



Newstead Wood School Part A Minutes of Local Governing Body meeting Held at the school on Tuesday 24th January 2023 at 6.30pm

Naureen Khalid (NK)	Appointed Governor, Chair	Present
Jonathon Capon (JC)	Appointed Governor	Present
Ade Fasusi (AF)	Appointed Governor	Present
Sol Ako-Otchere (SO)	Appointed Governor	Present from item 4
Steve Penny (SP)	Appointed Governor, Vice-Chair	Present
Eileen Xiaoyu Zhang (EXZ)	Parent Governor	Present
Jenny Wilkins (JW)	Appointed Governor	Present

In attendance:

Alan Blount (AB)	-	Headteacher
Helene Le Roux (HLR)	-	Deputy Headteacher
Jo Addison (JA)	-	Octavo Clerk

AGENDA ITEM	MINUTES	ACTION NO:
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.</p> <p>HLR was welcomed to the meeting. They are the DHT responsible for assessment and reporting, a Maths teacher and interim head of the Sixth Form.</p> <p>Governors introduced themselves.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>There were no absences.</p> <p>The meeting was confirmed to be quorate.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no new declarations of interest.</p>	
4.	<p>Governing Board Business</p> <p><u>Board Membership</u></p> <p>EZ would shortly complete four years as a governor and expressed interest in continuing for a further term. Governors were happy to support the extension of EZ's term. The relevant records would be updated.</p> <p><u>Governor Training</u></p> <p>EZ had completed Safeguarding training through her employment.</p> <p>NK had attended training on managing allegations against staff.</p> <p>The Spring Training programme had been circulated to Governors.</p> <p><u>LGB Self Review</u></p> <p>The review had been carried out and highlighted two areas requiring attention:</p>	

	<p>1) The vision and values should be reviewed. 2) Stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>NK had met with AB to discuss how to address these areas.</p> <p>1) A major overhaul of the visions and values had been undertaken before joining UL. It was felt that the most productive way to move forward would be for AB to consult with the SLT and student council over whether changes were felt to be necessary and what these should be. A report will be circulated to Governors for the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: JA to add an item to the agenda for the next meeting to look at the report on the school vision and values.</p> <p>2) Parents evenings are still being held online, so there is no opportunity to attend these. Governors were invited to attend any other school events but as there have been new staff and Governors with little opportunity to meet it was suggested that Governors could attend the CPD day to be held on Friday 10th February. All Governors are invited to attend all or part of the day and join the whole staff lunch. Governors were asked to inform AB if they were able to attend the day.</p> <p>ACTION: AB to send further information regarding the CPD day and Governor attendance.</p> <p><i>SO joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>There is a UL focus on sustainability and Newstead is being featured as a case study across the Trust. There is a recommendation that a link Governor keeps a strategic eye over sustainability.</p> <p>SP was asked to take on this role and agreed.</p> <p><i>Q: Is there a template for what the Trust expect to see?</i> A: There is a framework with five areas one of which is compulsory. The school needed to cite the work with students and in the curriculum. The school recently held a carbon neutral fair with a clothes swap, vegan/vegetarian food with no plastic packaging etc. which was run by the carbon council.</p> <p>The school will be paying for an infrared map of the school to see where heat is being lost.</p> <p>The school continues to work with the Green Schools project and there are plans through the Eco schools project to introduce growing spaces and nature areas.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
5.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>The Part A minutes from the meeting held on 29th November 2022 were AGREED to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p><i>Q: Has there been an update on the parental complaint?</i> A: There has been further communication, it may still go to a panel. Advice is being followed, but it feels appropriate to be flexible and reach the end of the process rather than stick to the letter of the policy.</p> <p>NK will sign the minutes when next in school.</p>	

6.

Headteacher's Report

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and questions from Governors invited:

Curriculum

Q: Why are you considering dropping the Statistics qualification?

A: This is to streamline our offer. We have reviewed our curriculum in line with grammars locally and nationally. Some students have enquired about Sociology and Psychology which may attract a few more students but we don't feel there is sufficient demand to run this at KS4.

Q: Is there a more financial based qualification which could be offered?

A: There is a more bespoke financial services offer which features in the PSCE work. It is filtering down from the Sixth Form where skills for university are taught. The provision will develop under the remit of the new AHTs.

