



Minutes of the meeting of the Howden School
Local Governing Board
Tuesday 21 November 2023 at 5.30pm



GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mrs S Warnes (Chair, SW), Mrs A Bahadur (AB), Mrs D Bassford (DB), Mrs J Leeman (JL), Mrs M Millar (MM), Mr J Nixon (Headteacher, JN), Mrs L Oates – Dibnah (LOD), Mrs J Pinkney (JP)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs K Burton (DSL, KB), Mrs J Doyle (Assistant Headteacher & DSL, JD), Mr I Furlong (Chair of the Trust, IF), Mr P Harris (Deputy Head, PH), Mrs S Issatt (Assistant Headteacher, SI), Mr J O'Brien (Director of Improvement and Standards, JOB), Mrs L Stephenson (SENCO, LS), Mrs G Stafford (Governance Professional, GS)

Throughout these minutes a question is indicated by Q followed by the initials of the questioner and a comment is marked by C.

15 WELCOME

SW opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, including two newly appointed Parent Governors and the Chair of the Trust.

16 APOLOGIES

R Gardiner and S Symington

Resolved: Consent was given to the absence of the above governors.

17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made specific to this meeting.

18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (19 September 2023)

Resolved: The minutes were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, SW

19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 19.1 **ACTION:** Updated development plan to be reviewed at the next meeting – see minute 23
- 19.2 **ACTION:** All Links to complete a governor link visit prior to the next meeting - see minute 27
- 19.3 **ACTION:** All Governors to complete the safeguarding module on The National College (Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees (2023/24) - see minute 28

20 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

JN summarised the following:

- The Development Plan is now complete, but always evolving
- The school had to shut following a break in electricity due to a storm on 19 October
- Interviewing for a Deputy Head with the responsibility for the curriculum, behaviour and attendance
- Year 11 recent mock exams were conducted well
- Number of in year transfers and the projected intake for the next 5 years due to additional housing
- The content of a recent Senior Students' meeting

JN elaborated on actions taken during the recent storm. The break in electricity led to issues with the front doors remaining open and a lack of mobile phone signal. Recommendations from a debrief were that there would have been more order if the students had been divided into two areas (not just the Hall), walkie talkies could have been used, and a Critical Incident Policy is required. However, overall, the incident was managed very well with 710 children given permission to leave the site safely.

C: (SW) It is good that you have reflected on learning points and been commended for your safeguarding considerations.

Q: (SW) Where did you get the projected student numbers over the next 5 years?

JN: From Year 6 feeder schools, 121 are automatically allocated.

JOB: And there are always students that join from out of catchment.

Q: (MM) How will a potential drop in numbers impact the school?

JN: We are looking at changing transition so there will be lots of work going on beforehand, with a reduction in the number of transition days (down to 2). The testing will move away from the transition days and into the start of term in September. Curriculum Leaders and the SENDCo are going out to feeder schools to ensure a smooth transition. Sue will be the line manager of transition. We are not able to offer summer school.

C: (AB) I feel the need for a summer school has reduced after Covid and as most of the children come from Howden a reduced transition is sensible.

Each member of SLT then gave an update of their Senate Group. Each group has between 6 and 10 students, and they meet every 2 weeks.

KB: Safeguarding

JD: Behaviour Rewards and Attitudes

LS – Inclusivity

SI – Curriculum and Teaching

PH – Sustainability

Link Governors were invited to attend a Senate meeting.

ACTION: GS to circulate Senate group dates for governors to attend

21 PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGY STATEMENT

- 157 students are PP (21%)
- Total funding for this year is £197K

Governors were impressed with the document but suggested the following:

- Challenges 7 and 8 to be reworded to follow the same style as the previous 6 – e.g., 'DS students' behaviour is not as good as....'
- Colour coding of the spend to be clearer with a key for the colours, or the colours removed
- More specific data to be included in Part B – 'Impact of the activity on pupils 2022/23' such as the attendance gap, destination data, behaviour data of PP and Non - PP

ACTION: LS to change the PP Strategy as suggested above and then governors to attend a Teams meeting to review and approve the Strategy

Q: (SW) Does the delivery of a careers curriculum happen all year?

PHa: Careers comes naturally to an end once the students have made their post 16 choices. We balance how to make best use of the time available.

SI: These sessions are not just about career provision, but also teaching lifelong skills of interview techniques and completing application forms.

Q: (IF) The Strategy focuses on closing the gaps, but how does it ensure that PP students develop their culture capital?

LS: We run 23 extra-curricular clubs and 29% attendees are PP. We run a Breakfast Club and 44% regular attendees are PP. To increase enrichment, we have music lessons. We support students attend trips and pay for all compulsory trips for the PP.

