

The Knights Templar School

Minutes of the Governors' Meeting held on Monday 25th March 2013

Please note : these minutes will be corrected, if necessary, and approved at the next meeting. Meanwhile, they will be treated as accurate, so please read them carefully and let the Clerk know if you notice any significant errors.

If you want to raise items at the next meeting, they can be included on the agenda if GKY gets them by the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting on Monday 13th May 2013. In the case of an urgent item which arises after that date, please let him know anyway, to help in planning the timing of the meeting.

1. **Members Present** : Mike Boxall (MBL), John Swift (JST), Sue Welch (SWH), Jane Millett (JMT), Julie Mutter (JMR), Andrew Pickering (APG), Sarah Barker (SBR), Richard Picking (RPG), Jo Johnson (JJN), Brian Williams (BWS), Graham Kingsley (GKY), Chris Gough (CGH), Ian Burrows (IBS), Ann Brown (ABN), Judith Balsom (JBM), Alan Church (ACH), Paul Barnett (PBT), Wendy Hepburn (WHN), Janet Wallace (JWE), Alison Atkinson (AAN), David Cook (DCK)
 - 1.1. Apologies for Absence : Maria Lukianowicz, Dari Samsami, Mark Overton
2. **School Data Dashboard** : All information and presentation shown by IBS will accompany these Minutes and will be sent by email to all Governors **Action : JCE**
 - 2.1. The Yellow sheet attached is a statement from the DoE. The following page provides information on similar schools; ie those schools with a similar key stage point score when entering. Our entry point score is 29.2, we emailed the DoE to see who our similar schools were and they refused to respond to our email; therefore the only way to find out was to search all data in the public domain searching schools until we found one with similar data - ie Tring School - please see information on the yellow sheet provided at the meeting.
3. IBS gave an extended presentation as to the meaning and significance of the data, and also of the much more detailed analysis and interventions used at KTS, at school, department, class, teacher and individual pupils' levels. This includes contacts and visits to other schools by senior staff.
 - 3.1. PBT : Have we sent anyone to Sandringham? SBR confirmed this. Sandringham start with data and tracking from Year 7 and intervention is started early.
 - 3.2. PBT asked about the projected mock grades for the summer? IBS said around mid 70's. JWE said prediction is looking higher than mid 70's. APG said we are looking at 78-80 being our target.
 - 3.3. RPG said data only analyses historical data, it needs revisiting. A fundamental change is needed to get students more engaged: a change in approach?
 - 3.4. IBS said maybe both are needed.
 - 3.5. IBS said we should identify some of the better performing schools in the County and organise IBS or SBR to do more visits. The County assessment team highlighted us as one of the better schools at analysing data and putting plans into place. We entertained the Deputy Head from Mount Grace in Potters Bar where she was looking at what we have in place and invited us back.
 - 3.6. SWH asked about sharing good practice between departments? SBR said this is allocated within the calendar but we have lost some of them but this is definitely something we need to revisit. We are piloting a coaching programme as part of sharing good ideas etc.
 - 3.7. PBT said one school uses Wednesday morning to feedback best practice to all staff. Takes 15 minutes. IBS said this was a good idea.
 - 3.8. DCK said there has been some excellent analysis. He stressed the difference between understanding it and making effective changes to change data. We perhaps need to find some way of different interventions **Action : SLT**
 - 3.9. IBS said biggest and most detailed document is subject by subject. He agrees with DCK and RPG. Our changes this year are better than the year before, but agree that we need to do something more radical.
 - 3.10. DCK asked what is going on in the classroom. There needs to be consistent and persistent monitoring in the classrooms. He feels most dialogue about mechanics, not enough about how you are getting into classrooms and identifying standards.
 - 3.11. IBS said to be fair this is just a snapshot, and certainly not a complete list.
 - 3.12. DCK said when this information has been digested and absorbed, it should be revisited again.

