



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board meeting

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1730 pm, Bishopton House

### MINUTES

#### Introductory Business

##### **In attendance**

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ), Eric Medway (EM), Robert O'Hare (ROH), Amy Tweddle-Bray (ATB) Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Adele Laurie Wilson (ALW), Ian Charlton (IC), Victoria Pang (VP), Sinay Jayan (SJ), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Graham Livesey (GL), Josh Stott, Matthew Bean (Via MS Teams)

- 1. Welcome and apologies for non-attendance**  
EJ welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from David Winspear (Work Commitments) with consent
- 2. Declaration of interests**  
There were no declarations of interest
- 3. Chair's opening remarks**  
EJ welcomed everyone to the meeting. She updated governors on her attendance in school (amounting to 14 hours since the last FGB) which had included face-to-face meetings with JMW as well as delivering some assemblies to multiple Year groups.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were approved.**  
Proposed by TCT and seconded by IC.
- 5. Matters arising and update on action points not covered by the agenda**  
None
- 6. Update on Governor Vacancies**  
The election for a parent governor was in progress and being managed by school. EM agreed to review the procedure for parent governor elections to enable this to be seamless – but to consider the requirements for proposer and seconder, given that there are parents who are new to the school who have no relationships enabling this.  
  
There were suggestions of possible co-opted individuals to the FGB which will be explored.

#### Principal Business

- 7. Headmaster's report**  
The Head presented his report which had been uploaded to the papers in advance of the meeting (Paper 07)  
  
Discussions focussed on –

a. School Roll

Governors noted high numbers on roll of 941 – boarding numbers are 88 and lower than expected but significant interest at the present time which the head and admissions team are pursuing.

Governors noted only 1 of the high number of new starters in Y12 has left – which is positive and reflective of the robust induction processes and embedded support and buddying systems.

School roll projections for next year – 972 – does rely on maximum entry numbers in each Year with increased an increased PAN for Year 9

Sixth form – the current Y12 of 161 includes a couple of students entering with <6 x grade 6 who on remark have now achieved the grades. Their progress is being monitored.

Target for Y12 for 2025 is 165 – which is the maximum Y12 and Y13.

Governors asked about implications – on space and class size.

**ACTION:** Curriculum committee will review impact of the large class size – in terms of quantitative feedback relating to grades and progress but also student and staff feedback.

- Will the current administrative capacity within the school be sufficient to support the higher student numbers?
- Will there be an impact on the ability to provide pastoral and academic support?
- Will this impact on teacher retention and wellbeing?

Given that the rationale for the student expansion is to ensure financial sustainability – an increase in admin or teaching support may be counterproductive. Governors asked for the Head to monitor impacts in all areas. There was a clear steer that an expansion resulting in detriment to students or teachers would not be supported.

b. Admissions Test Day

It was noted that whilst the day had run well, with high numbers of current Y6 students taking the test, there was again a decreased number of in-catchment students this year

**ACTION** – JMW to visit in-catchment Heads and discuss the above

It was noted that all in year testing dates are now published in advance to enable forward planning.

The Head informed governors of the discussions that are occurring regarding the test – and it's effectiveness – this is being reviewed in Admissions committee

c. Marketing

The Head informed governors of his contact with agencies discussing active recruitment processes for boarding places. Governors were supportive of the use of novel strategies for marketing including social media!

d. Staff Recruitments

The Head assured governors regarding recent teacher recruitments who were pleased to hear of strong appointments – with no gaps foreseeable after Christmas 2024.

e. Staff wellbeing strategy

This has been updated and will be reviewed by Staff Council.

Governors asked how the staff voice was being included in this strategy – the Head assured that this has been an agenda item in Staff Council and Staff Meetings – each of which have SLT representation to ensure feedback.

f. Academic Results

The Head reported a decline in highest grades in the last academic year in public exams. He felt they were representative of a year who were less cohesive.

