

Weald Of Kent Grammar School
Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Trustee Board
7th November 2023 at 6pm



Trustees Present	Richard Booth - HT Chris Eades (Chair) – CE James Hill – JH Robin Jones -RJ	Liz Kinnersley - LK William Varley – WV Victoria Tomalin - VT
Apologies	Kim Jiskoot - KJ	Toby Fountain – TF
Absent	None	
In attendance	Mason Willis Karen Marr - Clerk	CFO TEP Clerk

Item	Main discussions and agreed actions	Action by
PROCEDURAL		
1	Welcome, Apologies and Quorum	
	The chair welcomed everyone – especially RJ – new member appointed trustee.	
2	Declarations of interest	
	There were no new declarations of interest, governors were reminded to update their interests on GovernorHub. Trustees were also expected to undertake The Governance Safeguarding Training and upload their certificates to their training record on GovernorHub.	Trustees
3	Minutes of the last meetings – FTB 18th September 2023 & EFTB 16th October 2023	
	Non-confidential minutes from the 18 th September 2023 FTB were approved. Confidential minutes from the 18 th September 2023 were approved. Confidential minutes from the 16 th October 2023 EFTB meeting were approved.	
For Discussion and Agreement		
4	Structure	
	Moved to later in the meeting.	
5	Policies	
	Moved to later in the meeting.	
6	6th Form Provision	
	Moved to later in the meeting.	
7	Finance	
	The audit was about to take place for the year ended 31/8/23. End of year surplus was predicted to be £200k however the accounts system had taken time to correct. The team were confident that income and staffing were now correct. It was intended to contribute towards the capital costs from the surplus. The original year end estimates had been used to build the budget and therefore there could be improvements to the budgeted position. There was a need to look at the staffing structure – as this was predicted to be 84% of income when the benchmark was 75%. Trustee question: Did the school receive any additional funding for the split site? No, but the CFO had received a survey to respond to – may feature in future funding. Trustees discussed the timeline for decisions on staffing eg following GCSE and A level option choices. The decision around the 6th form would also impact future staffing. Trustee question: Did most staff see out the academic year? A: Yes, generally but there was some in-year movement. Requested information had been sent to the EFSA.	
6	6th Form Provision	
	The trustees referred to the circulated documents: Trustee question: As pupil numbers dictated the income, where would the savings come from? The costings provided show	

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savings through staffing with consolidated teaching. Cost savings would not be realised until there were changes amongst the staff. **Trustee question: Were there any subjects where staff only taught at 6th form?** Some eg Economics but the same staff teach Business Studies at GCSE. Psychology and Sociology were the most popular subjects and the hardest to recruit. Business and Economics teachers were also hard to recruit with only 5 teachers of Economics qualifying across the country last year. Economics was not offered at Sevenoaks. **Trustee question: Do some staff teach A level at both TON and SEV?** Media, Drama and DT were only taught at TON. **Trustee question: Would teachers stay at SEV if not teaching A level?** A: This was an issue to resolve. Most teachers were site specific with HoD's moving between sites. The school direct staff to which site. There was a danger that staff would request only TON so that they could teach A level which could lead to recruitment and retention issues. Trustees discussed the ways in which staff could move site to teach A level. Staff may look to move schools should the decision be made to close 6th form at SEV. Trustees agreed that there was no easy option and a decision needed to be made to balance the school's budget. Trustees discussed the reserves held and whether these could be used to invest in improving facilities to ensure the 6th form's future.

Trustees agreed that to attract more students to SEV a dedicated 6th form space was needed. No option for this was forthcoming from discussions with the boys' grammar school who confirmed that they would not be offering a 6th form provision when the time came for their students.

Trustees discussed that there was no 6th form grammar school in the SEV area and that this should help to drive recruitment. There was concern that without a 6th form some of the big sister communication opportunities would be lost e.g., 6th form running clubs and being there to support the younger students.

There was disparity and discontent between the two sites eg amount of marking needed based on class sizes. Issues at SEV included transport and no dedicated 6th form space although it was felt that rooming wise a 200 strong 6th form could be accommodated.

