

GOVERNOR SERVICES: EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE SERVICE

SIR TOM FINNEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL (06135)

Minutes of the meeting of the Student, Curriculum and Standards Committee held at the school on Tuesday 21 February 2023 11.30am.

Present: Mr P Main (Chair)
Mrs G Barlow
Mrs P Barlow
Mrs R Hurley
Mrs K D Jones
Mr S Jukes (Headteacher)

Also present: Mrs A Heywood (Clerk to Governors)

23.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr I Fazackerley and Mrs M Rothwell.

23.02 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to agenda items.

23.03 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 October 2022, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the chair.

23.04 Matters Arising

The following matters arising from the minutes were noted:

- a) Student Numbers and Distribution (Minute 22.31 refers)

The headteacher had met with the Head of the Inclusion Service on 1 December 2022. The meeting had been informative. A further update would be provided at agenda item *Student numbers*

- b) Policies (Minute 22.38 refers) – Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) was updated.

23.05 Student numbers / distribution / complexity etc.

ACTION

Mr Jukes advised that current student numbers on roll (NOR) was 220. He had been working with Lancashire County Council Inclusion Service which wanted to place more students. Two were awaiting an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and another child was on dual placement pending an EHCP. One student had started in January (included in 220 figure) having transferred from home education. Finally, one would start after Easter.

It was noted there were 80 on roll in the Further Education (FE) department, which was more than official capacity. Governors also acknowledged the rapid increase in the Semi-Formal and Experiential (SFX) Group (32) throughout KS3 and KS4 and understood the challenges encountered in accommodating the complex, severe and profound needs. Additionally, mental health issues especially for the post 16 group had increased. These needs changed as the cohorts moved into and through the school.

Mr Jukes advised that one student had been suspended. He explained that the measure had not been taken lightly. The matter was now being handled by Lancashire County Council Inclusion Team.

In response to a governor question, Mr Jukes confirmed the Y12 cohort had now settled. It had been challenging for staff and children alike. The two groups that had been re-located downstairs had also settled down. Governors noted one group had moved to meet needs of personalities; the other group to accommodate physical needs.

Governors noted that the school had 21 places available for Y7 but at the time of the meeting had been consulted about 32 children (2023-24). However, as explained by the headteacher after placing children from the usual schools, including Acorns, Holly Grove and Elm Tree there would only be eight places remaining. In reply to a **governor concern** about disappointed parents of Y7 children, Mr Jukes advised that though it was regrettable, he had to refer them back to Lancashire County Council. The headteacher highlighted his concerns about the long-term strategy for the school and problems in accommodating young people with SEN without appropriate funding. Governors concurred when he stated the issue was encountered nationally. It was acknowledged that more SEND units were being considered and there had been a conference which had focused on the specific issues of educating SEND children. There had been an escalation in demand for SEND places since 2016, with EHCPs up by 45%. The headteacher assured governors that whilst the current outlook across the nation was concerning, at the school everything was good. There was a very positive balance and staff had all the necessary resources to support the children. He continued that they were fortunate to have the building and space.

Mr Jukes advised that he awaited final figures prior to completing the draft Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. He would liaise with Mr

Fazackerley and he confirmed the document would be circulated at the next meeting of the full governing body.

He concluded the item by summarising the good work going on throughout the school and he used two anecdotal events to capture the positive feeling. The first had occurred that week and was that the school had been highly commended by parents of a student in the sixth form. The other success story was an example of a former Y12 student who had been very challenging who had returned to the school and was now mentoring students.

23.06 School Improvement Plan 2022-23 Evaluation

The headteacher circulated a document summarising the evaluation of each of the targets on the plan. The item coded red was a new target hence had not yet been achieved.

Mr Jukes assured governors that succession planning for the Senior Leadership Team and other key members of staff would be considered when planning the overall staff structure for the autumn term. He agreed forward planning for at least the next three years would be prudent. Governors asked that draft options for the future be put together for the Autumn term for their consideration. These would be referred to at the FGB

Replying to **a question**, about progress made in respect of OFSTED criteria, the headteacher highlighted a few aspects including:

- phonics had been developed and embedded and therefore the outcomes for reading and writing had significantly improved;
- accreditation had been embedded;
- Personal and Social Development (PSD) and British Values underpinned the curriculum across the school;
- SFX was working well under the leadership of Charlotte Pilkington.

He directed governors to the recently completed Self-Evaluation form (SEF) and advised that, from an organisational viewpoint, it provided detail on what was happening in school; what had gone well, what not so well etc. To evaluate progress from a student perspective, Mr Jukes, referenced the importance of the impact statements. He would provide a detailed report to the next meeting of the full governing body.