A detailed analysis of results will take place within the Curriculum committee, with subsequent feedback at the next FGB . Governors asked the committee to consider any lessons learnt from working with the Year groups, and how do we ensure things are better in the future?

**ACTION** – curriculum committee to review

The high number of grade changes as a result of school requests for remarking was noted – with 40% of all papers submitted for review having a grade increase.

g. School Day

The implementation of the change in school day (early finish on Monday, with compulsory staff training session replacing final hour of the day) has resulted in no adverse consequences and no complaints from the community, to date. VP reported that the change had been very well received by the staff team.

h. Home Working Policy

The Head informed governors that this policy, which was approved by governors in the last academic year, would be implemented in January 2025.

Governors challenged this delay and asked for assurance that implementation of future projects should be in accordance with the planned timeline.

i. Mobile phone use

This is being reviewed – a parent consultation re use of phones in school is being undertaken. It is likely the new policy will directly respond to this and include national guidance.

**ACTION** - Governors asked for this to be discussed at School Council and beyond to ensure the student voice is heard and recognised within this.

j. The Kirkland Rowell Survey

This has been undertaken. Results will be reviewed in detail in the relevant committees but there have been no concerns raised.

**ACTION** - Governors asked the Head to consider how we use the results to inform the School Development Plan.

EJ thanked the Head for his work so far this term, and asked him to extend these thanks, from the Board, to the staff team.

8. **Financial Matters**

a. **Budget**

ROH updated on the current financial position – ultimately as a school our expenditure continues to exceed the income – resulting in an in-year deficit of £67k. This position is an improvement from start budget. Some of the variables used to inform the start budget have become more secure, which has enabled the finance team to be able to give a much clearer future projection.

In the month prior to the meeting, there has been seen a 35k improvement in the in the position as a direct consequence of the efforts being made in school to find savings. The future options for this are becoming smaller as opportunities for savings become increasingly limited. A direct result of the efforts to date.

Governors were reminded of the process that the budget deficit has triggered – the school is in the process of applying for a deficit license with NYC and is required to submit the financial recovery plan. This document (paper 08b) has been reviewed and scrutinised by the F+P committee.

The recovery plan describes a forward plan to recover the financial position and includes the plan for expansion in school numbers by 25 (5 per Year) which will deliver an additional 145k revenue income per year.

Governors noted

- I. The lag in funding, so no additional income until the next financial year – and an inability to apply for early funding as the expansion does not meet threshold
- II. This will be delivered within existing teaching structure
- III. The resulting larger class sizes – and confirmed again the requirement for active monitoring of the impact of this on staff and students.

Within the recovery plan are other identified areas – including a review of the IT Project plan and curriculum changes – particularly relating to PE and low uptake subjects.

Governors were assured that our new bursar is well settled and working well to develop systems and processes which ensure financial procedures are in place, to allow us to be assured of the interface between the curriculum offering and the budget.

Governors noted that we will not be able to measure success until September 2025 which will be the decision point re triggering the other measures.

The financial recovering plan was APPROVED – proposed by ROH and seconded by VBB – with all in agreement.

GL updated the board on the tender process regarding the cleaning contract. The Board were pleased to hear that the process had been uncomplicated and smooth running.

b. **Solar For Schools**

Following approval for this at the last FGB meeting, governors were disappointed to learn of the delays in this application – which are with NYC. GL is challenging this – and governors offered support with this as needed.

9. **Safeguarding**

EJ updated the board on safeguarding – reminding governors of the statutory responsibility of the board in this matter. All governors have been issued with an update of KCSIE and have also been asked to undertake a quiz – assessing their knowledge of this. EM will remind those who have yet to complete this to do so.

NYC will be approached regarding safeguarding training for governors.

EJ informed governors that a serious safeguarding issue was raised in July 2024. She confirmed that this was dealt with robustly and in accordance with process. NYC and other relevant bodies were involved, and appropriate actions had been taken. She confirmed that there were no current safeguarding concerns relating to this.