Q: Banks can offer stakeholder engagement sessions, have these been considered?

A: Through the careers and lecture programmes, the school does work with Credit Suisse. Two sessions are run on university costs and how to budget day to day for Years 12 and 13. 40 students can take part and are asked to sign up.

It is important to ensure students are equipped for their life after school.

The opportunity to gain experience of running a business occurs in areas such as the Carbon fair and Enterprise work. Students learn about costs, profit and competition.

There is a curriculum plan for Character education and development through the school, so it is a clear part of the curriculum, not hidden away.

The A level statistics may be going, but the school is carrying on with the GCSE. There were some concerns about the qualification itself which achieved a much lower success rate than other subjects.

There is the scope for a quantitative methods course to run alongside subjects such as Psychology where it would be useful and where Maths is not taken. It would be delivered by Statistics teachers and possibly form part of the elective programme.

Q: How is Chemistry being affected by the two vacancies?

A: One teacher started their maternity leave early and has resigned. Another teacher has also resigned. Interviews for new appointments for next year are underway. The team has pulled together to cover some of the gaps. Chemistry cover staff are in post.

Q: Is it difficult to recruit science teachers?

A: It is difficult to recruit anyone. The school is hoping to keep current trainees in science and maths and is interviewing for the DT vacancy next week.

There is expected to be a higher turnover of staff this year as more begin to look at other opportunities post lockdown.

15 AHT applications were received. The school will always go the extra mile to get the right staff members into the school.

Advice was taken from an external advisor regarding our advertisements. The recommendations were to note the expected salary (the bands are included) and to move the benefits information further up (which has been done).

Modelling and scenario planning already underway for next year to ensure the school is fully staffed.

Removing the Engineering course is likely to increase the numbers taking DT and textiles, which in turn makes them more viable.

A Latin teacher was found from within the existing staff.

At the modeller meeting, the school was found to be just outside of tolerance, and in an improved position since last year. One might suggest that should be how a grammar school operates, with teacher workload kept down as students are likely to submit more homework which teachers need time to mark. There is also a large Sixth Form requiring more subject leaders.

Q: What is the quality of agency staff?

A: It can be mixed. The school tries to interview all before taking them on, but it is better to have a teacher with subject knowledge than a cover teacher who has none.

Attendance

Q: Has attendance improved?

A: The school has worked hard to increase it, but it has still not come up to the target we are aiming for. There are some parents still opting for holidays in term time and there are lots of persistent absences. The school was hit by Strep A before Christmas.

There are currently only 127 students with 100% attendance and 86 persistent absentees.

Some may be due to one period of absence which at this point in the year affects their data more. There are also some significant school refusers, despite all possible meetings and support in place.

Parental mental health is also being seen widely as an issue affecting attendance and there are higher levels of emotional based school avoidance.

Q: Is it across all year groups?

A: It is seen more in Year 9 and 10 than in others. It is a problem across all schools and the school is doing everything it can to support the students.

Q: Was there an impact from the train strikes?

A: Some, but attendance overall was quite good.

The AHT on secondment from Kettering Buccleuch Academy has brought their model for monitoring attendance with the Form tutor then Head of Year, and PPG and SENDCo being monitored separately. Parents are notified of low attendance and the system for sending out attendance notification is being automated.

Q: Do you fine parents?

A: The school make the recommendation to fine, but it is up to the LA. Some families still feel it is cheaper to take them out and pay the fines than go away in the holidays.

Q: Are there any specific groups who are more affected?

A: No, it is across the board, and is seen in the Grammar school networks and across the Trust. There are lots of measures in place as there is a government push on attendance.

Students can access resources online so can keep up without attending school.

There are mental health first aiders in school already, and we are training a further 8 on CPD day but they need to be championed even more.

Safeguarding

Q: Pupils who have experience domestic violence are automatically offered help. Is this in house?

A: There is no way of accessing CAMHS straight away. Each case would be triaged to see if internal help can be given or if external support is required. The Trust is looking to buy in to external providers.

Q: Is this in response to legislation not an increase in reported events?

A: Yes.

Assessment

Q: Has 4Matrix been useful?

