



The John Fisher School

Teaching, Learning & Standards Committee minutes – 20th February 2024

Governors: Ms G Grabowski (GG) Father F Murphy (FM) Mr A Theobald Mrs J Cole (JC) Mrs N Walsh (NW) Ms S Nasser (SN) Mr R Lawton (RL) Mr T Richmond (TR) Mr R Teague (RT)	Foundation Governor – Chair Foundation Governor Foundation Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor LA Governor Staff Governor Co-opted Governor Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present Present Present Absent Present Present Present Absent Present
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Attendees : Mr D Jackson (DJ) – Head of Sixth Form
Mr S Davis (SD) – Interim Deputy Head
Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

ITEM	MINUTES	Action
	Opening prayer by FM	
2.	Apologies for absence & declarations of interest Apologies for absence were received from JC due to illness – these were accepted. No apologies were received from TR. The meeting was quorate. There were no declarations of interests.	
3.	Minutes from the meeting on 21st November 2023 The minutes of 21.11.23 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and approved by all governors. There were no other matters outstanding matters not covered in the meeting.	
4.	Update and Data for Year 12 and Year 13 (presented by DJ) <i>(DJ distributed a data and analysis sheet)</i>	
4.1	DJ summarised action points from the previous TL&S meeting in October 2023 in terms of the UCAS information in that the closing date for applications has now ended on 31.1.24.	
4.2	There were 8 Oxbridge applications, 4 of which resulted in interviews (2 x Cambridge / 2 x	

	<p>Oxford) from which 1 student has been made an offer to study Natural Sciences at Cambridge with an offer of 2 A*s and 1A which he is on course to achieve. In contrast last year there were no Oxbridge applications.</p>	
4.3	<p>There have been 173 applications to Russell Group universities; to date these have resulted in 100 offers for 55 students but the deadline for university offers falls on 16.3.24 therefore this number will need to be updated in due course. The most common university is Queen Mary's with 15 offers and Southampton with 11. Last year there were 14 students offered compared with the 55 this year.</p> <p>By every measure this is an improvement on the previous year.</p>	
4.4	<p>A new extended Student Leadership Team has been elected. There are more prefects with roles around the school, with the intention of establishing a 6th form duty rota shortly.</p>	
4.5	<p>The Year 13 analysis is based on predictions rather than PPE grades, with the comparison summer 2023 results alongside.</p>	
4.6	<p>There are no particular cohort groups presenting cause for concern, however there is some focus on the EAL students whose results are slightly off from their peers. EAL is also a thread in the Y12 data, therefore this is being investigated further.</p>	
4.7	<p>There is separate subject analysis with the highest / lowest ranked subjects outlined together with the value-added subjects in terms of progress with the highest and lowest rankings. Also, the action points taken from this data being that DJ will be meeting with subject leaders next week to make clear how they intend this to inform their interventions for certain students as to what is necessary to remedy where they are not on track. DJ will also share the UCAS offer information with subject leaders to establish where students might be beginning to prioritise their workload based on the offer levels.</p>	
4.8	<p>DJ will be reviewing the 3R (Rights, Respect, Reward) status of students to ensure that teachers are setting SMART targets when moved down a level for academic reasons. If the move is for behaviour reasons, the student has a card with stamps for each period of study. This will be put to staff and subject leaders to cross reference with their tracking. Also, a new form is being devised for staff to use to state what the targets are to move back to the higher R level.</p>	
4.9	<p>The Year 12 analysis shows that the picture is not as good as Year 13, but not alarming at this point. DJ said it must be factored in that 40% of last year's high ability tutor group chose not to stay at John Fisher in the sixth form. This contrasts with 21 of 22 this year who have made applications to stay.</p>	
4.10	<p>As mentioned previously the EAL students are not aligned, but this is being investigated further.</p>	
4.11	<p>DJ commented that he felt the key reason was more a matter of engagement rather than an academic issue. The group is not particularly badly behaved with over a half of them with no behaviour points, but it is a case of apathy. DJ said the school felt there was still time on their side in Year 12 to create more accountability and move away from the teacher/student relationship.</p>	
4.12	<p>With this in mind, the school is producing an Employability Report for each boy based on five criteria – attendance, punctuality, professional presentation, use of initiative and wider respect all ranked 1-5. These reports have been put out to parents to show that in the current market that if their son is not around the average of 19 then they are not demonstrating the</p>	