10. **Parent and Student Engagement for 2024/2025**
  - a. **Parent Engagement**

It was agreed that a Y9 parental engagement evening will be held again – in school in the Spring Term. Discussion occurred around other forms of engagement – with a reminder again of the role of Governors being strategic and not operational.

It was decided that presence at parents’ evenings was unlikely to be helpful, but that governor presence at school events could be useful (eg Y7 parents’ tea party, sixth form information evenings).

**ACTION** – EJ to liaise with school re date for Y9 engagement
  - b. **Student engagement**

It was agreed that EJ would liaise with the Head of Sixth Form to arrange a date between mocks and before the main A levels for governors to meet with Year 13 students.
11. **FGB Self Review 2024**

EM summarised the feedback from the self-review – meeting management and timely paper circulation were mentioned as areas to improve on, as well as parental engagement.

There were no key training areas identified.

EM was thanked for administering the process.
12. **FGB Skills and Experience Audit**

EM summarised the findings of this – it was agreed that once the governor election process has completed – this will be reviewed again with a view to recruiting coopted governors to fill a skill gap.
13. **Website Compliance Audit**

EJ confirmed this has been completed with no actions.
14. **SCR Check Report**

EJ confirmed this has been completed with no actions,
15. **Membership of Governor Committees**

The vacancies on committees were shared. ALW was thanked for taking up a place on the F+P committee. Governors were asked to update EJ and EM of any other changes.
16. **Governor Committee Meetings**
  - a. Boarding Committee – 17/10/2024

MB updated on the most recent meeting – where the committee had visited the boarding houses and met with staff and students. He noted the stability of the workforce and the happiness of the students. Much time had been spent discussing the Ofsted Boarding Inspection Report – and in the end the committee had come to the view that there was everything to be celebrated, given there were no recommendations for improvement. The committee will work with the Assistant Head (Boarding) to ensure that the standards are maintained.
  - b. Finance and Personnel Committee – 11/9/2024

There were no additional updates.

c. Admissions Committee – 25/09/2024

Much of the admissions work was covered in the Head's Report. There has been focus on the process around in-year testing – with an new protocol which enables advance publication of dates as well as a timeline for marking and results release.

In response to ongoing lower uptake of the entrance test for in-catchment Y6 students, the Head has been asked to visit local primary schools.

The admissions test for Y7 is being reviewed to ensure it is relevant and makes the appropriate assessment of children.

d. Estates Development Committee – 09/10/2024

DW presented the update – the committee had been impressed with the exceptional quality of the work undertaken by the premises team over the summer to upgrade areas of the estate – some of this has been grant funded – and resulted in new classrooms and a new staff room with workspace for staff. The estates strategy has been reviewed and work going on to align the strategy with the SDP – with close alliance with the finance team. It was noted that there are areas of risk within the estate, particularly relating to the school heating system, and work is being done with NYC to escalate this.

17. **Governors with Specific Areas of Responsibility**

a. Child Protection and Safeguarding

EJ assured governors that she is having regular updates with the DSL and team. In assurance visits to school she continues to review safeguarding procedures, but also assess the culture of safeguarding within the general agenda.

There have been no safeguarding concerns raised to her since the start of term.

b. Inclusion Governor – this post is vacant

c. CEIAG

TCT reported that he would be visiting school this term and update at the next FGB. Mock interviews and careers fairs were in progress.

d. Staff Welfare – this post is vacant.

18. **Health and Safety**

no update

19. **Staff Training**

EJ agreed to circulate NYC governor training courses.

A SLT/governor strategy evening will be arranged for early in the Spring Term – JMW will circulate dates.

20. **Policies for approval**

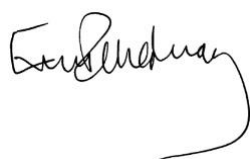
none

21. **Off site visits for approval**

none

22. **Date of next meeting – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 - 1730 hours**

23. Meeting closure 1955 hours



**Vice-Chair of Governors , 11 December 2024**