

HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION

GOVERNING BODY MINUTES SUMMER TERM 2016

MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2016 AT 6PM –  
A13 – QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr Andy Byers (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 Mrs Judith Minto.

**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:

20 April 2016 (Part 1)

**Matters arising from the minutes:**

GA advised that no further consideration had been given to the possible implementation of the Accelerated Reader programme at HMS but that he and JM would look at it on her return.



The QEHS monitoring group met on Wednesday 11 May. Minutes are currently being drafted and will be circulated once they are approved.

#### 4. Governor updates

##### HMS Monitoring Group

The HMS monitoring group met on May 4. Literacy across the curriculum and teaching and learning reports have been circulated. The meeting considered achievement and progress data. Governors noted that the new assessment system is enabling them to have a much better handle on attainment and progress across subjects and year groups. SKi and JG will arrange to meet with GA separately to go through the data in more detail.

SKi/JG/GA

SKe asked what had been the view in school about the SATs. GA advised that some papers had been perceived as more challenging than others, notably reading, and that this seemed to be a common perspective across schools. GA explained that he was satisfied that the preparations had been thorough. Raw results will be available on 5 July 2016 and will be issued to pupils and parents that week. It is likely to be well into the Autumn Term before governors have a meaningful sense as to the quality of the school's outcomes in relation to the national picture.

SKe asked how things were going generally at HMS, particularly given JM's absence. GA reported that things were continuing to operate smoothly. He has increased his day-to-day presence at HMS but commented that there is now sufficient strength in depth, across senior and middle leadership as well as the wider staff, enabling JM's absence to be accommodated without any drop in standards.

JH asked if updated attendance data had been circulated and GA reminded governors that the information is in the recent Executive Headteacher's report.

Regarding the minutes of the triangulation meeting with QEHS pastoral leaders, BH asked whether any conclusions had been drawn in relation to the lack of availability of practical subjects. SKi commented that few school sixth forms offer practical subjects and that provision for these is often better resourced at FE colleges.

BH asked whether any action was being taken to address the concern about how some staff address behavioural issues. GA advised that the pastoral team are aware of where particular issues may exist and do provide support where necessary, and that the effectiveness of this is revisited from time to time. Dave Todd, Assistant Headteacher, had recently presented on the impact of the revised approach to managing behaviour at an SLT meeting and all the indications are that it is proving effective and is being typically well-used by staff.

JG sought clarification regarding the note in the minutes that co-chairs would write to individuals facing possible dismissal due to ill health to express gratitude for service to the school. JG was concerned that this might be read as implying a dismissal decision had been made. SKi gave assurances that this was not the case.

JG also advised caution over the occasional identification of staff by job title in the minutes. SKi stated that the notes had to contain enough



information to enable governors not in attendance to know what had been discussed. All agreed that minutes must be written whilst being mindful of confidentiality. It was agreed the minutes of the QEHS monitoring group's meeting on 11 May would be redrafted accordingly.

JH/GA

JG suggested data protection training for all governors.

#### **Audit Committee**

TB advised that Sarah Sparke, Business Manager, has investigated various finance systems. PS Financials appears to be the most appropriate system and is the same one used by KEVI. The cost will be £24,175 which should be covered by the Academy Conversion Grant, whether or not governors make the decision to convert. Sarah has negotiated a £2,900 discount on the upfront costs and £400 on the annual costs. There is an option for a cloud version but the costs of this are disproportionately high although this can be added later if required. The purchase of the new system has been approved by the Audit Committee and was duly noted by the Full Governing Body.

#### **Safeguarding Group**

There has been no additional safeguarding meeting since the last meeting of the FGB.

JH informed governors an HMS pupil had been contacted online by an adult posing as a young girl. The situation was dealt with appropriately and other partnership schools have been informed. One issue the matter raised was how quickly the school can communicate with all parents, when some are not on Parentmail. This is being looked at including the possible use of text messaging to parents.

#### **Other Governor Visits and updates**

ST advised Governors that the police had been called to HMS on Sunday due to youths on the roof of the buildings and asked what the school's liability would be in the case of an accident. JH advised that if a person is a trespasser then they would be liable. It is believed that the students are from the high school so if we can identify them then it can be addressed in school. JH informed governors that GA and JM had met with police regarding trespass and they assured her that they would respond as required. Any incidents should be fed to GA, and JM on her return.

ST thanked all governors for their contribution to the work of the Audit Committee and monitoring groups.

### **5. MAT update**

ST asked GA to provide an update on the consultation on conversion to academy status. The academy order has been granted and an e-mail received from Anita Turnbull following the meeting of Headteachers' Board had been very complimentary.

Presentations have taken place with both staff and parents. Around 150 people attended the staff briefing. Turnout at the parent presentations was low: 20 attended at QEHS and 10 at HMS. Questions were noted with responses to all received within the consultation period to be made

available. 34 consultation responses have been received so far. The deadline is 13 June.

Freedom of information requests have been received both at the DfE, asking for the application form and associated documents, and at QE regarding financial forecasts. These are being responded to.

SKi asked governors if they had heard any informal feedback. JG commented that she had not heard of any at HMS, SKe spoke to one grandparent who was quite hostile to the idea of academisation until the reasons were explained to her. SKe is aware of a Facebook group "Heart of Hexham" and a Momentum meeting regarding academisation.

The working party met with Jamie Otter, advisor from Browne Jacobson, to discuss various issues. Key points to report to governors were:

1. The articles of association, commercial transfer agreement, funding agreement and lease details will be issued in draft format for agreement in principle at an additional a meeting of the FGB on 29 June.
2. It is suggested that official appointment of the trustees takes place at the September meeting of the Governing Body.
3. A name needs to be chosen for the proposed Academy.

Regarding the latter point above, governors had submitted name suggestions to CG in advance, for discussion at this meeting.

Governors voted for their top 3 suggested names to create a shortlist of 4 names, and then voted for their preferred choice, to be followed by 'Learning Trust'. Votes were as follows:

Tynedale/Tyne Valley	2
Hadrian	8
1599	0
Charter	0

GA suggested that following the end of consultation on 13 June, the working party will meet to prepare a draft report for governors. There will need to be an extraordinary meeting of the Full Governing Body at the end of June for a decision to be taken. Governors agreed 29 June 2016.

## 6. Any Other Business

The School Improvement Partner, Chris Cottam, will be in QEHS and HMS on 24 and 25 May respectively. The times for governors' meetings with her will be circulated shortly.

CG advised Governors that there was a need to change the signatories for the bank accounts

**HMS School Fund with HSBC** – Remove Susan Hope and add Sarah Spark, Federation Business Manager, as Signatory. The mandate needs to be signed by the co-Chairs and the Executive Headteacher. The mandate was duly signed by ST, SKi and GA.

**QEHS School Fund with Lloyds** – Remove Helen Bailey, Neil Morrison and Susan Hope and add Graeme Atkins, Executive Headteacher, James Andriot, Deputy Headteacher, and Sarah Sparke, Federation Business Manager. The mandate needs to be signed by two existing signatories.

Part 1 of the meeting was concluded.

Governors moved to Part 2 of the agenda.

  
15.6.16

Chair  
Date