- 3.13. MBL feels we need to relate interventions to expected improvements in performance – we need to revisit the SIP and make it much more a results driven exercise. He is meeting with Mr Farina later this week. When describing most interventions most were pupil centred. We know from P&P that repeated issue is homework, Moodle is also one of those issues.
 - 3.14. IBS will be sending out an email to HOF and HOD on Wednesday addressing issues where subject heads are not completing tasks. At the moment any member of staff not completed intervention plans or faculty procedure, SLT expect to take to task.
 - 3.15. APG said he understands MBL's point and agrees that there is a large amount of school variation. The second point of our extensive list is about interventions with pupils, one of the things we are attempting to tackle is accountability, this applies to all staff.
 - 3.16. GKY asked about the accuracy of KS2 results. He said if a primary school was very good at SATs then those children would show different levels of progress at KTS. We need to compare value added at KS4 with respect to what primary school they went to.
 - 3.17. IBS said we have three grades - one is grade achieved in mocks, second is target (prior attained), third teacher's professional judgement. Can't ignore target as government will use calculated target but for info the intervention plans analysis was against current performance/against teacher's expectations.
4. **Parents Association Report (Mark Overton)** : Mark was absent from the meeting but reported that the Charity Commission have confirmed the PA Annual Return for the year 2012, and issued a Certificate of Registration and Compliance.
5. **The Declaration of pecuniary or other interest** form was completed.
 6. **Governors' contacts with the school** : the list was circulated.
 7. **Notification of urgent 'other business' items arising since 14th March** - none.
 8. **Minutes of Meeting held on 12th February 2013** were agreed as a true record.
9. **Matters arising not otherwise on the Agenda** : DCK - sixth form issue 12.1.21 wondered whether we would benefit from a more in-depth discussion. GKY said is there a report we can do as to what forms their decisions on this? APG said yes. This will be an agenda item at a future meeting **Action : APG**

10. Financial Update

- 10.1. Budget Progress - Monthly monitoring report for February was circulated. Budget tracking within plan at the halfway point in the year. Staffing costs pleasingly within budget. Repairs and maintenance a bit overspent versus profile but can be scaled back during second half of year. Water costs overspent due to leaks relating to our heating failure. We had not allocated enough for staff recruitment costs which are set to be closer to £30k, not the £15k allocated.
- 10.2. Sports Centre - Profitability of Sports Centre has taken a hit due to 14 snow days in January meaning the AWP has been closed with a subsequent loss of revenue. Actual YTD profits of £35.1k are below budget of £36.6k for the 11 months to end of February.
- 10.3. GKY expressed his thanks to JST and all other members of the Finance team.

11. Governing Body Items :

- 11.1. Governor Development Coordinator (CGH) : Two governors have attended the induction course. CGH and JMT are attending an Anti-Bullying course in May. SBR said statutory safeguarding training is coming up, governors do not have to attend this training as they have their own safeguarding training sessions which are slightly different. CGH said Governors should be attending safeguarding training and SWH mentioned that this is hoping to be done at the Baldock Forum Governor Training in July **Action : SWH**
- 11.2. Teacher Governors (JWE) : Staff morale is low. Staff Committee requested a meeting with APG last Friday to talk about staff feelings. Lengthy discussion and staff will wait and see what outcome of that meeting will be and how APG/SLT/Governors can help. It is worse than normal, not a good time of year anyway but a lot of information impacts on how staff feel. GKY felt there was not much that Governors could do.
 - 11.2.1. APG said interventions need an enormous amount of staff commitment; we ought to be looking at things differently but staff are working harder to try to get very positive results from students.
 - 11.2.2. JBM asked where the line was drawn - why is morale low and at what point should governors be involved.