22 SEF – SELF EVALUATION FORM

- SEF and SDP have been reviewed by the improvement Team and central leadership
- All areas are judged to be RI and until there is firm evidence of change the rag rating will remain the same
- All actions towards good are judged to be amber
- JN stated that things are moving in the right direction but there is still a significant journey to make

Q: (SW) This is a clear document, thank you. When do you think we can judge the school good?

JN: I want this school to be good before I leave and it is important that this is a good school, not just a school that is rated good.

Behaviour and Attitudes – JD

JD: We have the routines in place and most students are compliant in our expectations but there is still more to do regarding behaviour engagement. The Behaviour curriculum is teaching the students how to behave, and we are introducing this in various stages with the policy launch first. We need to do further work on cognitive understanding as feelings and thoughts impact behaviour and we need to make every student the best version of themselves.

Q: (AB) Do you address this within lessons?

JD: Yes, in the ACE lesson and it is addressed in curriculum time, not just in PSHE.

Quality of Education – PHa

PHa: We stripped back the curriculum and looked at the key concepts. We then looked at mapping across the curriculum; presentation of work needs to be the same across all subjects and how teachers teach to the top. We also have new guided choices and the analysis of this has been completed and will be presented to parents on students shortly.

Q: (AB) Is the term 'guided choices' deliberate, rather than options?

PHa: Yes, as some courses are more suitable to certain students than others so we will guide them to the most appropriate choices.

Q: (AB) How do you logistically do this to all of Year 9?

PHa: LS will have one to one conversations with the pupil premium students and the SEND students. This is very time consuming and will take between four and six weeks. All SLT will be available to discuss choices with the other students. We need to engage the parents too. Parents of the higher ability students generally want to support their child, but other students need more support.

JN: We need to have the right curriculum in place for all students.

Personal Development – LS and SI

LS: We are highlighting the importance of reading across the school and working with Richard Hill to identify difficulties in reading so that we can assign targeted, appropriate intervention. We have found for example that 13% of students are dyslexic, so they need specific intervention.

SI: Our January training day will be all about literacy and reading with Richard Hill in attendance. General reading across the whole curriculum needs work.

C: (SW) Phonics will be an important transition piece when visiting the feeder schools. Do the students miss other lessons to have reading interventions?

SI: In key stage three they have library lessons and we do the interventions then, but sometimes they do miss other lessons but this is necessary as reading is fundamental.

SI: We have restructured the lessons called Howden lesson which is our expectations of learning. This is to be used throughout the school. We are also working on developing the students understanding of key concepts such as retrieval, and student voice is telling us this is happening. We are also ensuring there is stretch and challenge in each lesson as we have seen inconsistency throughout the school. There is a CPDL programme to develop the teaching as we are aware for example that there is too much teacher talk in lessons and the students do not thrive on passive learning.

Q: (IF) Which subject areas are your greatest concern?

SI: Technology and religious studies. English, maths and science are strong but, in some areas, teaching and learning in the lessons is good but the outcomes are not, so we must teach to the top.

Q: (IF) If subject leaders from technology and religious studies came in to talk to you as a Board would they say they are supported?

JN: Yes, we have review meetings, and we are honest of where the concerns are and the next steps. We have started coaching of teaching and learning and stretch and challenge and interventions are personalised for teachers. I have arranged some out of county visits for our leaders to look at schools that are strong in areas where we are not, such as going to a school that is strong in humanities; their P8 is +0.74.

C: (JP) In an area of growing manufacturing it is important that we do not lose DT as a subject.

JN: It is being looked at as the progress was -1.9.

Q: (AB) Regarding triple science, we have to ask if this is the best route for each student as sometimes to opt for combined science is a strategic move that could lead to two better grades than three average grades.

PHa: We do however need to be careful of the language used around this.

C: (JOB) The uptake of triple science is being looked at by the DfE and this may be a measure that we become judged against, so we need to be mindful of this before we introduce any change as we do not want to have to reverse any decisions made.

Q: (AB) Is RS taken by all Year 10 and will this continue?

PHa: At the moment yes, all our students have to do RS but it is time to revisit this. RS does not usually count in our measures as students usually do not score highly in it and the eight best grades are used. Other schools offer religious studies as an option.

SI: We have moved our students onto a short GCSE course so it is worth half a grade so there is not as much teaching time.

Q: (JL) If it is half a grade, what is the other half?

PHa: There is not one, we just followed the guided learning hours.

C: (JOB) As a Trust we have been reviewing our RS provision and all the schools are moving away from universal entry to offer RS as an option and schools are reducing their options from 4 to 3. This will take place from this year's Year 9 option process.

Q: (MM) What are the most popular option choices?

PHa: Geography, history, PE and a language.

Q: (GS) Which SEF grade do you think will turn good first?

JN: There will be dips as improvement is not linear, but I am confident that we are moving forward. It will most probably be behaviour and attitudes as this is making rapid progress, followed by personal development. Quality of education is a huge area. The last category to become good will be leadership and management as all other grades must be good for leadership to be good.

