

The John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre (JKHS&SFC)
Interim Independent Chair of Governors Impact Statement.
Paul Deneen OBE JP DL - July 2024

Introduction

The Local Board of Governors acts as a sub-committee of the Heart of Mercia Multi Academy Trust (HOM MAT). It has been set up by the HOM MAT to 'support and challenge' and 'hold to account' the Headteacher and Senior Leaders regarding the work undertaken at the school.

The Local Board of Governors are very keen to ensure that the staff, parents/carers, students and the community are kept up to date with governance information at the John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre.

For the meeting in July, we agreed to implement 'Governance, Strategic Leadership and Planning-2024/25,' a copy of which has been placed on the Governors section of the school website for everyone's information.

As Chair of the Local Board of Governors, I have also reported on the work undertaken by the Local Board of Governors at the school to the HOM MAT Trust Board, which has overall responsibility for the governance of the Trust which includes JKHS&SFC.

1. Governors - Update

We will shortly have details, pen portraits and photographs of Governors on the school website. We were delighted to welcome Huw Lewis MBE (Community), and Eve Bound (Community) as two new Governors. The full Governors now include:- Myself (Community), Moira Lee (Community and Vice Chair), Charlie Yemm (Parent), Frances O'Brien (Parent), Jess Fawkes (Parent), Mark Finning (Community), and Neil Pritchard (Staff), and Julian Morgan (Headteacher). Katie Evans is the Clerk to the Governors.

In April, I was involved with the Vice Chair and Headteacher as part of the 'Strategic Group' in arranging 1:1 meetings with each Governor to talk through Governor interests, thoughts and ideas regarding the proposed new Working Group Structures.

In addition to the Full Governors meetings, the Governors agreed that there will be Working Groups set up for each of the following key areas of activity at the school:- Safeguarding, SEND, Stakeholders and Standards. Each Governor would attend at least one Working Group, though any Governor was free to attend any working group.

After reflecting on the groups, the Governors decided to set up the 4 groups for:-

i) Safeguarding + Working Group

ii) SEND+ Working Group (to include Inclusion).

iii) Stakeholders+ Working Group to include staff voice, student voice and parent and carer voice, as well as seeking to develop closer links with the local community as part of the input from the stakeholder groups within Ross-on-Wye and District. A JKHS&SFC Stakeholder Forum would be set up, and an event would be arranged each term, with invites being sent out to key individuals involved within the stakeholder groups.

iv) Standards+ Working Group to consider student attendance, behaviour, student performance, pupil premium/support for any disadvantaged students, the JKHS School curriculum/Accessing the

school's curriculum. It will also consider enrichment and extra curricular work and educational visits and activities and all.

2. Headteacher's Report - July Meeting

a) For the July meeting the Headteacher (HT) provided a detailed and comprehensive report on all aspects of the activities of the school. Governors asked pertinent questions as part of the 'holding to account,' and support and challenge. The HT spent some time considering the TEACH agenda - This included information on Teaching and learning, Engagement, Academic outcomes, Community and High quality leadership. The HT talked about the 'JKHS Way,' which would ensure a clear focus for staff and students. Curriculum developments would look at ensuring everyone had an opportunity to maximise their potential. Attendance is an area which is being well supported, so that each student attends on a regular basis. Student tracking and assessment would help with improving student performance. It was also important that everything being undertaken was 'Quality Assured.'

b) In addition, there was discussion on the **Ready, Respectful and Resilient** agenda. A new behaviour policy and programme had been introduced. Phase One had been completed and phase Two was in-situ ready for implementation. There had been conversations with the students and the staff regarding the initiative, and feedback received was being discussed and actioned by the HT and Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Governors were fully supportive of the new innovative approach, and this had been well received by staff, students and by parents and carers.

c) Governors took the opportunity to thank the Headteacher and staff for the excellent way in which students had been supported for the GCSE and A Level examinations, which was greatly appreciated.

d) In addition, there had been superb enrichment activities, sports, trips and visits organised and arranged for the students which had been well received by all. The school held its own 'General Election.' The school garden is being refurbished and will be a useful area where students can become more interested in horticulture. Exhibitions have been arranged. End of Year 11 and End of Year 13 Events had been organised and had been well attended and supported, and were enjoyed by all. It has been a very busy term.

e) Visits by local primary schools and visits to local primary schools had been excellent. Feedback had been most positive.

f) Attendees at the Sixth Form Induction Event had realised 130 students which was excellent.

