Council members to be invited to 3 July 2018 Governing Board meeting (8.2)	Headteacher
Trustee Link roles to next meeting (Item 4.2).	Chair/Clerk
To consider the budget implications of pay increase for non-teaching staff (11.1)	Headteacher/Chair of F&P Cttee/Finance team
To request that VWV review the wording of points 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5 of the Performance Management Policy. To forward the longer version of the Attendance Policy and updated Data Protection Policy to trustees (13.1)	Headteacher Clerk
Update on 6 th form outcomes and destinations and comparison with previous years.(14.1)	Link Trustee
To implement a cash reserves policy (14.2)	Chair of F&P Cttee/Headteacher/Finance team
To add the Public Sector Equality Duty statement to the school website (15.1)	Clerk

Governing Board

CONFIDENTIAL

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(Chair)

Alan Jenner (AJ)
(arr.6.15pm)

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Co-opted Trustees:

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Hannah Ross (HR)

Staff Trustees:

Violet Walker (VW)
(Headteacher)

In attendance: Hilary Furey (Clerk to the Governing Board)

Part 2 – Confidential Item

A staffing matter was discussed.

Chair:.....*R. Hanley.*.....

Dated:.....*14 May 19*.....