	<p>characteristics which employers are looking for and ask for in references. The school has encountered some resistance from parents who find this information uncomfortable. However, the school is keen to show a no excuses ethos and that there must be compliance with the rules. It is felt that this is provoking more response from parents which is then fed down to their sons.</p>	
4.13	<p>The UCAS information evening was held in January with the timeline for what is expected at what point. The evening was recorded and sent out to all parents who had not been able to attend. It was stressed at this evening that the next PPE at the end of the summer term is the largest decider for the predicted grades. This was made perfectly clear to the boys and parents to avoid them coasting in Year 12 and prevent them working hard only once they went into Year 13. How they perform in Year 12 is physical evidence of what they have done to achieve a particular grade.</p> <p>A governor asked about the analysis of last year's results in terms of the school knowing about it but there was no action taken to prevent underperformance. They are concerned that although there is the data this time but wanted to know what was now being done?</p>	
4.14	<p>DJ said that the 3Rs are not just about behaviour but also about academic leverage. Previously as head of history it was hard to take privileges away from the sixth form boys, whereas now the focus was on the boys having to earn the rights first. It can already be seen that the boys now see that they have to work to get privileges in the first place. The school is presenting it now as a contractual agreement that they have chosen to be here and the subjects they are studying, therefore they are bound by that.</p> <p>A governor said they were concerned that there were boys who felt they had no reason to be engaged.</p> <p>DJ agreed that they currently did not have the answer to this but assured governors that he and his deputy, Mr Webb, were chasing down every battle. DJ gave the example of some boys who had chosen not to attend their compulsory RE lessons and were brazen about not attending as they said they did not value the subject. Therefore, they were internally excluded. 2 of the 3 parents involved sided with their sons against the school's action. DJ had pushed back and asked them to complain formally if they felt they had a case which none of them chose to do. DJ said this underscored the reason of apathy.</p> <p>A governor asked whether it was apathy or passivity?</p> <p>DJ said that some students felt that our offer was that teaching and learning was inconsistent. However, in response to his appointment as Head of sixth form, DJ presented a 5 year plan to change this culture. With the changes being worked on, by year 2 there is the option to improve the offer. DJ agreed it was both apathy and passivity.</p> <p>RT added that from speaking to Year 12s and 13s there are simply some who do not want to be in a school environment and want more of a college environment.</p> <p>DJ agreed with this, but said that in contrast for September there were now 150 plus internal applications whereas at the same point last year there were just 11. The change in the entry criteria for English and Maths will support the improvement. He said it was important that the courses were suitable not just available.</p> <p>He highlighted that governors need to prepare for the improvement in results this year with next year's results being a potential ripple, then thereafter move forward with improvement.</p> <p>A governor asked whether the parents of the boys who avoided the RE lessons were Catholic?</p>	