C: (AB) The change in behaviour is the most visible measure to the parents and the weekly Headteacher letter to parents is great.

JN: I speak of connectedness; this is a multifaceted plan, and it will all come together.

23 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- the school development plan formulates all the priorities
- governors found it user friendly and will link all future governor visits to a school development priority

Q: (SW) Are all staff on board with the development plan?

JN: Yes, feedback has been very positive. The middle leaders like the clarity; people like direction.

LS: We all have a link in our performance development review with the SEF and the development targets.

JN: We will update you on progress against targets. The school senior leaders across the Trust have training / meeting nights meet on the same days so that there can be collaboration and links forged.

Q: (IF) I am pleased that there is emphasis on the curriculum in the plan. How will you emphasise that the quality of teaching will deliver the curriculum?

JN: Governors will come in to conduct visits and look at the quality of the curriculum. There will be feedback given following monitoring. We gather student and staff feedback.

Q: (SW) Can we be sent the Trust monitoring visit feedback?

JOB: We can share these, but the more regular feedback will be from the school improvement team.

SW: We can then triangulate the data we have.

24 ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR REPORT

- overall attendance for the first half term 91.8%
- lowest attendance is in Year 11 89.4%
- PP attendance is 88.2%, non – PP 92.6%
- SEND attendance is 89.7%, non – SEND 92.5%
- Persistent Absence (<90%) is 26%
- 69 suspensions by 37 students
- 2 permanent exclusions

Q: (DB) What can be done to improve the attendance of Year 11 girls?

JD: There are only 60 girls in Year 11 and 92 boys. We have some severe mental health issues in this year group and 4 Year 11 students have an attendance of less than 57%. I meet with the attendance team and the DSL regularly to discuss vulnerability and we challenge the external agencies if they are not supporting. There are lots of ongoing initiatives we have tried such as a text buddy system which worked for a brief period of time, we have engaged with the Trust mental

health counsellors and Mabel therapy. We hope that our prom passport will increase attendance as students receive points for attendance, punctuality and behaviour. We have seen an increase in attendance for the 37 students that are on the challenge 100 initiative. We are very aware of our mantra 'Attend to Achieve' and we are feeding back to the students and their parents of the number of lessons missed rather than attendance as a percentage, as this has a bigger impact.

Q: (MM) What has been the feedback on the prom passports?

JD: We are only on day 2 but feel that this will be a good incentive for all. For work done already all the students were awarded 100 points, so the target of 250 is very achievable.

Q: (SW) It is interesting if student turnover affects attendance. Has the CAN (Current Attendance Number) been actioned?

JN: Yes, and has already made a difference. We have great support from the attendance team at the Local Authority.

Q: (DB) The bullying number of incidents of just one in Year 11 is extremely low. Are you confident this is accurate, or do you believe that some are simply not speaking up?

JD: As DSLs across the Trust we drilled into what exactly is bullying and to understand that somebody being unkind is not bullying. The bullying category on CPOMs is overseen by the DSL and DDSL to ensure that cases are actually bullying rather than conflicting behaviours. We then triage and re categorise if needed, so yes, I do believe that figure to be accurate.

Q: (MM) Are Year 7 students taking to the new Behaviour Policy?

JN: Yes, they are very compliant and understanding of their behaviours. The full transformation of the school will take place when this year's Year 7 become Year 11 students.

ACTION: JD to include peer conflict data in the next Safeguarding Report

25 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

- There are currently 3 children under child protection and 10 children in need
- 7 children looked after (CLA)
- 4 children on the safeguarding monitoring list
- Staff have completed the mandatory safeguarding training
- 361 safeguarding cause for concerns logged last half term – most are in Year 7
- All multi agency meetings were attended
- 22 Smoothwall alerts
- There have been 6 referrals; 1 to early help and 5 to the safeguarding and partnership hub

C: (SW) I joined SS on her safeguarding link visit, and we saw how much work KB has done. Filtering and monitoring is a new requirement in Keeping Children Safe in Education this year. How can we ensure that the 22 Smoothwall alerts are not repeated?

KB: They were inappropriate searches that have been addressed and have not been repeated.

Q: (SW) Are the children in need receiving sufficient support from the local authority?

KB: Yes, and we chase and challenge when we do not agree with any decision.

26 RISK REGISTER

Risk 1 – Inconsistent outcomes result in our not progressing quickly enough in our ACE values, having a negative impact on students' aspirations and future careers

Risk 2- Students attendance is down from the previous year with specific reference to some year groups and some subgroups

Risk 3 - Embedding migration of the MIS system and consider how behaviour is monitored and evaluated if class charts is no longer available

Risk 4- Absence of staff for periods of time significantly impacts teaching and learning and school operations

Risk 5 - Buildings and facilities no longer fit for purpose and do not provide an excellent learner experience, due to expected growth in numbers

JN: Regarding risk 5, this is the most difficult school to manage as there are lots of hidden areas.