Headteacher

23.07 Professional Development and Training

A **governor questioned** how staff development had impacted outcomes. The headteacher shared details from a document which listed all staff training and development that had taken place throughout the year. He summarised and emphasised highlights as follows:

- SLT, teachers and other staff had undertaken various National Professional Qualification (NPQ) training;
 - Teachers and non-teaching staff had completed subject specific training and refresher courses;
 - All staff had undergone annual updates in safeguarding and GDPR;
 - Health and Safety and other compliance training for appropriate staff.
- Governors acknowledged how significant the appraisal process was in ensuring staff were equipped with good knowledge and skills to enable them to deliver in their field. Mrs Barlow advised that a twilight session had been held at the Acorns and eight or nine members from Sir Tom Finney had joined the training session.

Governors were pleased with the report and agreed the school was in a good position to meet the challenges that would be encountered as student cohorts and members of staff changed. To compound the internal outlook, all agreed the educational and political climate was continually changing. Specific reference was made to the government's white paper on academisation, the SEND consultation and the complexity of the Early Help strategy. Training would need to be continuous. Discussion moved to the issues developing due to the increasing workload of the deputy head, Miss Debbie Rickard, in delivering the school based Early Help strategy. The increase had resulted from a change in the threshold. Governors recognised that despite the workload pressures, positive relationships had been developed between the school and parents. Discussion ensued about the changing profile of young people needing special schools. **Governors expressed concern** for parents who wanted their Y6 child to continue from a specialised school or unit to join the school in Y7 but who would be denied a place due to limited space. The headteacher agreed and expanded that in all probability the school would be approached to accept the child in Y9, by which time it would be more difficult for the school to influence the child's outcomes.

23.08 Review of Policies

Attendance levels of five students had raised concerns for the school. Mr Jukes confirmed the school had been working with Lancashire County Council attendance team. He asked governors to consider the proposed change to adopt a model Attendance Policy. Governors discussed the merits and demerits of the change and advised that the school should follow Lancashire County Council guidance but utilise the usual autonomy and discretion to introduce the penalty of fining parents when the absence would result in the mark "unauthorised absence". An example would be if school had reason to believe the lack of attendance was influenced by the parenting issues.

The headteacher confirmed, in **response to a question**, that the attendance team at Lancashire County Council would support administering the process.

Governors agreed that the school should adopt the policy and include the ability to fine parents on appropriate occasions as "a last resort".

23.09 Any Other Business

- i. Mrs Gail Barlow nominated governor for IT, Online Safety and Computing had visited the school on 23 January 2023 and met with Mr Ethan Currey, IT Technician. She had written a report of their meeting and Mr Tony Gillies (absent on the day of the meeting) had responded and his reply was included in italics at the foot of the document. Mr Jukes was pleased that the report highlighted the good work that the technician had been carrying out during the long-term absence of the IT Manager. It also demonstrated the improved technical knowledge young people now possessed. It was recognised that the skills had improved because of learning to access education and work using IT during the pandemic. Reference to the report would be included in the headteacher's report.

Headteacher

A **governor asked** for a report from the Student council, focussed on culture and diversity, to be included at the next meeting of the full governing body. Mr Jukes advised that at a recent student council meeting and subsequent assemblies, the content of which included the aspects requested, had been determined by the council. Some of the questions asked by the council included:

- How is banter defined in school?
- Does it happen here?
- What do adults do when they encounter it?

The young people observed that banter could be fun but that it could become too much or wrong. They considered to whom they would report if they became concerned. Governors agreed student cohorts, despite not being mainstream were becoming more "streetwise". The subject had been given higher profile from PSHE lessons.

- ii. An article written by a journalist was circulated. He had taken a role as a supply support assistant after the pandemic. The article referenced the good work being carried out in the school.
- iii. **In reply to a governor question**, the headteacher confirmed that the extra bank holiday for the King's coronation had been confirmed.
- iv. Mrs Jones advised that she had met the new parent governor, Ms Nicky Hudson and concluded she would be an asset to the governing body.

- v. Governors noted that Mr John Cockerill, Assistant Headteacher, would attend the next meeting of the full governing body to provide an update on Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- vi. Governors were reminded to follow up their meetings with subject leads and report to the full governing body meeting.
- vii. Mrs Jones asked to meet with the subject leader for mathematics
- viii. Mrs Jones and Mr Harper would attend the next Health and Safety premises walkaround.
- ix. The committee were reminded that Mr Main's term of office was due to expire and he had advised he did not intend to renew his membership. He would attend the full governing body meeting, but this would be his final committee meeting. The committee expressed their thanks and appreciation for his valuable contribution to the school.

ACTION
FGB

**Nominated
Governors**

**Subject
Lead for
Mathematics
(via
Mr Jukes)**

23.10 Confidentiality

There were no items deemed confidential.

23.11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting had been arranged at 9:30am on Tuesday 9 May 2023.

The chair thanked governors for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 12.50am