

York High School

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Governing Board held on Thursday 6th February 2025 at 6pm held at the school

Present:

Gavin Kumar (Principal)
Andy Pope (Chair)
Sally Gordon
Sarah Hammond

Richard Lavell
Andrew Waller
Ian Savage
Clare Besant

In Attendance

Carl Law (Potential Governor), James Walker (Senior Pastoral Leader), Sophie Triffitt (Clerk)

Action

1. Welcome, Apologies for absence, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted for Val Roddis.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 2nd December 2024 (previously circulated)

Resolution: The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and approved.

Matters Arising and Action Plan

Action 1: The School Improvement Plan had been added to the December 2024 meeting pack.

Action 2: The action was carried forward. The Principal explained that different authorities have different levels of funding and if the national insurance and pay increases were not fully funded then there would be a budget gap.

Challenge: A governor asked if connectivity and access to the internet at home was a barrier for some young people. The Principal confirmed that no concerns had been reported but there was a homework club every night of the week to support access. Connectivity was addressed through Covid lockdown but the Principal suggested that a question on connectivity could be asked in the student survey.

3. SLT Feedback

Senior Pastoral Leader – Behaviour and Wellbeing Update (Tabled)

The Chair informed governors that he met with the Senior Pastoral Leader fortnightly which included a review of data and noted that overall incidents of behaviour tended to be linked to persistent defiance.

The Senior Pastoral Leader reported on changes made to the Reflection provision which had delivered more purposeful learning and a reduction in suspensions. A key change had been a review of the use of knowledge organisers and the introduction of Chromebooks and Sparx English and Maths. There were also plans to introduce Sparx Science. The Senior Pastoral Leader noted that the Maths Leader had reported positively on the impact of Sparx Maths in Reflection.

Mr Law joined the meeting at 6.12pm.

The Senior Pastoral Leader explained that Behaviour Policy protocols were being followed and Progress Leaders had information on high tariff students in order to be proactive in supporting them. Progress Leaders have a timetable to ensure maximum impact throughout the day.

The Principal added that Progress Leaders had a focus on both pastoral support and academic progress and colleagues would have training to support their development.

The Senior Pastoral Leader explained that the behaviour pyramid was reviewed to reduce the accumulation of suspensions to ensure there was time to implement interventions and support.

The Senior Pastoral Leader presented weekly suspension data with a comparison to the previous year.

The Senior Pastoral Leader noted that the introduction of Chromebooks had significantly increased the success in Reflection and the School Wellbeing Service provided fantastic support.

The Senior Pastoral Leader reported on a visit to The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee which had a similar demographic to York High School and advised that it was hard to see a change in culture on a day-to-day basis but it would be evident over time.

The Senior Pastoral Leader shared an example of the Progress Leader timetable with directed focus between 8.25am and 4pm.

The Senior Pastoral Leader reported that next steps included:

- Launch of Sparx Science
- Development and trial of an in-house alternative provision.
- The Reflection space to be redesigned over February half term.
- Liaising with the SENCO to understand what can be done for SEND students in Reflection.

Challenge: A governor asked if students who have been in reflection are asked for their thoughts on the provision. The Senior Pastoral leader confirmed that students were asked what they thought would make their time in Reflection more successful and that informed the removal of period 6 and the introduction of Chromebooks and Sparx. The Principal explained that the Chromebook package used was bespoke to the student and was a way to address the need to improve the core offer for those children. The level of engagement was high and there were plans to introduce the same work approach to detention.

The Principal explained that the redesign of the reflection space gave consideration to wellbeing with the booths not used as standard but available when regulation was needed as part of a graduated response and the young people walk to get a hot meal at lunchtime.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was a risk that some students would prefer to be in Reflection than in their classroom. The Principal accepted that was a concern and did not want lesson avoidance so would track and monitor.

The Principal noted that the Trust had Inspire as an alternative provision but the KS3 places were limited, Year 8 was a behaviour hot spot so was investigating an internal alternative provision for a group of high tariff Year 8 students.

A governor noted that from suspension panels it was clear there was a pattern of a small group of young people who struggle to cope in the classroom environment.

The Principal informed governors that the Trust had established an emotion coaching approach to support dysregulation and there was a priority on keeping children in the classroom but there was a robust Behaviour Policy to be applied as needed. There was a piece of work to do on reintegration to support students on return from suspension.