- 11.2.3. JWE said staff are under pressure with results, and are working collectively more hours than they have ever done. There is a large revision timetable for Easter holidays including controlled assessments and marking coursework. In terms of work she does not think staff could work much harder. WHN said was she suggesting it is worse than usual at this time of year?
- 11.2.4. APG said when he has spoken to local Heads in secondary schools staff morale is low at present. The teaching profession is under a great deal of pressure, it is difficult to know how to alleviate this whilst remaining on the ball with results.
- 11.2.5. JWE said teaching staff pay freezes, pensions etc., all add to the way staff feel.
- 11.2.6. DCK explained it is the same for anyone in the public sector. JBM felt that as part of being an Academy this should have freed up the school from external influences.
- 11.2.7. APG said “freedom” on pay and conditions are pretty illusory in terms of national context. By September this year performance related pay in schools will become statutory. Being an Academy makes no difference. Ofsted wanted to know performance management data for staff within school.
- 11.2.8. WHN asked that as a Governor she would want it confirmed by SLT that what we are hearing is primarily down to external forces and nothing else that we are responsible for in the school.
- 11.2.9. GKY suggested P&P to discuss this? **Action : P&P Meeting**
- 11.2.10. Support Staff Governor (BWS) : Support staff meeting last Thursday, support staff have not had a pay rise for 5 years. Some barely just above minimum wage of £6.19 per hour. P&P need to explore this too. County wide pay scales? SWH: can BWS come to next P&P meeting **Action : P&P Committee and BWS to attend**

12.School Redevelopment Update (APG) : New block is on target. JST & APG are meeting contractors tomorrow. We would like to organise a tour for governors, probably about May, when construction is finished. Planning permission has been granted for phases 2 and 3 - science and D&T building. We did not have a single objection. We find out next month whether we have been successful in our £4m bid. Good news regarding caretaker's cottage - ACH will report on Premises Committee discussion. JST, IBS, GKY, APG meeting with County to discuss expansion. Meeting Chief Planning Officer this week, recent consultation in area re future housing plans has set things in motion. APG meeting next term with Andrew Young and other local councillors to put school's position forward; GKY to be involved also.

12.1. DCK – regarding new block, he thinks it is a real credit to us that we are on time/on budget.

13.Reports

13.1. Head's Report (APG) : Studio Schools: lack of consultation, cooperation, consideration or sensible planning. He spoke to Director of Education. That view is shared by other schools locally. Admission numbers positive. First year under new admission criteria. Set up for next few years, until increasing numbers force further decisions.

- 13.1.1. JBM remarked on recent “boys motivation” talk - is it time to look into this more deeply to see if there is something we need to be doing?
- 13.1.2. APG – The boy/girl gap has definitely widened, become an issue in the last 3-4 years. Need to be looking at how we teach children in terms of results overall and pupils in school that are male.
- 13.1.3. AAN : next year not target all boys?
- 13.1.4. APG said feeling amongst staff is that session benefitted some boys more than others - many of them felt it was useful, some of them felt they didn't need this. We can identify underachieving students, therefore target those students rather than all students.
- 13.1.5. SBR said we will do it earlier next year and Dan Pallett will do it earlier.
- 13.1.6. JMR – do girls need this motivational talk? Will it be the same? SBR - boys talk would be different.
- 13.1.7. JWE said we want to differentiate high achieving that are underachieving, and underachieving who were not achieving.
- 13.1.8. AAN said it would worry her to think that if students are classed as ‘high achievers’ they are not able to access the same information/strategies.
- 13.1.9. WHN asked if there was a growing problem with girls?
- 13.1.10. APG said no, comments from parents though, asking why girls were excluded.
- 13.1.11. Parents evenings: DCK re the booking system: parents may want to talk to all science subject teachers; it is still a concern to some parents of GCSE pupils not having opportunity to see each teacher.