	<p>DJ said they were; and he had explained that John Fisher has to be compliant with Section 48 requirements; one of them is a governor of another Catholic school who themselves carried out Section 48 inspections therefore it was hard to understand their rationale for complaint.</p>	
4.15	<p>A governor asked what the governing body could do to help address these problems? He asked whether there were resources to help them in the sixth form, notwithstanding the lack of budget?</p> <p>DJ said that could form part of his conversation with Mr Webb but that the revamp of the 6th form centre had been a big boost therefore it was important not just to focus on a materialistic response, but that if there was something which would make a difference, he would advise the governors.</p> <p>The same governor commented that the governors hoped they could do more like the 6th form centre because he thinks this has a positive effect on students studying.</p>	
4.16	<p>A governor asked about whether the issue of the toilet door locks had been resolved, as this was a safeguarding issue?</p> <p>DJ said 2/3 toilets were fixed and he had checked and raised the issue with the facilities team. It was raised as an action for DJ to report back on this matter – ACTION.</p>	1.
4.17	<p>A governor asked whether DJ felt this academic culture should be mirrored from Year 7-11 too?</p> <p>DJ responded that the recent survey had asked a question along the lines of 'is the 6th form experience the same as in years 7-11?' whilst he felt that the underlying culture should be mirrored there was also value in the making the 6th form special, particularly from a marketing perspective.</p> <p>The same governor commented that it was important for the quality of education to run throughout.</p> <p>DJ said he was a firm believer that the 6th form should always mirror the culture across the school years.</p>	
4.18	<p>A governor asked whether DJ felt that this Year 12 in some cases were due to lack of opportunity to get in elsewhere?</p> <p>DJ responded he believed it was because it was the easiest choice. The factor of the poor grades also meant they knew they were not likely to get in elsewhere. However, he stressed that many of the Year 12 boys had really stepped up to the challenge but the school just needs it to be more of the majority doing so.</p> <p>The same governor said that the current Year 11 who want to come next year know that it is no longer guaranteed they will get a place, so there has been a shift.</p> <p>DJ confirmed they had sent out the offer letters stating that there were 1.5 applicants for every space. Currently there are 111 in Year 12 but they could go to up to 140. There were 268 applicants with 38 external students shortlisted from 68. These are coming in for interview all on one day next Wednesday. The 'rejection' letter for external candidates had stated that the school will keep them on record if spaces become available. Most of the external applications came from Wallington Boys students who the school would like to have.</p>	
4.19	<p>A governor commented about the matter of last year's grade predictions not being accurate</p>	

	and said that the school had now made it part of teachers' performance management criteria to secure more accuracy in predictions.	
5	<p>Summary of the 2024 Curriculum (presented by RT)</p> <p>RT gave a presentation identifying a range of factors, including:-</p> <p>5.1 Challenges were identified on how to improve progress at GCSE and A level, presenting the concept of how to balance the curriculum, with KS3 currently having breadth but it has not got the correct balance for learning. He stated that giving a lot of time for English and maths will have a powerful effect on achievement.</p> <p>The number of GCSE options will be reduced from 4 to 3 for the current Year 9 because the 'reformed' GCSEs are more content-heavy. The intention is to better serve students' interests by to prioritising quality over quantity.</p> <p>5.2 The quality of RSHE teaching which currently is a mix of the old PSHE and new RSE requires teachers who are able to talk about the sensitive issues. Currently 48 people teaching the subject using Powerpoint.</p> <p>5.3 The move to streaming throughout KS3 with 2 bands, each containing a 'top stream' and two mixed-ability forms. Typically, there is already a third of the year group who have high prior attainment. There is already some streaming in KS4 in English and Maths. Streaming is important to have groups where targeting can be done appropriately, particularly in light of our recent P8 data which highlights underachievement among the more able.</p> <p>5.4 Reducing the amount of drama in the curriculum; rebranding of IT to Computer Science which the teachers feel is more beneficial; and this will free up an extra period for English and Maths.</p> <p>5.5 Year 9 have carousel subjects, which are designed to give them a taste of subjects not taught at KS3, but this may be contributing to an unusual distribution of KS4 subject choices. This is to be reviewed over the coming weeks.</p> <p>5.6 The sixth form currently has no general entry criteria only subject criteria. From next year a general entry criterion of grade 4 passes in English and Mathematics will be introduced in addition to simplified subject hurdles with the view to moving attainment up over the next 2-3 years to give the sixth form a more academic character.</p> <p>5.7 RT presented a spreadsheet outlining the subject distribution compared with the national picture with an example of the school having 7 A level art students whereas the national expected level would be 3. The school is doing well in numbers taking PE and business studies, but with far fewer taking chemistry. This unusual balance suggests that students may be staying because it is easy to do so but might be taking subjects which do not serve their best interests. Therefore, there is the need to adjust the criteria so that those students who stay will be better served. This is whilst continuing to recognise the need to keep up numbers in the 6th form and allow personal choice.</p> <p>A governor commented that the science subjects were all red and whether RT felt the school had the right resources to support good science?</p> <p>RT agreed this was one of the key priorities.</p> <p>Another governor asked about MFL which they had understood was not being studied in the sixth form.</p>	

RT said that they do offer Spanish and it is vital to commit to MFL and music. If they applied the numbers threshold these subjects would disappear, hence the school must commit to them.