3). Governors, HT, CEx HOM MAT, Senior Leaders - 'Away Morning' event

In June, Governors attended a strategic training event which was held on a Saturday morning. It involved the HT, Chief Executive of the HOM MAT, Senior Leaders, the Clerk and Governors. It provided an excellent outline of the work of the school, and the progress into the next phase of development.

Detailed Briefing papers on key issues were presented to each small groups of governors by the HT and Senior Leaders. The following areas were discussed:-

- a) The HT gave a detailed overview of the school and all that was proposed in relation to strategic direction.

- b) Governors were briefed and had the opportunity to question HT/Senior Leaders on the new 'Ready - Respectful - Resilient JKHS&SFC Behaviour Policy.'
- c) There was also the opportunity to receive an update on the proposed 'HUB,' which would be in use in the new them to support pupils - SEMH, SEND, and EBSA. There would also be the new Student Support Centre, which would house JKHS&SFC internal and external support services.
- d) A detailed paper on 'Summary of Teaching and Learning Actions,' was also presented which outlined the current provision, what had been done, its impact, and work which would be considered as next steps.
- e) Governors were updated on student attendance and were able to review school data. This included information on all students, as well as providing a breakdown on SEND/Pupil Premium etc. Areas of concern were discussed. Detailed work was being planned, and the impact and work still to do was outlined.
- f) There was a detailed paper on 'Raising Standards.' This considered the current position as well as considering the work which would be undertaken to improve things for 24/25.
- g) The Chair/Vice Chair would be briefed on the Curriculum Model for JKHS.
- h) Presentations, papers and useful discussions took place. A report was being prepared which would provide useful feedback from the group work which was undertaken. Governors felt it was almost useful opportunity to meet with HOM - MAT staff as well as receiving an update on key areas of activity. The direction of travel was most positive and encouraging.

4). Local Governor's Handbook and National Governance Association (NGA) and Governor Hub (GH)

The school is working on producing a Handbook for members of The Local Governing Board. This will provide useful information about the school, its governance structures as well as advice on governor roles and all. The NGA and GH also provides useful support advice and training. All governors undertake training on safeguarding and understanding the DfE 'Prevent' agenda. All Governors have been checked to enhanced level by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

5). Refreshing the Model of Governance - Discussions took place with individual governors on the importance of a Local Governance Model which all felt to be 'Fit for purpose.' As Chair I drafted a proposed Model of Local Governance which would easily fit into the HOM MAT Model of Governance. The local Board of Governors unanimously agreed this model.

6). Governor Visits and Involvement in the School - Summer Term

There have been a number of visits to the school since the last governors meeting held in March. These have included meetings/discussions regarding:-

- i) Safeguarding - Governors have been updated and briefed on all key issues and support involved. A detailed report was considered by the Governors on all key issues.

- j) SEND - Governors have been updated and briefed on all key issues. The proposed changes for support from September, which includes additional input/facilities at the 'Hub' and 'Haven' is fully supported by the Governors.
- k) c) SLT - As Chair I attended and observed an early morning briefing involving the HT and the Senior Leadership Team.
- l) Staff Briefings - Governors have attended the Monday morning briefing sessions. Governors have also received various updates from the Headteacher in relation to key issues on student behaviour, results, attendance, student intake, school budget, staffing and involvement with the local community.
- m) 'Fab Friday' - Governors have observed the staff 'thank you' event held each Friday morning before school. Suitably named as 'Fab Friday' as it recognises staff's input into the school, as well as thanking staff and recognising birthdays.
- n) Rewards Days - These have been a great success, and form part of the RRR agenda. It has been well received by students and staff.
- o) Student Council/Student Voice - The Vice Chair and I attended a meeting of the School Student Council, and listened to their thoughts, views and observations. Definitely a feeling of 'You said - We did,' in relation to feedback and actions. Some ideas about a summer school uniform will be considered as part of an update review.
- p) Staff Voice - The Vice Chair and I spent some time talking to a range of staff about their work and role and listened to their views about the school. All were complimentary about the very supportive leadership provided by the Headteacher.
- q) Parent/Carer Voice - There are a number of Parent Governors who are able to provide feedback, and surveys are also carried out so that the school is able to understand the views of parents/carers. We will look at how we might improve communications early next term. The Weekly Bulletin was felt to be excellent in relation to providing updates and information, and celebrating student success.
- r) Sixth Form Student Leadership Team - A new sixth form student leadership team has been elected/appointed, and we congratulate them on their appointment. During next term, I will meet with them and I hope to involve the team in aspects of school governance.
- s) Year 11 and Year 13 and Examinations at GCSE and A level and BTEC - Governors have been briefed about the examinations and projected results. The behaviour of the students during the examination period was excellent. We will look forward to receiving a full update, breakdown and briefing on the results in September. Students were able to celebrate their leaving via the special events arranged by staff and students. The Year 11 students were 'clapped' as they left school to prepare for their examinations, and were welcomed back to enjoy their 'School Prom.' Year 13 also had their own celebration locally.