Challenge: A governor noted the positive suspension reduction and asked if it was sustainable. The Senior Pastoral Leader was confident it was with the new structure of five Pastoral Leaders in addition to the Senior Pastoral Leader, changes to Reflection and the new procedure on suspensions which would enable more time to intervene.

The Senior Pastoral Leader noted that Stepping Up a Police ran programme for 30 students for one hour per week would launch after February half term.

The Principal informed governors that with the Senior Pastoral Leader's management of the team of Progress Leaders, the Progress Leader timetable, proactive approach and using the system to address issues early and help students settle in lessons he was confident the year would end with significantly lower suspensions than the previous year. The Principal added that the introduction of Chromebooks to Reflection had revolutionised the provision in the best interests of the young people.

Challenge: A governor asked how the long-term impact would be monitored to ensure a change in culture and behaviour and not a reliance on the safety nets and proactivity in the system. The Principal confirmed that enabling students to be successful adults was considered when implementing systems but as a school of 40% of young people in receipt of Pupil Premium having a support mechanism in place was important and reflective of the school context. Coaching of life skills and organisation would be developed through tutor relationships but accepted the need to enable independence.

The Chair noted that 85% of the children across school were behaving well and working hard. Progress Leaders get through lots of work and know their year groups very well. The Chair highlighted that there were occasions where some of the children were better off in school than at home so there was sometimes a need to manage the balance of that and impact to learning in class. The Chair emphasised the amount of work done at York High on attendance and behaviour was phenomenal and beyond the standard offer.

The Chair suggested sharing examples of interventions to support young people.

The Principal noted that the introduction of Chromebooks was focused on ensuring the young people have the basic foundations of literacy and numeracy to help them access the wider curriculum offer in the classroom.

A governor noted that the experience of panels had shown the level of support and intervention put into helping young people.

Governors recorded thanks to the Senior Pastoral Leader.

The Senior Pastoral Leader left the meeting at 6.41pm.

The Chair welcomed Mr Law and introductions were made.

Resolution: Governors unanimously agreed to recommend Carl Law be appointed as a general governor for Trustee approval.

Behaviour Policy (previously circulated)

Resolution: Governors approved the Behaviour Policy.

Checkpoint Data Headlines (previously circulated)

The Principal presented the Checkpoint data and noted the 2024 Year 11 outcomes of:

- 44% 4+
- 27% 5+
- -0.75 P8.

There had been significant work this academic year including interventions, review of exam boards and tuition and the current data was reporting at:

- 60% 4+
- 37% 5+ (target to have 5+ at 40% or above).

The Principal noted the uplift on data from the previous year but noted the importance of improving outcome data.

The Principal explained the weekly BRAG process to review students with both a pastoral and academic focus. The academic review feeds into bespoke intervention for Year 11 and aiming to get the best outcome for every student. The Heads of English, Maths and Science, pastoral and attendance leads contribute to the meetings and there was a focused review of each child. The Chair noted that he joins the BRAG meetings half termly.

A governor noted that they felt the process was evident at a recent Year 11 parents evening.

The Principal explained that Year 11 and Year 10 had precise bespoke intervention plans with a priority of investing in English and Maths. There was work to be done for seconds in department to start to work the process through in Year 9 for earlier intervention.

Challenge: A governor noted that the middle ability cohort was making the least progress. The Principal explained that the Teaching and Learning strategy had been rewritten this academic year to account for refinement of skills to teach across mixed ability lessons. There was a theme of the middle ability group not achieving as well as they could and there was also a need to stretch the higher ability.

Challenge: A governor asked if the middle ability outcomes were getting better or worse. The Principal explained that he would need to review the historic data. The Principal reported that lessons were calm and purposeful but there was a need to push the passive learners to maximise potential outcomes.

Double Science

The Chair noted that in previous discussion governors requested rationale for the move to double Science.

The Principal explained that the headline figure for P8 was -0.75 and in terms of Ofsted category that would put the school at significant risk and was an area of concern. From experience and having sought guidance from experts including the CEO and Ofsted Inspectors the Principal supported the recommendation for a school with the outcomes like York High to focus on Double Science. Some students last year were moved to the double award and their grades improved by two grades.