The governor said that Spanish had high GCSE numbers, so it was surprising.

Another governor asked about the fact that universities were only interested in the top 3 A level grades, so why were they doing more?

RT said the school did only have 3 A levels, other than those doing further Maths who might take 4.

A governor asked about the PE BTEC and how this fits with the curriculum map. They commented that in the Admissions Policy there was the anomaly of the school accepting 15 students if they had a good sports record but not necessarily a good academic record.

RT said the school was not offering many BTEC courses and recent data suggests that many on BTEC courses are not making good progress. For some of the boys it might have been because they wanted to stay at the school to play sport and these were the students who might be better served elsewhere. The school needs to play to the pupils' strengths and help boys to find the right place for them even if that was not John Fisher.

A governor observed that the school was losing the gifted and able students and filling the sixth form with less able for those courses, which was not doing either any favours.

A governor responded that these initiatives were attempting to change this.

A governor asked if there were different entry points for different subjects?

RT said that DJ had done some analysis about what GCSE performance gives more than 50% chance of a grade B at A level and this was found to be different for STEM subjects than others, therefore the grade requirement to study STEM was higher.

5.8 The new arrangements would see weekly RSE taught by the tutor moving to fortnightly, with the more sensitive topics on sex and relationships being taught by a specialist. There remains the issue of whether RSE counts as part of the 10% RE, but to address this the school is changing to AQA syllabus which covers RSE very well. It is hoped that overlap lower down the school will also ensure that sensitive RSE topics are taught by specialists.

The school is buying new resources of 10:10 which is approved as a provider both by the DfE and the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales.

A governor asked how much this change was being communicated to the parents about the change of arrangements?

RT confirmed that they will write to all the parents to explain the new arrangements and also make 10:10 available to them as there is lots on there for parents too.

A governor asked if this was also approved by the diocese?

RT confirmed it was.

A governor asked if the existing staff would be asked to teach the new curriculum?

	RT said it would be taught in the RE department and what was left would be shared between 4-5 teachers with an enthusiasm and skill for this area, depending on the exigencies of the timetable.	
6.	Academic Enrichment	
6.1	RT outlined that Mr Gamage had a TLR for this and was doing a brilliant job. He detailed some of the initiatives including:-	
6.2	NRICH which is a maths problem-solving project run by Cambridge University.	
6.3	Fisher Scholar Lectures – being run since last term at lunchtime, mostly given by 6 th formers, these had been very high quality and well attended. A governor asked about the range of topics and whether the students chose themselves? RT confirmed they did and it was on any topic (example given on Octonians, a maths topic) and said the idea was that it was something not in the curriculum and more an opportunity to explore a topic in more depth, learn how to present and answer questions. A governor asked if governors might be invited? RT said they could, but that currently capacity was an issue in the classroom being used. Therefore, the plan is to find a different space, possibly the hall to give the lecture more gravitas. Once this is arranged, the governors were welcome to attend.	
6.4	University applications and preparation support. The success of the applications previously discussed indicated this had been positive.	
6.5	Medical work placements organised with St George's.	
6.6	Axiom maths circles.	
6.7	Chess training has been ramped up with teams planning to compete on Friday afternoons against Wilsons.	
6.8	Entry to national competitions on STEM subjects.	
6.9	John Fisher Journal is being relaunched, written and edited by the students.	
6.10	Promotion of the Super Curriculum. RT outlined future developments which were planned, including:-	
6.11	More participation in humanities-related competitions.	
6.12	Review of the Homework Policy.	
6.13	Review of the use of form time for some kind of enrichment, e.g. staff giving talks to promote and interest and love of learning for its own sake.	
6.14	RT commented that the single lunchtime from next Monday will make it easier to run clubs. He said it would be great if the 6 th form could form a law society and medical society.	
6.15	GG requested that governors were given an assessment of the impact on students of the enrichment programme including numbers, outcomes and impact – ACTION.	2.

