



Governor Training – Autumn term 2018

Governors took part in the following training run by Durham L.A. last term:-

- School Complaints
- Social deprivation and Pupil Premium
- County Durham Cultural Education Partnership
- Chairing committees and effective meetings
- Minute taking
- Self Evaluation and action planning
- PE and Sports funding
- Safeguarding and PREVENT
- Chairs' briefings

Knives and Schools

There has been increased focus in the media recently on young people carrying knives. In 1988 it was made a specific offence to possess a knife in school. Staff do not need consent to search a student for a knife. Further measures considered by parliament, including widening the knife ban to F.E. colleges. 10 to 17 year olds represent roughly 20% of those cautioned or convicted of knife offences i.e. possession of a knife or threatening someone with one.

In the light of these concerns governors considered the wording of the school's behaviour and exclusions policy at their Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare meeting in January 2019.

Mr Byers blogs

Since September 2018 year Mr Byers has been writing a regular blog. Although he said initially "I really don't have time for this" he has written on a range of topics including:-

- Funding issues including Sixth form funding
- Assessment and the use of GCSE grades
- Homework
- Teacher recruitment
- Behaviour and exclusions
- Knowledge organisers
- Teaching and learning

These blogs give governors and parents an insight into the complexity of running a large school and the wide range of issues which are dealt with on a day to day basis.

Governor Up-date

January 2019

Curriculum & Assessment

Mr Byers led a training session for governors on assessment as part of their LGB meeting in November. This followed from his September 9th blog entitled "**GCSE grades: There's a time and place**". Since the demise of assessment levels individual schools have had to devise their own assessment systems. There is a considerable amount of research available in relation to this, including a book made available to governors – "Making good progress? The future of assessment" by Daisy Christodoulou.

Mr Byers explained the following changes which have been introduced this term:-

- The school is moving away from "working at" GCSE grades for Y7 to Y9 students.
- A new Curriculum and Assessment Policy was introduced this term.
- Teaching is now delivered in 10-week blocks with a consolidation week and assessments at the end of each block. The end of year assessment will test all the knowledge and skills students have learnt throughout the year.
- There will be summative and formative assessments with only three data collection points, down from six, across the year. No GCSE target grade will be assigned to students until Year 10.
- The summative assessments are written by the Head of Department. Teachers will mark each other's papers, having no prior knowledge of the assessment questions to eliminate any teaching to the test.
- The new system creates a baseline in each subject from which student performance can be ranked and tracked after each assessment. Above all, students will be compared to their peer group rather than to national data.

Reports

An example of the format of a student report was discussed. In Year 10 and 11 students will receive a predicted GCSE grade based on all their assessment data to date. **This new approach means that subject predictions will now be based on real data.** The reports, containing a significant amount of information on student performance, will be sent to parents three times a year.

Mr Byers acknowledged that the new system would take time to embed and would develop over time. Teachers have been very positive about the changes. Governors will monitor this and discuss progress with the new policy in the summer term.