The Principal assured governors that a move to the double award would not reduce life chances noting that the Russell Group Universities did not specify triple science.

The Principal explained that it was an intention needed at this point and the focus would be to get the results for Double Science in a strong position and then look to reintroduce Triple Science. The Principal was confident outcomes would improve for both the individual and the school.

The Principal noted that the more able students would be able to do a statistics GCSE so would get an additional GCSE.

Challenge: A governor asked if any routes in higher education would be blocked by not having Triple Science. The Principal confirmed not and there was a likely uplift in final grade.

Challenge: A governor asked if there would be any impact to access to A Levels. The Principal confirmed there would be no limiting factors.

Challenge: A governor asked if there would be a disadvantage to a student who hadn't done Triple Science if doing three Science A Levels. The Principal confirmed not and confirmed that combined science covers all three sciences and whilst there wouldn't be the same depth of knowledge covered the student would potentially get a higher grade.

Challenge: A governor noted concern that removing Triple Science may reduce those applying for York High as a first-place choice of school and create a perception that the school had a lower offer. The Principal explained that the impact to academic outcomes would have the greatest impact on the perception of the school and there was a need to secure a good P8 score. The Principal assured governors that he would not have taken the decision if it limited life chances.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was the option to run both Triple and Double Science. The Principal explained that it was not possible to staff / timetable both offers with the size of the school.

Challenge: A governor asked if there had been consideration to run Triple Science for a small cohort. The Principal explained that it was considered but could not be facilitated. For those high ability students there would be the offer of statistics. **A governor noted that statistics was a useful skill in sciences.**

The Principal noted that York High was a good school, and the Ofsted outcome had a positive impact on applications but there was a need to ensure the P8 and attainment outcomes were improved in order to maintain or better that.

Challenge: A governor asked what would change in two years that would warrant a move back to Triple Science. The Principal explained that the school would be more advanced in the improvement journey and the Teaching and Learning strategy would be embedded and delivering better outcomes and student experience. The Principal confirmed that Teaching and Learning strategy was part of the School Improvement Plan.

Challenge: A governor asked if higher attainers were going to be challenged enough and not disengaged. The Principal explained that there were many conversations with families at open evenings about how the school would stretch their child and that comes with the robust Teaching and Learning strategy.

Challenge: A governor noted concern that there were two years' worth of students that were having a reduced offer as a result of timing. The Principal emphasised that running a Triple Science course that was delivering a negative Progress 8 grade was not right for the majority of students.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was the option for a student who really wanted to do Triple Science to do so as discussed at a link governor meeting and questioned why Science was the subject offer that was reduced. The Principal explained that short term there was a need to take decisions to deliver the best outcomes without limiting life chances and this change would not limit access to any college courses and a range of advice and guidance had been sought before taking the decision. The priority was to improve the P8 score. The Principal explained that the proposal for a new school day and enrichment offer may inform plans and confirmed that he would ask the Head of Science about potential options to run Triple Science.

The Principal noted that the York High School reputation had moved on so much over the last few years and they need to ensure they secure a positive Ofsted.

Challenge: A governor requested the Principal consider all options for how Triple Science could be offered.

The Principal confirmed that there had been no feedback regarding the move to Double from Triple Science as part of the Year 9 options process.

The Chair asked the Principal to consider the option to staff an enrichment programme to offer Triple Science for those who want to do it.

School Day

The Principal explained the 2025/26 school day and enrichment programme proposal consultation.

Challenge: A governor asked what evidence the proposal was based on. The Principal explained that he had lived experience of the approach, it was used widely in Dixons Academy Trust and had engaged the experiences of colleagues in other schools who had that approach. The Principal confirmed that students would be registered every period.

The Principal explained that the timetable would ensure 55 minutes of precise learning in a lesson and a structured five-minute movement time after every lesson.

Challenge: A governor asked about staff thoughts on the change of day. The Principal explained that there was a consultation for staff and some questions were raised but generally feedback had been positive. The priority of the proposal was to ensure the right offer for the children but would also support recruitment and retention.

Challenge: A governor emphasised the need for an effective communication plan to emphasise the true consultation process and benefits for the community and the young people. The Principal explained that the opportunities and threats would be considered for the three stakeholders who were being consulted. The Principal added that he had set four sessions for parents to come and meet with him to talk about the plans.