7.	Pupil Premium Report	
7.1	RT outlined that 12% of the John Fisher pupils were Pupil Premium (PP). In the financial year 23-24 this amounted to funding of £145377 and recovery funding of £9158.	
7.2	<p>A governor asked how this compared nationally?</p> <p>RT said it was relatively low.</p> <p>A governor asked if there were families who would not tell the school about their income and therefore did not get this benefit?</p> <p>RT agreed there undoubtedly would be some who would not claim it. In Year 11 there are 23 PP students. The school has tried to find out if others qualify.</p>	
7.3	The challenges the school has identified include many in this cohort's lack of engagement with study; a weakness in basic literacy and numeracy; and low attendance. The school has to then identify the intended outcomes for the funding.	
7.4	<p>A governor asked if the funding can only be spent on those PP students?</p> <p>RT said that it can also benefit others if it was more a whole school issue.</p>	
7.5	Some of the interventions include at KS4 an extra set in English and Maths to allow for greater differentiations; homework support with the intention to restart a homework club in the LRC; some targeted academic support (£45000 spent on individual tutoring , which RT said he was unsure was the best use of this and therefore plans to review this for the next budget); music lessons (£17000 of the current budget for individual pupils, and again this will be reviewed to ensure that the pupils are definitely attending).	
7.6	RT pointed to the gap analysis chart of the most recent PPEs and commented that the gap was considerable against the non-PP cohort. However, he added this was also reflected nationally.	
7.7	RT commented on the overlap between PP and SEND which is 49% of the John Fisher PP cohort, therefore this is over-represented.	
8.	Catholic Life and feedback on the mock CSI from Collett Doran Hannon (presented by SD)	
8.1	<p>The inspection had taken place on 30.1.24.</p> <p>A governor asked if it was a planned visit?</p> <p>RT said it was; it had been 2 days free of charge and they had agreed to come back if the school wanted to review once they had worked on the action points.</p>	
8.2	Prayer and Liturgy – the improvements suggested were to involve the pupils more in mass; morning prayer – the inspectors had observed a Year 7 session with a talk about human dignity with the improvement suggested of the adult linking the subject more to Catholic teaching and giving the pupils more opportunity to engage.	
8.3	Form time – the suggested improvement was for a traditional prayer to be shared and for the staff to be aware that this was a whole school ethos not just for RE. The Catholic life of the school and how that is represented in the life of the school.	