A: It is a useful analytical tool which provides better quality data and finer analysis. Teachers need to ensure any pupil who is underachieving is followed up. It makes it easier to identify outliers, and what characteristics might be relevant.

The results for each department can be highlighted and subjects compared which promotes useful discussion. Head of Years will need training to use it properly. This will be started in Years 11 and 10 then filtered down the years and to middle leaders.

Q: Could it be used to support Year 9 option choices?

A: It can be used to guide students although the school prefers them to be quite free with their choices, however, historical data can be useful in supporting decision making.

A different programme is used to support students in the Sixth Form choose combinations of subjects which support their plans for the future.

Q: In the student survey, pupils did not feel they have useful conversations about their career intentions, is there a lack of careers provision?

A: We have discussed this at length – it is felt that it may be partly due to students taking the wording of the question literally. When thinking about their career, they may not include university or the many other opportunities which are part of the Careers provision. Year 11 are asked to fill out a booklet regarding UCAS choices, they attend careers fairs, and the 6th form open evenings from Year 10. We know the provision is in place and students are receiving it, but it hasn't come through in the survey. We need to do a little more research as to why.

Q: Are they informed about apprenticeships as well?

A: Yes, a speaker came in to share their experience just last week. It is part of our regular offer.

Students are encouraged to make informed choices and those looking to take an out of the ordinary combination of subjects would be spoken with to ensure they had a sound reason behind their choices.

Q: Is it worth investing in 4Matrix?

A: It is good value for money, and there will be a discount through UL. The school was not using a specific analysis tool and it works more effectively than spreadsheets. It would be a worthwhile investment but will need training for staff.

Q: Is question level analysis an option?

A: Not through this software. It is always useful but difficult to do whilst managing workload. Some departments do it well.

Surveys

Q: Only 60% of pupils felt Hegarty Maths was helping them.

A: The school has moved away from Hegarty to Sparx and there is an expectation that all students complete it. Newstead is the top school in the Trust every week for SPARX.

Progress/Attainment 8

Governors noted the KS4 Progress and Attainment 8 scores and tables.

The ranking with other schools is useful and demonstrates that small gains would make a big difference. Newstead is in line with other selective schools. We have adopted some strategies in place at The Hurlingham Academy already.

It is an achievement to add good progress when students enter the school at a high standard and Newstead has proven that value can be added.

Anecdotally girls coped better with lockdown and home learning, putting more effort in than boys.

Governors wished to pass on their thanks and congratulations to the staff for achieving these results and positions in the tables.

Sixth Form

Retention of pupils into the Sixth Form is still being looked at, particularly in maths. 21 of the 34 in the top set remained this year, which is higher than last year. Anecdotally, boys are less likely to move schools while girls apply to lots of other schools.

There are changes in the 6th form culture at Newstead. The vision is to be at an excellent Sixth form where your individuality is respected. More will stay as grades continue to improve, maybe not next year, but the improvements are continuing.

There may be an impact on grades as grade boundaries return to normal this year.

The school needs to keep the special ethos. Retention rates in the sixth form are high, completion and retention rates are very high in Sixth Form.

Students are reminded that they only have six terms, and it may be better to stay where they are known and where UCAS references are written by people who know you. Those who decline places are not likely to get them back as there is now a waiting list. The new Head of Sixth form will continue to be proactive and make the process as streamlined as possible.

There will be more capacity to get early information on Sixth Form candidates, which will support better choices and planning.

	Work is being done to give the Sixth form area an identity. Students should have a sense of ownership, of being proud Newstead students where individual successes are celebrated.	
7.	Confidential matters <i>There were no confidential matters.</i>	
8.	Any other business <u>Industrial Action</u> We are working out numbers of staff expected to be on site. Once this is known a decision can be taken. Online learning and revision sessions will be provided for those at home. AB has regular meetings with the Union representatives and Governors will be updated once a decision is taken.	
9.	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 6.30pm. The meeting closed at 8.15pm	

Action Points

Outstanding Actions and Actions arising from Newstead Wood Local Governing Body

No:	Action	By	When	Status
1	JA to add an item to the agenda for the next meeting to look at the report on the school vision and values.	JA	March	
2	AB to send further information regarding the CPD day and Governor attendance.	AB	ASAP	

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____
Chair of Governors

Date: _____