

# Rye College Full Governing Body Meeting

7 January 2014

## MINUTES

A meeting of Rye College Full Governing Body was held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at 6.00pm in the Learning Resource Centre, Rye College.

**PRESENT:** Jane Burnett (JB) [Chair]; Ian Bryan (IB), David Cooper (DC), Thomas Earl (TE), Sarah Glen (SG), Jo Kirkham (JK), Sally King (SK), Nicola Midgley (NM), Allen Mills (AM), Peter Savory (PS), Hazel Russell (HR), Francine Thomson (FT).

**APOLOGIES:** Anita Hollowday (AH), Angela Soderberg (AS).

**In Attendance:** Pip Gasson (PG), Sally Welch (SW) [Clerk].

**Part 1: Governor Training:** The meeting opened with Governor training on RAISEonline presented by the Principal and Chair.

## Main Agenda

### 1. Introductions

1.1 Noted:

- a) the Chair welcomed Thomas Earl (new Staff Governor) and Sally King (new Parent Governor) to the meeting and also Francine Thomson as a new Governor following her attendance at the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 meeting as an observer.
- b) the Chair thanked Anita Hollowday in her absence for her contribution to the work of the Governing Body. A card had been left at reception.
- c) Patricia Kaye – who had attended the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 meeting as an observer had opted to join the Rye Studio School Governing Body.

### 2. Ways of Working

2.1 Noted: for the benefit of new members, the Chair reminded Governors of the fundamental principles of confidentiality and collegiality underpinning the work of the Governing Body.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Noted: that no member(s) of the Governing Body had declared an interest in relation to any item(s) of business on the agenda.

### 4. Parent Voice Champion

4.1 Noted:

- a) the Chair invited TE to outline his role as Parent Voice Champion.
- b) that the remit given for the role was to engage the hardest to reach parents and the parents of students who are struggling the most in the classroom. 'Hard to reach' in this context equated to those parents who did not attend parents' evenings.
- c) TE reported that he had created a plan for the year, with the first activity a bowling trip to which parents of Pupil Premium students would be invited, and which, if successful, would be followed up with an invitation to parents to attend an activity which is College related. The trip

was intended to provide an opportunity for parents to interact with members of staff in a non-threatening environment and to develop on from that positive support and encouragement to the parents to attend events with an academic input.

d) that College based sessions for parents focusing on numeracy, literacy and ICT were planned which were intended for students and their parents to attend together.

e) it was noted that Hastings Academy has a number of successful initiatives to engage parents.

f) that the College has an engagement booklet containing tips for parents on how to support students.

g) that TE would update Governors on progress in due course.

4.2 Noted: that a presentation from the Student Voice Champion would be diarised for a future meeting.

## **5. Minutes of the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

5.1 Received: the minutes of the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

5.2 Noted:

a) that DC had arrived at the beginning of the main meeting.

b) *Minute 6.2*: to read 'Governors discussed the need for the policies to state clearly *that where a formal sanction is considered a full investigation of the circumstances will be undertaken and that students will be given the opportunity to disclose all relevant information concerning the incident which may be relevant to the investigation*'.

c) *Minute 10.1*: to read "an accident had occurred due to a wet floor in the Technology Block foyer (first floor) as a result of a recurrent roof leak ....."

5.3 Resolved: subject to the above amendments, to approve and sign the minutes as a correct record.

## **6. Matters Arising**

### ***Pupil Referral Unit***

6.1 Noted: the Chair reported that she had raised with the RAT Board a suggestion to look at establishing a Pupil Referral Unit within the RAT with the possibility to provide pupil places for schools locally and generate revenue. The initial response from the Board had been positive subject to researching costs and demand. Governors may be asked to consider a business case in due course.

### ***Marketing Committee***

6.2 Noted: the Chair invited expressions of interest from Governors with marketing experience to join with Rye College staff (Jon Kemm, Harriet Catt, and Martin Estall) to consider the marketing strategy for Rye College.

6.3 Resolved: that HR and PS would be willing to join the group and were thanked by the Chair.

### ***Student Behaviour Policy***

6.4 Noted: that NM would provide the Clerk with the updated sanctions chart.

## **7. Principal's Report**

7.1 Received: paper RCFGB/20, the Principal's Report for January 2014.

- 7.2 Noted:
- a) the Chair introduced Pip Gasson who reported on actions arising from the external review commissioned of the Science department.
  - b) that PG was working with staff in the Department to support improvements in teaching and learning and the practice of individual members of staff, to empower the acting Head of Department and to address deficiencies in quality assurance procedures.
  - c) that Ofsted had referred to issues with Science and there would need to be visible improvements across the Department by the time of the next inspection visit.
  - d) that the overall quality of science education in the College is inadequate.
  - e) that there is a shortage of well qualified Science teachers at national level which is compounded by difficulties in recruiting in a rural location. The College may need to consider financial incentives for shortage subjects to enable it to offer a competitive package. It was noted that the Finance and Personnel Committee may wish to consider the resource implications if required.
  - f) the Chair thanked PG for her input.

