

HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION

GOVERNING BODY MINUTES SPRING TERM 2016

**MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2016 AT 6PM –
F6, HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL**

PRESENT: Mr Simon Kitchman
Mrs Sandra Thompson.
Mr Tony Brown
Mr Graeme Atkins (Executive Headteacher)
Mrs Barbara Hignett
Mr Patrick Ferguson
Mr David Hartland
Ms Sarah Kemp
Mrs Jo Grey

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Andy Byers (Head of School - Associate Member)
Mrs Judith Minto (Head of School - Associate Member)
Mrs Charlotte Gaines (Clerk to the Governors)

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

Items discussed under Part 1 of this agenda will not be classified as confidential: consequently the minutes and supporting documents should be made available to any person wishing to inspect them.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jonathan Holmes.

2. Declaration of personal or pecuniary interest in any agenda item

Governors declared that they had no pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Consider & Adopt Minutes of Governing Body Meetings

Minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to the Governors, were adopted and signed as a true record:

9 December 2015 (Part 1)

Matters arising from the minutes:

SKe asked if Christmas cards had gone out to staff. GA advised that they had not gone out because there were so many events taking place at the end of term. Governors discussed ensuring regular contact with staff at both schools. Governors agreed to delay the planned meeting for January with Hexham Middle School staff. GA/AB/JM to think of ways to link in with existing events.

GA/AB/JM

The three Governors due to update on Pay and Performance Committee will be meeting immediately after this meeting and will advise Governing Body of how they might incorporate input into target setting for Executive Headteacher's at next meeting.

JG/ST/TB

4. Executive Headteacher's reports

PF sought clarification on certain aspects of the QE report relating to Attainment 8 and attitudes to learning, which GA provided.

SKi noted that the improvements in chronological reading ages as a result of the Accelerated Reader programme were impressive.

Governors expressed reservations about the implementation of another policy as a result of a parental complaint at QEHS that was being dealt with. AB advised that this had been offered as part of the measures taken to resolve the complaint. JG asked what the nature of the complaint was. AB advised that it was regarding communication with parents who are separated.

PF queried the fact that there had been no reported instances of bullying in the first term at HMS. GA explained that he had questioned pastoral staff regarding this and they had given assurances as to its validity, and that it correlated with feedback from pupil panels to governors and SLT. Pupils consistently state that they do not have bullying concerns and they have confidence in reporting any concerns to adults at school should concerns arise. Governors with children at HMS stated that this reflected their own children's experiences. However, GA said he would ask pastoral leaders to re-visit with staff and pupils the importance of vigilance and reporting.

GA

BH asked how SLT ensure consistency across the Federation with regard to staff appraisal judgements, given that at QE there is typically external exam data whereas at HMS, outside of SATS data, there is not. GA explained that judgements at HMS were based on a combination of SATS where applicable, moderated progress data, progress seen in lessons and evidence in books, and that this did represent a sufficiently consistent approach with that taken at QE.

GA

SKe stated that it was nice that the HMS report had information that gave a flavour of school life beyond the classroom and requested that similar information be provided for QE.

GA

BH asked that an index of staff be provided to go with each report. GA stated that in future the full names of members of staff would be used in the first instance and then initials.

Governors acknowledged that the reports were being discussed in full at

Monitoring
Groups

their monitoring group meetings.

5. Governor Updates

Safeguarding minutes have been circulated and minutes of the Audit Committee are being drafted.

All

GA advised that staff have completed formal WRAP (workshop to raise awareness of Prevent) training. A link to online training that governors should undertake is being circulated by CG this week.

6. Curriculum

AB advised of proposed curriculum changes at QE. Reformed courses are more demanding with less coursework and more exams. AB referred to his circulated paper. It is proposed to reduce the number of options taken and shorten lessons to 50 minutes to increase the number of weekly periods to 30.

SKe questioned whether the number of options should be reduced given proposals regarding compulsory EBacc; students would only have the choice of one free option and this would have greatest impact on those wishing to take more subjects from the arts or second foreign languages. Governors discussed other ways of increasing the learning time for GCSEs, such as a three-year KS4. AB explained that this is problematic for a high school because students do not join until Year 9 and need time to consider options. AB advised that if the Ebacc proposal goes ahead, at least 90% of students will have to undertake this.

SKe and ST both questioned travelling time between lessons. AB explained that this had been built into the proposal. DH asked whether there would be an impact on A Level choices with fewer students taking options and following through. AB advised there could be but there are some subjects such as business studies that do not need to be undertaken at GCSE.

SKi commented that 50-minute lessons would enable staff preparation and planning time to be reduced. AB explained that this would be problematic, particularly as it would reduce the capacity for cover and mean that more supply would be needed which was likely to be more expensive overall.

All

Governors agreed to take the report away and to reach a decision at the additional governing body meeting on Wednesday 20 January.

7. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Part 1 of the meeting was concluded.

Governors moved to Part 2 of the agenda.

Chair

_____ **Date**