



Welcome to Mr Byers

The governing board was delighted to welcome Mr Byers to our first full board meeting in September. Governors had already worked with Mr Byers at our Self Evaluation Review workshop in July. It was helpful that he was able to present his vision for the school before the end of the year.

Mr Byers is ambitious for the school and wants to see it return to an Ofsted judgement of Good as quickly as possible. He recognises that a strong and pro-active governing board is essential if the school is to drive forward rapidly.

New ways of working for governors can be found on the school website. Six full governing board meetings per year, three committees linked to the Ofsted framework and individual link governors will ensure that governors are pro-active and well placed to both support and challenge the school. Mr Byers has moved from Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham. This is a high achieving school and, consequently, he knows that Framwellgate School Durham (a similar school) has all the potential to achieve at the highest level. Governors simply want to do all they can to support him.

Further details on the way governors are working this year can be found on the school website.

Thanks to Amanda Hopgood for her part in securing funding for the public artwork installed at the new sports hall entrance

Amanda is one of our most experienced governors. She was able to secure £24,000 from section 106 funding for public artwork. This has been used to fund a large sculpture of a climber on a rock face at the entrance to the new sports hall. The sculpture is called **#what's next?** It was designed by Ian Gill, an award winning sculptor, who has been designing and creating works of art out of metal for 20 years. He exhibits widely and his work is held extensively by collectors across the UK and Europe. Ian attended the opening of the sports hall on September 20th when he met up with the art & design students with whom he worked when creating his design. The climber makes an impressive statement at the entrance to a fantastic building.

The funding, which was also used for the purchase of equipment and training for students in 3D design, will ensure that there is a lasting legacy from this project for the future.

Governing Board Skills Audit July 2017

The DfE governance handbook 2017 states that *“Boards should carry out regular audits of the skills they possess in the light of the skills and competences they need, taking account of the department’s*



Competency framework for governance”. The N.G.A.’s skills audit was used last term to identify strengths and areas for development.

The audit demonstrated strong responses, as you would expect, from a

group working in a range of professional roles. All governors scored 5 (the highest) on *“commitment to improving education and welfare for all pupils”.* The scores indicated that the areas for development are focused on educational issues where governors currently have limited knowledge or would like to know more. These areas included:-

- Current national education policy and the local education context.
- Safeguarding duties including Prevent
- An understanding of SEN and disabilities
- Preparing for Ofsted inspection

The scores indicated that further work is needed on:-

- Engagement including communicating with and taking account of the views of parents and pupils.
- Promoting community cohesion.
- Ensuring governors have information and data needed to hold leaders to account.

Further training will help to address these issues.

Governing Board meetings will have a school specific training element which will keep governors up to date with educational changes.

The Skills Audit will be completed annually, thus enabling the Local Governing Board to focus on its core purpose to oversee the strategic direction of the school, to monitor standards and to be held accountable to the Trust Board for its performance.

The Skills Audit summary and commentary can be found in full on the school website.

Welcome to two new governors:-

Richard Royle – Headteacher at Elemore Hall School, Richard has skills and knowledge in SEND and Special education. He has two sons in the school.

Jo-Anne O’Driscoll – Is a member of the senior management team in the County Durham Youth Offending Service with skills in system development and performance. She has one son in the school.