*[PG left the meeting].*

- 7.3 Noted:
- a) the Principal took Governors' through the report.
  - b) in all Foundation subjects the validity of the student data has been explored, each Curriculum Leader is now able to explain where the grades have come from and what they are based on, which accounts for some of the fluctuation from Assessment Point 1.
  - c) TE was working with a cohort of students to convert a half GCSE to a full GCSE in addition to core ICT time to maximize the number of qualifications achievable and support students to improve in other subjects where they are lagging behind. Students were being assessed on a case by case basis.
  - d) an enhanced level of confidence in Year 11 student progress data in light of improvements to tracking procedures.
  - e) Steve Ruddy, the consultant from Bishop Bell is looking at data systems to enable identification of students requiring interventions.
  - f) that the skills base of the SEN team would be reviewed to identify how best to deploy the skills available. Work on the implications of the changes to SEN provision at national level and its impact on Rye College students was in process.
  - g) that all staff had been asked to visit another school today for INSET and the purposes of sharing best practice and bringing new ways of working into the College.
  - h) there were no questions from Governors on the report. Governors were encouraged to contact NM or follow up issues with Curriculum Leaders.

### **New Curriculum Structure**

- 7.4 Noted: the Principal presented a new curriculum structure as set out in the presentation attached to these minutes.

- 7.5 Noted:
- a) **in response to a Governor question concerning the implications of the curriculum changes for the College's status for Arts' specialism:** the Principal responded that the changes would have a bearing but that the College would still be able to deliver excellence in arts provision.
  - b) that the curriculum changes would not have implications for the amount of funding per pupil but may affect the overall number of students on roll. Although mindful of the requirement to deliver Best 8, the changes were designed towards serving the best interests of the students to fulfil their potential and to put students in the best position to have as many options as possible.
  - c) that the 2014-2015 curriculum may need to be revisited as and when further information

becomes available.

d) that grouping students as proposed would give greater flexibility for deployment of specialist teachers.

e) that careers education and advice would run in parallel to enable students to make informed choices in their best interests.

f) that opportunities for the most able students to take GCSE's early was not seen as favourably as sitting qualifications all at the same time.

7.6 Noted:

a) that the Principal was seeking Governors' agreement to take the curriculum proposals forward. A decision was required at this meeting due to the need to comply with statutory requirements as regards notification and consultation periods should redundancies be proposed.

b) that any potential redundancies would impact at Middle Leader and Senior Leader level and were not expected to exceed five in number.

7.7 Resolved: agreement in principle to the philosophy of the new curriculum structure and the proposals as presented.

## **8. Policies**

8.1 Noted:

a) that the Admissions Policy had been withdrawn from this meeting and would be presented on a future date in order to comply with requirements set down by County to consult on changes.

b) that consideration of the other policies on the agenda be deferred to the next meeting.

## **9. Governor Monitoring**

9.1 Noted:

a) the Principal reported that each subject area has been asked to identify priorities for their area which would be circulated to Governors.

b) changes are being made to the way in which homework is monitored which Governors may wish to follow up in the next round of Monitoring visits.

## **10. Report from the Rye College Finance and Personnel Committee**

10.1 Noted:

a) the Chair of the Committee gave an oral update on business.

b) the Chair had met with the Chairman of the RAT Finance Committee and discussed the possible requirement for additional resources to support the restructure consultation process. There was recognition that historically the Rye College budget has been underspent and that this could be called upon if necessary.

c) that a reduction of numbers on the Finance and Personnel Committee might be advisable in the light of the need for a pool of Governors to be available to sit on Appeals Committees.

## **11. RAT Update**

11.1 Received: paper RCFGB/26, a summary report of business considered by the RAT Board.

11.2 Noted: there were no comments on the report.

## **12. Health and Safety**

- 12.1 Noted:
- a) that there were no new safety issues to report.
  - b) there had been no reply to the letter sent in response to the accident described at 5.2 (c) above. The leak was proving very difficult to track down and resolve.
  - c) that the porches at the student entrance were effectively finished and had turned out very well.
  - d) that a capital bid was being put together for replacement of the remaining windows in Rye College.
  - e) that upgrading of the hall electricity infrastructure was required.
  - f) the Chair reported that Peter Savory had agreed to take on the portfolio for estates and health and safety on the Governing Body, shadowing DC initially and thanked PS for agreeing to take this on.

**13. Any Other Business**

***Complaints Committee***

- 13.1 Noted: that there would be a need to set up a Complaints Committee to hear a complaint under Stage 4 of the College's complaints policy.

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

- 14.1 Noted: that the Governing Body would meet on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 6.00pm.

*Meeting closed: 20.45*