Trustee question: Were the students and staff aware that, if the 6th form were to continue, some changes would be necessary? A: This had not yet been clarified.

There was a consensus that with the boys grammar students needing 6th form places in two years and the lack of an alternative 6th form grammar locally there should be a way to establish a thriving 6th form at SEV.

Trustees discussed retention numbers and the challenges around retaining students into the 6th form, even if an 80% retention rate could be achieved a further 50 students would need to be recruited. Current numbers are not hitting this target. It was believed that parents had an aspiration of a seven-year journey for the students through the school. The common room, café and mezzanine at TON were a draw for students.

Trustees agreed that there was a need for time and space to review the SEV provision.

The numbers of students indicating the desire to study A levels at SEV was low and this was forcing the consideration of the longer-term position. Numbers of external students admitted could be reduced to accommodate the SEV students at TON.

It was agreed that the unique selling point of Weald was the inclusive nature of the school and the successes with 75-80% of students gaining their first choice at university. What was missing was the sense of belonging.

Trustees agreed that the 6th form provision at SEV should be paused with a plan to reintroduce the provision in three years' time. At this point the plans of the other school on the site would be known and the site could be better planned and a prepared for a 6th form.

Trustees decided that whilst they would like to commit to a 6th form for the current year 9 it would be better to take time to carry out a full review of the options and look at how

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	<p>the site could be used. The agreement was the 6th form would only be run at the TON site for the next two years, SEV students have the same access to TON 6th form as the TON students. The majority of trustees approved this decision. It was clarified that there were no planned changes for the current year's 12 & 13 at SEV.</p> <p>Following this decision there was a need to look at ways to balance the budget. EFSA support would be sought, and an element of natural wastage was expected to be seen with recruitment and retention needing a strategic plan.</p> <p>The HT to send some suggested messaging to the trustees for urgent circulation as the 6th form open evenings were imminent.</p>	HT
4	Structure	
	<p>Nevita Pandya resigned as at the date of the last meeting. Geoff Marshall had also resigned effective immediately. Active trustee recruitment was underway with the potential for two new trustees to be added to the board. It was agreed to wait for new recruits to be brought on board before making changes to committee membership except for Robin Jones joining QofE, CE would chair the next meeting with a view to RJ chairing thereafter. Geoff Marshall had resigned, Kim Jiskoot was unavailable until Jan 24. The Safeguarding and Personal Development monitoring would be continued as a monitoring pair until sufficient trustees to meet as a committee.</p> <p>The HT had attended a training session on suspensions and exclusions. Due to the process a panel of trustees could be needed if a suspension was appealed and if an exclusion happened. There was training available for trustees and the HT would send a link.</p>	HT
8	Stakeholders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice <p>Feedback from student voice included complaints about the toilets – the HT planned to speak to the premises team.</p> <p>Trustees were encouraged by the number of students saying they felt safe in school however the feedback on the SEV buses, the HT planned to contact the other schools on the SEV site to discuss the concerns raised. All bar one student had a trusted adult they could talk to, the consensus was that issues such as bullying were being dealt with. There was good feedback on student services.</p> <p>Consistency in the application of the Behaviour Policy was considered good at TON but not as good at SEV – this was included in the HT report.</p>	HT HT
5	Policies	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions Policy 2025-26 – trustees noted the increase in Pupil Premium (PP) spaces, this reflected the policy of another local grammar school. The issue with the postcode for 6th form allocation was also resolved. Trustees approved the policy with one amendment – add the word “highest” before average on number 6. • Bursary Policy – Trustee question: Did the policy meet the needs of the PP students? A: This could not be specified in the policy, but the HT agreed to follow up on the question. Trustee question: What were the amounts for levels two and three? HT to check. Policy was approved subject to the information requested. • Career Policy & Statement on Provider Access 2023-24. Approved – noting that CE surname misspelt. • SEND Policy & Information Report 2023-24 SEND policy approved – report to be discussed at next FTB. Trustees noted that an external review of SEND was planned. 	HT HT Clerk
9	Operational Update	
	<p>The refined behaviour policy gave autonomy to staff over the sanctions with a positive focus. Regular feedback from staff and students would be sought, there was a need for understanding of the policy and for staff to commit to the policy for it to work. House points outweighed any negative points and the number of students in detention was low.</p>	