The Principal informed governors that the number of students wanting to share work as part of excellence every day had increased significantly and wanted a range of valuable enrichment for the benefit of students.

Challenge: A governor noted concern that some students may not take up the offer with the enrichment element being optional. The Principal agreed that there was a need to ensure that the students access the enrichment and part of that would be engaging them in what they want offered.

Challenge: A governor noted that the enrichment offer would be beneficial for those students who struggle in lessons as long as they can be encouraged to engage.

Challenge: A governor asked if there had been consideration to research that suggests teenagers perform better with a later start. The Principal explained that Tutor Time would move to period 2 to provide a precise start to the day with check-in with high tariff students on the gate and going straight to a lesson. The Principal explained that the start of the school day was not purposeful enough and when that approach was implemented at a previous school there was improved attendance and fewer lates.

Challenge: A governor suggested building a Frequently Asked Questions document, including questions raised by governors, to share as part of the communication plans. The Principal agreed and suggested it could be included in the Principal communication to parents. **A governor suggested sharing a comparison of a current and proposed timetable.**

The Principal noted that consultation responses and requests for Principal meetings had been low.

4. **Principal Feedback**

Pulse Update (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the Pulse Report.

Year 11 BRAG (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the BRAG Report.

Promise to Vulnerable Pupils Plan (previously circulated)

The Principal presented the Promise to Vulnerable Pupils Plan and explained that Pupil Premium and SEND students were prioritised in any decision and action. The Trust were working with Huntington School around poverty proofing the school day.

Challenge: A governor noted that some outcomes on the plan relied on other organisations to fulfil their duties, and the school and Trust need to hold those agencies to account.

The Principal reported that Maxine Squire, Assistant Director of Education, Skills and SEND, visited York High School WC 27th January 2025 and reflected on the progress made. The Principal took the opportunity to emphasise the need for CAMHS capacity to support the needs of the local community.

The Principal reported that Sir Martyn Oliver, Chief Inspector of Education, visited York High School to undertake filming for the new Ofsted framework and he commented positively on the school and pupils.

The Chair informed governors that sixteen Year 9 students supported a recent pentathlon event as Sport Leaders and the event organiser commented how excellent the sports leaders were.

School Improvement Plan

Addressed as part of SLT Feedback.

5. **Chair Feedback**

School Improvement Plan

Addressed as part of SLT Feedback.

Attendance (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the Attendance Report.

BRAG Pulse Trends

There was no update to report.

6. Governing Feedback Deep Learning

Teaching and Learning (link governor report previously circulated)

There were no questions on the governor report.

Reading and Literacy (link governor report previously circulated)

There were no questions on the governor report.

7. Governor Feedback – Deep Experience

Assessment and Destinations (link governor report previously circulated)

There were no questions on the governor report.

Careers and Education

There was no update to report.

8. Governor Feedback Deep Support

Child Protection and Safeguarding

SEND

Community

Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged

Behaviour

There was no update to report.

9. Finance Report (link governor report previously circulated)

There were no questions on the governor report.

P4 Financial Summary (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the Financial Summary Report.

P4 Consolidated Management Accounts (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the Consolidated Management Accounts.

10. School Policies

Resolution: Governors approved the below BTEC policies:

- BTEC Registration and Certification Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)
- BTEC Internal Verification Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)
- BTEC Blended Learning Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)
- BTEC Assessment Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)
- BTEC Assessment Malpractice Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)
- BTEC Appeals Policy Jan 2025 (previously circulated)

11. Governor CPD (previously circulated)

Governors noted the training tracker and CYC governance training schedule.

12. MAT Update

There was no update to report.

13. Any Other Business

The Chair recorded thanks to governors for the visits and associated reports.

14. Future Meeting Dates

Tuesday 18th March 2025 – 6pm

Tuesday 6th May 2025 – 6pm

Thursday 10th July 2025 – 6pm

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

Approved at LGB on 18th March 2025

Approval

| <u>ACTION POINTS</u> <u>From the meeting of the Local Governing Board held on 6th February 2025</u> | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | <u>ACTION</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>WHO</u> | <u>WHEN</u> |
| 1. | Confirm impact to the budget of the National Insurance contribution. | 9 (02.12.24) | Ian Savage | Feb 2025 |

Future meeting: