



The John Fisher School

Teaching, Learning & Standards Committee Part A Minutes – 9th October 2024

Governors	Category	Attendance
Ms G Grabowski (GG) Chair	Foundation Governor	Present
Ms S Nasser (SN) Vice Chair	LA Governor	Present
Ms J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Present
Mr D Fox (DF)	Foundation Governor	Absent
Father Francis Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr T Richmond (TR)	Co-opted Governor	Present
Mrs M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr R Teague (RT)	Headteacher, Ex-Officio	Present
Mr A Theobald (AT)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Absent
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present
Ms Anita McGowan (AMc)	Foundation Governor	Absent

Attendees

Mr D Jackson (DJ)	-	Head of Sixth Form
Mrs J Beeson (JB)	-	Croydon Education Partnership Clerk

MINUTES		
1.	Apologies for absence & declarations of interest Apologies for absence were received from AMc, ATi - these were accepted. Apologies were received from DF, and he was preparing for a CSI inspection which took precedence. FFM opened the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was quorate. There were no declarations of interests.	
2.	Minutes from the meeting on 9th July 2024 The document was taken as read. GG went through page by page. AT queried that it was noted in the minutes he sent apologies; however, he was present at the meeting. JB agreed to check this and respond – ACTION. The minutes of 9.7.24 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and approved by all governors. The actions are agenda items or carried forward.	1.
4.	Update on Sixth Form (presented by DJ – document distributed) (It was agreed this agenda item would be moved to allow DJ to leave afterwards)	
4.1	DJ outlined they were focussing on 4 key areas – numbers and comparisons; entry criteria and retainment; JFS's USP as part of marketing the sixth form; finances.	
4.2	Numbers and comparisons – the school enrolled 126 students, of which 116 were internal and 8 external students. Of these, 92 opted for 3 subjects and 34 for 4 subjects.	



	As of today, there are 103 students. 23 withdrawal notifications came on results day, 10 of these to go to colleges, 5 to go to local grammar schools, the remainder were various reasons. However, DJ said they were pleased to see that, on a like-for-like basis, the number enrolled was higher than last year. There are 111 in Y13, but this was prior to the English and Maths criteria had been applied, which had this been the case would have meant there were 94 in Y13. As such on a like-for-like basis the numbers have increased by 9.	
4.3	The A level results were much better with double the number of A* grades and an increase on every measure. However, DJ offered a word of caution that the predictions for this forthcoming year were not positive which he attributed to the continuing apathy of the year group, so he said the school must brace itself for a dip, but would take the necessary actions to rectify. The interventions the school is putting in place to address this and bridge the gap take account of the fact that the current Y13 cohort enrolled under the previous entry criteria so they are working to build a new culture but there is still work to be done. The apathy is embedded together with a large number of confrontational parents – DJ gave examples linked to exclusions since the beginning of term. He stressed, however, this was not typical of the whole parent cohort. This is a lower ability cohort than the 23/24 GCSE cohort on every measure, in that only 60% are of the more able and talented retained. In the current Y12 they have retained many of those with higher GCSE scores and with a higher percentage expressing a desire to go on to university. Only 62 of the 111 in Y13 have expressed this interest and of those 15 are still unsure what they want to do. This compares with 85 of the 103 in the current Y12 who have been explicit and reaffirmed their wish to go to university.	
4.4	There are academic interventions at subject level and a more holistic approach which the school uses – and Employability Record. This ranks out of 5 on 5 measures – attendance; punctuality; attitude to learning; conduct and behaviour; presentation. Parents can see if their child is on par, above or below. This was trialled last year and they had the difficult conversations including meeting with the lowest ranked 15 and their parents. The system resets termly so pupils can reset if they had a negative previous term and equally not dine out on a positive term. In terms of the correlation between this and end results it showed what the school had expected, the higher the ER ranking the higher the grades. They will continue to target these non-academic elements, particularly behaviour, not just the academic elements.	
4.5	The UCAS comparison this year was much stronger. In 2024, 98 of the 110 students represented an increase on 75 from the previous cohort. Of these there were 8 Oxbridge applications (4 the previous year) which resulted in 4 interviews and 1 place at Cambridge. There were fewer Russell Group applications but double the number of places – 27 of 57 applications secured places (14 of 65 the previous year). 69 of 98 who applied to universities secured their first choice destination. Of the 98, 10 did not follow through on the application i.e. they failed to respond to the offer. 11 secured their insurance place and 9 went through clearing and upscaled. This year's UCAS applications so far – 1 application for Cambridge; and the others already put through are all for Russell Group universities as one of the options.	
4.6	Entry criteria – the aim is to increase the quality and quantity in the sixth form. However, the school is	



	conscious that if they go too far too quickly for quality this will have an impact on the finances due to the reduced numbers.	
4.7	The school faces various challenges, in that they compete with 3 local boys' grammar schools (one of which has increased their numbers in the 6th form); the shrinking demographic; the 2023 headline figures were not good and therefore influenced potential students; the change of government has not reversed the many changes of the previous government made at KS5, they have only paused them for review. The school's offer deadline is 6.12.24. therefore, this is unlikely to be announced before then (DJ expanded on the 2 tier KS5 post 16 structure)	
4.8	The school cannot offer T levels as they do not have the infrastructure; they cannot compete with the grammar schools because they are not taking from a selective pool. Therefore, DJ proposed that the school plans to offer its unique USP namely the school's support in preparing students for university really well. Good feedback has been received this year from parents about this element of the school's support. Therefore, he and Mr Webb have made it their mission to develop this further. The USP is that JF is the place to come for the best chance to get into the university of choice and upscaling through clearing.	
4.9	DJ said they knew they were up against challenges and that the entry criteria had to be challenging enough to get the right students but not off-putting to apply. All the teachers had their own views about the appropriate levels, therefore he had looked at a Cambridge study from 2018, recognising this was not a perfect study, but 2 things were worth noting – retention of students and end grade from starting point. He said the table presented showed 2 things – the subjects boys are most likely to take is where they end up achieving the lowest (these are maths, sciences and other STEM), he gave the example of with a starting point of physics at grade 6 leads to only 24% with a B grade at A level, compared with in art 50% achieving a B grade. DJ said that with boys having the vision of getting to university and £40K tuition fees, the school has a moral duty to get them to a reputable university. For this they would need an average B grade. As a result, the school intends to introduce that the boys must have a minimum grade 7 in STEM and grade 6 in the other subjects to study them at A level from September 25. All the BTECs require a grade 5. Because boys are most likely to take STEM there will be the caveat that if they only take a single STEM subject, they may enter on a grade 6, but for 2 subjects it must be a 7. The subjects identified in the study are those where boys had the best chance of higher grades were computing, sociology and art – at JF these were all in the same block last year.	
4.10	This year the school will identify itself as a university provider, they will not say if pupils do not want to go to university they are not welcome, but will suggest that if the student is not considering university they might wish to consider other providers. It is important that the students go to the right place for them.	
4.11	The prospectus has been rewritten. DJ welcomed governors to have a look. Each subject had a case study from a boy in university with the target of 'aim high'.	
4.12	As part of the UCAS offer to get the grades, it had been previously left too much to preconceptions about good subject combinations. They wanted to dispel this.	
4.13	BTECs still have a strong role to play. The triple sport option had previously been marketed as a way to stay here if there was no access to anything else. However, DJ suggested it should be marketed for example to those students wanting to do physiotherapy because of the focus on sports injuries.	



	In terms of recruitment they remain hopeful of retaining higher ability students. The plan had been to have the grade 4 in English and Maths then to add in a set number of GCSE passes. However, this will now be held for this year because of the competition with grammar schools, but it will be reviewed annually.	
4.14	Due to the school's USP they hope to attract students who are academically gifted but do not know what to do with the UCAS process. The school does not have the same high class sizes. Also they can invite parents in to explain the process. They will feel in safer hand with JF. The anticipation this will strike the balance between quality and quantity. DJ said this is also in the context of funding and not to be a drain on the school. He suggested various areas of funding:- • Those studying 2 science or more attract an additional £600 because sciences are more expensive to deliver. Therefore allowing grade 6 for a single science will increase the number of students opting for this. • Maths attracts an additional £900 each year. • There is a core maths programme which could be offered to those students not taking maths A level. It is close as an equivalent to the EPQ (extended project qualification). There is £900 funding per student for the lessons being delivered over 6 weeks in one year or 2 weeks over 2 years. There would be questions on the resource on how to deliver this option, but it is being investigated. However, modelled on this Y12 there are 60 students not taking maths A levels, so if they could find a way to introduce it, this equates to £54000.	
4.15	DJ said they are working with RT to do both the boys justice but also with an eye on finances. They are looking at all the ways they can gain from the current cohort as well as extending the numbers in the 6th form. A governor asked if there are comparative university figures for Wallington Boys and the other competitor schools? DJ said this was not available without their consent. However, he thought it likely they would focus on their Oxbridge numbers. A governor commented that one of the school's USPs was the small class sizes compared to colleges. She also asked if they will potentially look to offer the core maths qualification to this Y12 when they are in Y13? DJ replied the model planned is to offer it to Y12 because the funding is for one year group, but they might be able to look to apply it to this cohort retrospectively. The governor added this would be a definite benefit to the boys as maths was so important. Another governor commented this qualification also counts for university points. DJ confirmed that it was worth 4 UCAS points less than the EPQ. The governors thanked DJ for his report. <i>(DJ left the meeting)</i>	
3.	In depth analysis of A level and GCSE results <i>(papers distributed)</i>	



3.1	Governors split into pairs for an exercise to look at 3 questions based on the data:- 1. What questions about the data do we ask as governors? 2. What key actions do we expect to see from the school based on the data? 3. How do we monitor those actions against the data provided? 3.2 The questions governors raised after the exercise were:- 1. What has changed since last year? 2. How do the results compare to national and local figures? 3. What is the greatest area of concern for the school? 4. Given the different pupil group data, how does the school ensure equal prioritisation? 5. What are the percentiles? 6. How does the school explain the Attainment 8 (A8) in the Indian ethnic group being marked red – this is unexpected? 7. What is the school most proud of? 8. What has happened to the 7+ progress? 9. How does the school plan to manage the dip in 7+ and avoid it happening again? 10. How is the school addressing significant underperforming departments? Are they checking that the staffing in those departments is appropriate? 11. Will there be increased rigour by HoDs in departments which are underperforming in exam results? 12. Will there be an improvement to achieve a consistent approach across the school? 3.3 In terms of looking at how as governors they monitor progress, it was agreed that getting regular input from staff (as with this evening from DJ) with presentations and the option to question them, informs them. Likewise, the importance of data and outcomes keeps governors abreast of the situation. A governor said they felt that training the governors about data for the school but also getting the context of the wider community was important and ensures they can ask in depth questions. 3.4 RT picked up on the questions posed:- 1. What has changed? – he referred governors to page 2 of the data with the A8 and P8 which give a flavour of the shift. Whilst A8 has not massively improved the P8 takes account of the improvement from -0.03 to 0.31. This represents a change from the 53rd to the 28th percentile - a leapfrog of around 1000 schools. These have not yet been published by FFT but they will be by Christmas. 2. How compare with national picture? – the benefit of FFT is that it takes the majority of schools and pools the data to achieve the P8 and percentile measure of value added A governor commented that this would make the school above average, but not well above average, whereas last year it was only broadly average. 3. The Indian group had high attainment but were statistically poor in that FFT take the contextual national number for a high achieving group. At 6.7 this is still well above average. A8 is the weighted score on the EBacc, whereas P8 looks at the prior attainment at KS2 and looks at what would have been expected. A governor added that schools are judged by grade 5+ by the Ofsted inspectors, whereas 4 relates to an average pass grade. 4. How do they ensure no groups fall behind? – RT said they monitor progress across the year and
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have rigorous interventions by each subject to pick up where students are dipping. They work a high to low chart and know how well they have done on P8 value added. There are no group with a minus value and several with a positive value. The subjects where there is negative value- added would be music but this is not statistically significant because of the size of the cohort.

A governor asked if they understand the reason in the various subjects where this is the case?

RT responded that it was a case of staffing in the 3 areas. Drama, they had been unable to recruit and so had covered internally. Music, the Head of Music was on maternity leave and there had been a fixed term replacement where there had been some challenges but that person had now left. Food tech – this was the strongest area last year, but the teacher left in summer 23 and they had problems recruiting someone and the person appointed was an excellent teacher but not a specialist. They now have a very experienced Head of food tech person in place. Most other subjects have shown improvement.

A governor pointed out this information supported the fact that specialist teachers at secondary schools, and particularly for A level, were very important.

5. The low percentage at grade 7+ - RT said this had been a longstanding problem at the school. They had not been good at achieving higher grades, compared with across Sutton. Historically they had got 4-5s and then grades fell off a cliff. They had been focused this year and it had born fruit. The most significant negative P8 last year had been the high prior attainment group which had gone up.
6. What were they most proud of? – RT said it was the improvement on last year, the teachers were targeting the boys with higher prior attainment and they had done better, while those with lower prior attainment continued to excel. Things were moving in the right direction for those across the ability range.

A governor observed it was important to reflect the way governors question the SLT and what their expectations should be. Governors must remember they have to be strategic.

A governor* commented that she had some concerns about changing the criteria for 6th form for those currently doing double science as to whether they would be able to do science at A level. This felt unfair to change it when they have chosen double or triple last year. This requirement might be too much change too quickly.

RT agreed it was difficult but they had to strike a balance between inclusivity and the need to ensure that the pupils are prepared for A level science.

Another governor said that most 6th forms require a grade 7 for science.

A governor commented that STEM subjects demand academic rigour, so they have a moral duty to allow students only onto the right courses.

RT said that they have the lowest entry criteria in Sutton for the 6th form. On the one hand they want to be as inclusive as possible and want the students to benefit from what they can offer them. It is a comprehensive intake in Y7 but the prior attainment rate has skewed down in Y12. If this is allowed to continue it would result in the school not having a 6th form at all. Some comprehensive school 6th forms do better than the grammar schools, they could do that at JF but only if they take the first steps. The current Y12 intake has balanced grades but last year's was skewed lower.

The Chair pointed out that the discussion was becoming a parent/Headteacher issue rather than a governing board one.



	(*the governor emailed after the meeting to say she had checked the science entry criteria for the current year, which had been grade 7, therefore her concerns were allayed.)	
5. AOB		
5.1	A governor commented it was incumbent on all governors to ensure the safety in school of the students. He commented that the scenario at the exit and outside the school gate with the traffic with the driving and parking of the parents was a cause for concern and potentially harm will be inflicted on the pupils. RT explained there had been an incident 2 weeks ago but it was a one-off and they had put measures in place. They had made the change last year that the boys could exit either at the front or back of the school as they want, both exits are supervised. They are very reliant on the 127 bus in Foxley lane which causes some issues, so they are trying to spread the load over different bus services. He acknowledged that traffic in the roads around the school is an ongoing problem. The Chair said this was operational and RT would address this with the SLT with action brought back to the FGB - ACTION.	2.
5.2	A governor pointed out the flooding in Foxley Lane was dreadful and she was concerned about the boys coming into school with very wet shoes.	
	TLS committee meeting dates this academic year - Wednesday 20th November 2024 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 5th February 2025 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 26th March 2025 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 14th May 2025 @ 5.30pm - Tuesday 1st July 2025 @ 5.30pm FGB meetings:- - Wednesday 27th November 2024 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 2nd April 2025 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 9th July 2025 @ 5.30pm	
	Closure of meeting FFM closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting closed at 7.05pm	

New and Outstanding Actions list 2024-25:-

	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 9.10.24					
1.	JB to investigate and respond re AT attendance at 9.7.24 meeting.	JB	Immediate	Email 10.10.24	Closed
2.	RT to report back to FGB on traffic issues	RT	FGB 27.11.24	-	Open

Outstanding Actions list 2023-4

	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 20.2.24					



2	Impact assessment of the enrichment programme	RT	July 24		open
Meeting of 14.5.24					
2.	Post-results action plan and next steps report for governors	RT / NO	Sept 24	Agenda item 9.10.24	closed
3.	Training for governors on the use of data	RT / NO	Sept 24	Agenda item 9.10.24	Closed
6.	RT to ask the Head of Literacy to investigate local authority adult literacy courses and signpost these to all parents.	RT	a.s.a.p.		Open
Meeting of 9.7.24					
1.	Careers report	NW	9.10.24		Open