8.4	<p>Spiritual Life Group – discussion about prayer, with the suggested improvement of making this central to the life of the school.</p>	
8.5	<p>RE - the inspectors observed a Year 8 and 9 discussion group, observed their lessons and had a chat with the Head of RE.</p> <p>They said they were impressed with what they had heard and seen; however, there were inconsistency in the quality of the lessons and their suggested improvement was to give the students the opportunity to work on evaluation of their own work; for tasks to be modified for the abilities of the pupils; and for greater clarity of instruction and expectations.</p> <p>A governor commented that given a lot of the pupils were not Catholic this will have the knock-on effect in the RE lessons because they do not come from Catholic primary schools.</p> <p>A governor also commented that RE needs to have a specialist teacher at senior school level just as the other subjects have.</p> <p>In Y12 the inspectors commented on the passivity and behaviour towards learning and in Y13 it was identified that only 5% of the taught week was happening which needs to be addressed.</p>	
8.6	<p>Subject lead discussion – the inspectors commented that it was important to stretch the more gifted and able students.</p>	
8.7	<p>Catholic Life and Mission – the inspectors focused on Catherine where they said the staff need to be clear why it is different being here in a Catholic school and how the teachers link this.</p>	
8.8	<p>What makes this different is the staff are very committed and this needs to be linked to working in a Catholic school.</p> <p>RT added that the next staff CPD sessions was going to address the distinctive character of a Catholic school.</p>	
8.9	<p>The inspectors said that what it was important for the students to love about the school is not just it being an ‘old boys’ tradition’ but being linked to the Catholic social teaching. The school and sport are interlinked but they commented that sometimes this becomes the focus too much rather than the Catholic nature.</p>	
8.10	<p>They identified that there was a large number of teachers doing PHSE and this led to a lack of evaluation of the lessons being taught.</p>	
8.11	<p>They suggested some ideas to strengthen the Catholic ethos of the school, namely a full time lay Chaplain. Previously the Catholic life of the school was driven by the former chaplain.</p> <p>RT commented that it was the policy of the diocese not to have a priest chaplain.</p>	
8.12	<p>A governor asked how many of the SLT are Catholic?</p> <p>RT said it was 6 of the extended group but only 1 of the AHTs.</p> <p>A governor said the Archbishops’ policy was for Deputy Headteachers to be Catholic as well as the Headteacher; and also for them to role model from the top and make it part of the culture.</p>	

8.13	A governor asked about the role of the governors and how they present to the school and how religion was an aspect of their role. They asked if there were things the governors should consider and wondered if there was a way to link with the pupils e.g. to ask them to write a prayer for the governors' meetings (something which was done at the primary school to which she is also linked).	
8.14	<p>Another governor suggested the John Fisher prayer book.</p> <p>Another governor commented it was important to ask students what their faith means to them.</p>	
8.15	<p>A governor asked the lay chaplain job description had been distributed to stakeholders and how this role would work?</p> <p>RT said it was to mitigate them not having a chaplain.</p>	
8.16	<p>A governor asked about how long it had been advertised?</p> <p>RT said 5 times including 3 times this year.</p> <p>A governor suggested the idea of retreats for soul space both for students and staff.</p> <p>There was discussion about different locations including Aylesford and Whitstable for residential retreats.</p> <p>SD suggested they might consider a May pilgrimage.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>9.1 RT commented that the school is writing a Capability Policy which it currently does not have other than one section of the Teaching and Learning Policy which only applies to teaching. Therefore, they are adopting one for approval shortly.</p> <p>9.2 The chair advised there had been a working party for the Behaviour Policy and this would be reported at the full governing body meeting.</p> <p>9.3 RT advised there had been a survey completed with staff and pupils in January. The results had been very positive. He will bring the results to the full governing body meeting.</p>	
	<p>TLS committee meeting dates this academic year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 12th March 2024 (focusing on data from the 2 PPEs and predictions). • Tuesday 14th May 2024 • Tuesday 9th July 2024 	
	<p>Closure of meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.30pm</p>	

Actions list:-

	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 10.10.23					
1	DJ to advise governors on number of Oxbridge applications and Russell Group applications from the 2023 cohort of Y13.	DJ	21.11.23		completed
2	DJ to advise governors on the number of Russell Group applications which will go in with the current Y13 cohort once submitted	DJ	21.11.23		completed
3	Any governors who want an email prompt to look at an email going to their JF email should send their email address to JB	Governors / JB	a.s.a.p.		completed
4	Data on GCSE – number of 8s and 9s with subjects	NO / RT	21.11.23		completed
5	RT to send list of school policies to GG and JB	RT / GG / JB	a.s.a.p.		completed
Meeting of 21.11.23					
1	JE to send link to Austin's Butterfly to governors	JE	a.s.a.p.		Open
2	RT to speak to the caterers about the option of providing breakfasts	RT	a.s.a.p.		completed
Meeting of 20.2.24					
1	DJ to check on toilet door locks and report back to governors	DJ	a.s.a.p.	Response by email 21.2.24	Completed
2	Impact assessment of the enrichment programme	RT	July 24		open