Huge thanks to all staff for their input and support, particularly the Head of Year 11 and team and the Head of Sixth Form and team.

- t) Democracy Week - This went exceptionally well, and students were provided with their own election experience. This was arranged as part of the school's Democracy week and the British 'DREAM' and the importance of its values of **Democracy**, **Rule of law**, **Experiencing individual liberty**, **Acceptance**, **Mutual Respect**.
- u) Careers - A terrific amount of work is undertaken to support students via the service provided by the school - much appreciated.
- v) HOM MAT - As Chair I have attended meetings to discuss budgets and finances, staffing and also attend the Chair's Group of Governors at the HOM MAT. Peter Cooper (Chief Executive) and Ken Hopkins (Chair) have been very supportive indeed of the new set up at JKHS&SFC.

7). JKHS&SFC Stakeholder Forum - Update - As part of the new governance model, the school will be arranging a termly JKHS&SFC Stakeholder Forum. This will involve themes which will be of benefit to the students at the school. The first theme will be on volunteering. The first Forum was due to take place in early July, though this coincided with the date of the General Election, and so a new date will be agreed for the Autumn term, and community members will be invited to attend a briefing and meet with the students and staff. This will consider opportunities that students might offer to volunteer in the local community, as well as what the community members might be able to offer in relation to volunteering which would benefit the school. Other themes under consideration include - i) The World of Work and ii) Inclusion.

8). Governor Planner/Involvement and Governor Training and Development - As Chair I will be developing an individual termly planner with governors, so that governors are provided with opportunities to meet with students and staff to understand key aspects of the school. I also want governors to undertake relevant on-line training and development which will assist them with their work as governors.

9). School Website - Update

The Governance section of the school website has been updated and includes all relevant information as suggested by the DfE.

10). My Thanks

As the new Interim Independent Chair of the Local Board of Governors, I set myself a challenge of producing an updated and refreshed Model of Governance which was simple and was 'fit for purpose.' This has now been discussed with the Headteacher and all Governors and has been agreed as an effective 'blueprint' for future working. A copy is now on the school website. Just over 100 days since my appointment, I believe that a considerable amount has been achieved in a short period of time. I am most grateful to the HT, Vice Chair of Governors, the Chief Executive and the Chair of the HOM MAT, Governors, Senior Leaders, The Clerk, HOM MAT Clerk, the Staff and Students at the school for their encouragement, advice, help and support which has been much appreciated. I am also most grateful to all the parents/carers for their great support of the school which is much appreciated.

Conclusion

Students are at the heart of all that is undertaken at the school. The Headteacher along with Senior Leaders have implemented the TEACH agenda, RRR, and effectively a new 'The John Kyrle Way.' This has been very well received by the staff and students.

Governance was raised as an issue at the last OFSTED visit. I think it is fair to say that we are in a much better and improved position to be able to evidence that the governor input is efficient and effective. All governors have a clear understanding of their role and their work. The governance arrangements reflect the important areas of activity at the school, which we will be closely monitoring:- Safeguarding, SEND, Stakeholders and Standards.

It is interesting to note that there are very few teaching staff leaving this year. This information acts as important evidence to governors about the culture and ethos, and also evidences of a much more happy and cohesive staff. When the Vice Chair and I chatted to the staff, students (and informally to parents/carers outside of school and anecdotally), one recurring theme came through and that was that all had been achieved had been inspired by the excellent leadership of the Headteacher, Julian Morgan.

I take this opportunity to thank him and his team for the transformational work undertaken in a relatively short period of time, which is making a difference and which is much appreciated.

I hope that you have found this report to have been of interest and of value and thank you for taking the time to read it - greatly appreciated.

Paul Deneen

Interim Independent Chair of Governors

July 2024