Q: (SW) Do we have central support following risk assessments of the building?

JN: Yes, we raised in a recent operations meeting what is needed and refurbishing the key stage 4 toilets and making the car park more welcoming would make a significant difference. The decorations that have taken place in the building are tremendous and I must say thank you.

Q: (AB) Where does capital spend come from?

IF: We get funding from the Schools Condition Allocation which amounts to about £1,000,000 a year but if you can imagine there is a huge list of projects across the schools, so we have prioritised the jobs. We need to make each school place worthy of great education. This school is still very much work in progress, but lots has already been spent.

Q: (SW) What is the current absence level of staff?

JN: I know the numbers but not the percentage, but we will get this from People Services. Staff absence is currently OK and has reduced since return-to-work interviews take place.

Q: (SW) How do you cover absent staff?

JN: We have two cover supervisors, but one is leaving so we have to use supply, but this is not the same as having established teachers in place. We have long term absence in English so have made adjustments as Year 10 and Year 11 are priority groups and they now have consistent teaching in manageable class sizes.

Q: (MM) Are you recruiting for the cover supervisor that is leaving?

JN: Yes.

Q: (MM) Is the website under development?

JN: We are sending material through to marketing in central services to update as we are aware this is what visitors see first.

C: (IF) At a recent conference RSM who do our audit work, presented on the value of school level risk registers and they support not having school level risk registers so long as there is a mechanism for reporting risks up. You will continue to have discussions about risk in your local board meetings and feed this to the strategic trust level risk register but will not need a school risk register any more.

27 GOVERNOR LINK VISITS

There have been 3 governor link visits last half term:

??? SS – Safeguarding Link visit

2 October – MM – Behaviour link visit

4 October – DB – PP and SEND Link visit

SW as Chair has accompanied each link governor to see how the visit is conducted, how prepared the staff are and the effectiveness of the questions asked by governors. Historically the Links have been meeting with the same member of SLT that they see in board meetings so during visits I would like to see Links talking to other members of staff and students too so that all information given can be triangulated.

The next step is for the link governors to come in during the spring term and meet more people and attend the Senate group if possible and conduct student voice. It was proposed that the curriculum link position is split, as this is such a considerable area. At the next meeting, Link Governors positions will be confirmed, including the introduction of a Community Link Governor.

ACTION: Link positions to be confirmed at the next meeting

ACTION: AB and LOD to be invited to attend visits with Link Governors

28 GOVERNOR TRAINING AND SUPPORT

DB and JP to complete the safeguarding module prior to the next LGB meeting:
"Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees (2023/24)"

All Governors to complete the "Annual Certificate in Data Protection and GDPR Governors and Trustees (2023/24)" before the next meeting.

AB and LOD will be sent the link to access The National College once the DBS checks are through. The safeguarding module is the first to be completed.

ACTION: D Bassford and J Pinkney to complete the safeguarding module on The National College ASAP (Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees (2023/24))

ACTION: All Governors to complete the Annual Certificate in Data Protection and GDPR for Governors and Trustees 2023/24) before the next meeting

JOB offered to carry out any face to face data training that would assist the new governors in performing their role.

29 2023/24 MEETING DATES (all 5.30pm start)

Tuesday 16 January
Tuesday 16 April
Tuesday 9 July

There will be a pre meet the same evening as the meetings, starting 4:45pm.

30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30.1 Complaints

DB asked for an update on complaints. GS confirmed that there was only one live complaint for Howden School. Complaints will be a regular agenda item but was removed from this agenda due to how many other items were already on the agenda.

30.2 J Leeman

This was JL's final Board meeting. JL was thanked from both the Board and the Headteacher for her service as a governor for 6 years and Chair for 4 years.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

31 AGREED ACTION POINTS

31.1 ACTION: GS to circulate Senate group dates for governors to attend (minute 20)

31.2 ACTION: LS to change the PP Strategy as suggested above and then governors to attend a Teams meeting to review and approve the Strategy (minute 21)

31.3 ACTION: JD to include peer conflict data in the next Safeguarding Report (minute 24)

- 31.4 **ACTION:** Link positions to be confirmed at the next meeting (minute 27)
- 31.5 **ACTION:** AB and LOD to be invited to attend visits with Link Governors (minute 27)
- 31.6 **ACTION:** D Bassford and J Pinkney to complete the safeguarding module on The National College ASAP (Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees (2023/24) (minute 28)
- 31.7 **ACTION:** All Governors to complete the Annual Certificate in Data Protection and GDPR for Governors and Trustees (2023/24) before the next meeting (minute 28)