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	<p>Trustee question: What was the issue around truancy? It was 6th formers not turning up for lessons – the students were picked up and dealt with. Trustees requested that percentages were added to the reported numbers to aid proportionality.</p> <p>The HT reported that there was some low-level disruption, and it was taking a while for staff autonomy in this area to bed in. The students were appreciative of the focus on positive behaviour. Staff were ensuring that students were clear about why they were in detention. The SLT were encouraging consistency amongst the staff and were supporting staff with managing behaviour. Trustee question: How frequently were staff reminded about the new approach? A: Approximately every three weeks. Simplifying the process was appreciated by both staff and students. Trustee question: was there a consistent way of delivering the positive behaviour point? A: Yes, usually in front of the class, the e-postcards were going down well. The next step was looking at the house system.</p> <p>Sixth form process was to be in-person to make it a more supportive process. Care needed to not undermine the admissions criteria but offer flexibility on appeal. The message to year 11's was that they were wanted, the school wanted them to stay in the 6th form and support them to make their decisions. It was agreed that the 6th form evening at SEV would not go ahead and that all SEV year 11's would be encouraged to attend at TON. A year 11 celebration event was planned recognising effort and defined success rather than outcomes, the plans included a PTA funded activity, revision skills, a BBQ and a celebration event.</p> <p>Trustees were advised that the school were looking to appoint someone to focus on marketing including social media, taking photographs, and updating the website. The message around the 6th form experience needed to be clear and useful. Trustee question: Could we say a "Girls school for Girls" when external 6th form applicants could be boys? A: Revised to "A school that listens to you, this is your school"</p> <p>Trustee question: Where was the voice of existing students in promoting the 6th form? A: Current students would be speaking and helping on the evening. It was suggested that a student from SEV taking A levels at TON could be useful and that further discussion between the sites should be encouraged.</p> <p>Trustees noted the report on disadvantaged students and were encouraged to see PP monitored into the 6th form. The school's progress 8 measure for PP students was 0.13 compared to a national figure of -0.6.</p> <p>The whole school progress 8 figure was 0.87 adding significant value and was the top performing school in Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. The challenge was to ensure that the progress continued into the 6th form.</p> <p>Trustee question: How many PP students did not stay at WoK to do A Level? A: this statistic was unknown. Trustees discussed the in-school PP gap, and it was agreed that the PP strategy document would be taken to the QofE committee.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the idea of a PP champion should be supported.</p>	QofE comm
10	Training	
	No further discussion	
OTHER		
11	AOB	
15	Confidentiality	
	None	

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16	Next meeting date	
	6pm, Monday 11 th December 2023 at Tonbridge followed by 7.30pm AGM with members.	
	The meeting closed at 21:54	

Actions Log 12.07.22

Name	Item	Action	By when
Chair	3.3	Review Articles of Association	Hold for now

Actions Log 06.03.23

Name	Item	Action	By when
Trustees	5	Provide a short bio and send to the Clerk	ASAP
HT	5	Arrange staff noticeboard in Sevenoaks	ASAP
Trustees	6	Undertake safeguarding training	Urgent
HT	10	Book further trustee Ofsted training	Ongoing

Actions Log 24.08.23

Name	Item	Action	By when
HT	4	Benchmarking of non-contact time	
TF	4	Income generation working party	
TF/HT/ MW/FM	4	Review EFSA action plan	

Actions Log 07.12.23

Name	Item	Action	By when
Trustees	2	Undertake governance of safeguarding training and upload certificate to GovHub	ASAP
HT	6	Send suggested messaging to trustees re 6 th form	immediately
HT	4	Send Exclusions training link to trustees	ASAP
HT	8/1	Speak to premises team re student concerns re toilets	ASAP
HT	8/2	Consult with other HTs @ SEV re behaviour concerns on the buses	ASAP
HT	5/1	Small amendment to admissions policy	ASAP
HT	5/2	Check levels in Bursary policy	ASAP
Clerk	5/3	SEND report to next FGB	T2
QofE	9	Review PP Strategy statement	T2