- 13.1.12. APG discussed with whole staff last week the possibility of an electronic system – the trialled evening was very successful. We need to allow parents more access to staff than has happened in the past.
- 13.1.13. JJN asked if the homework on line would be compulsory and APG said yes.
- 13.2. Baldock Forum (APG/GKY) : Each term meeting of Baldock Forum represents local schools including Weston Way Nursery and Brandles School (Head and Chair) to discuss matters of common interest. This is valued by all those who take part in getting to know how education system looks from everyone. Meeting took place earlier this term and forum felt it was a worthwhile way to spend an evening. An annual Baldock Area Governor Training Session is planned for July organised by SWH. SWH said on the school calendar it says the session has been cancelled but it hasn't. Not sure of location yet, will let you know at a later date **Action** : **SWH**
- 13.3. Minuting Committees : who does it, and style of minutes? Difficult to persuade people to write minutes. Suggestion whether spending some money to get somebody to come to committees to take minutes and circulate for which we would pay. Do you feel good way of spending money?
- 13.3.1. SWH : on Agenda sometimes our minutes for committees are not as detailed as Ofsted would want in terms of knowing that people have questioned/challenged evidence etc. Difficult to be in a committee and join in fully if taking minutes.
- 13.3.2. GKY agreed that we were probably not shown in the minutes as being as challenging as Governors ought to be; probably a fault of minuting rather than fault of performance.
- 13.3.3. JST said Minutes are scrutinised in the audit as well, but only Board and F&GP. APG said SWH's suggestion is that minutes are taken like F&GP and Board.
- 13.3.4. Generally agreed to move ahead with this probably from September. Pay local authority rates.
- 13.4. Teaching and Learning Committee (MLZ) : MBL : two things - excellent presentation on plans for rebooting science agenda from Ben Chantrell; secondly for future discussion work on Link Governors Scheme.
- 13.4.1. WHN mentioned the list of link governors is incorrect. **Action** : **WHN to tell Maria**
- 13.4.2. DCK is concerned about achievement for disadvantaged pupils, and is keen to make sure something practical that allows children who don't have access to computers do have access at school.
- 13.4.3. APG said 96/97% of students have internet access at home. We can make provision for students to do this at school. We need to meet the needs of those individual families.
- 13.5. Premises, Health & Safety Committee (ACH) : JST and ACH met with County re site managers house; positive meeting. Report now hoping to be received by June giving us permission to sell the site, highly likely proceeds will come direct to school and permission to build new property on area we are thinking about. Caretaker has been offered a house temporarily, pending building of new.
- 13.5.1. GKY commended ACH and JST for their work on this issue.
- 13.6. Pupils & Personnel Committee with 6th form liaison (SWH/RPG) - nothing more to say than is in the minutes.
- 13.7. Appointment of community governors (see attached proposal).
- 13.7.1. DCK suggested voting takes place at a meeting, but if you cannot attend the meeting, you are allowed to contact the Clerk and let them know who they would like to vote for.
- 13.7.2. GKY felt this was a good idea? – nobody against. We will adopt that as our method of working. ACH likes the system we have at present and is easily understood - one thing - at the time when know vacancy coming up know what skills we are looking for in anyone that might become a governor.
- 13.7.3. GKY suggested a first step of allowing governors to decide whether they wanted an election, or just to reappoint the current incumbent. SWH said the problem with that is if governing body decide they don't want that person then they know nobody wants them. ACH said he would rather be rejected at a vote with other candidates; APG would commend the simple process.
- 13.7.4. JJN said 100 words could do with being increased to 150? This was agreed.
- 13.7.5. It was agreed that SWH will update the procedure to allow for "absentee voting" and the 150 words. JCE will be asked to start the process when a community governor is nearing 3 months from the end of their current term. **Action** : **SWH and JCE**
- 13.8. Finance and General Purposes Committee (GKY) : Had minutes; nothing to add.
14. **DCK has offered** his expertise on site and building matters.
15. **Dates, times and topics of SLT Planning meetings in the Summer Term** : 29th April to discuss budgeting (classes, staffing etc). **Action** : **ALL - let JCE know if you wish to attend**
16. **Next meeting** : Thursday 23rd May 2013
17. **Any Other Business** as agreed at start of meeting – none.