

**THE GOVERNING BODY OF HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION**

**MEETING: WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2011 AT 5.00PM.**

Mr Roland Beevor  
Mr Neil Watson  
Ms Helen Gray  
Mrs Rosemary Theobalds  
Mrs Sarah Kemp  
Mrs Sarah Buchan  
Mrs Sandra Thompson  
Mr Neil Morrison (Headteacher, QEHS)  
Mrs Alison Killen  
Mr Adrian Woolley (Chair)  
Mr David Watson (Headteacher, HMS)  
Councillor J B Jonas  
Mrs Kate Gessey  
Mrs Jane Wrigley  
Mrs Sue Boath  
Mr Robin Hodnett  
Mr Alan Lynch  
Mr Peter Scaife  
Mr Simon Kitchman  
Mr Andy Byers  
Ms Di Harris  
Mr Neil Cassidy  
Mr Bill Wilson

**Also present:** Mrs Helen Pye (Clerk to Governors)  
Mr Steve Rodchester, SIP – present for Item 2

**PART 1 (Classified non-confidential)**

**Items discussed under Part 1 of this agenda will not be classified as confidential: consequently the minutes and supporting documents should be made available to any person wishing to inspect them.**

**REGULAR ITEMS**

**1. Apologies for Absence and their acceptance or otherwise**

Apologies were received and consent given for the absences of Mr Peter Oliver, Mrs Jacqueline Cameron, Mrs Annette Bedson, Mrs Angela Mole, Reverend Joanna Anderson, Ms Helen Bailey and Mrs Susan Hope.

**2. SIP Reports**

Mr Steve Rodchester, SIP, had been invited to the meeting to present a verbal report to Governors following his visit to both QEHS and HMS earlier that day. The Clerk would request that the written reports be circulated to Governors as soon as these were made available, for information.

**Action by:**

**Clerk**

### 3. **Membership Update**

The resignation of Christine Carruthers was noted – consequently a vacancy would exist for a Staff Governor (Teacher),HMS. Governors wished to record their thanks to Christine for her service to the Governing Body.

The Chair, on behalf of Governors, welcomed Mrs Sarah Kemp, recently appointed as Community Governor, to her first meeting of the Governing Body.

The Chair reported the resignation of Mr Peter Oliver, Community Governor, from the Governing Body with immediate effect.

### 4. **Declaration of personal or pecuniary interest in any agenda item**

Governors declared that they had no pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda.

### 5. **Annual Register of Governor's and Staff Interests**

The register of governor and staff interests was circulated for completion by the Governing Body. The register would be updated by staff and copies retained in each school for audit purposes.

Head

### 6. **Consider & Adopt Minutes of Governing Body Meetings**

Minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to the Governors , were adopted and signed as a true record:

- 23 March 2011.

### 7. **Matters previously referred or delegated to individuals or committees**

Governors received the written report from the Chair updating on 'matters arising' from the minutes.

Further matters arising:

Item 8 – Biometrics system for school meals.

Helen Gray expressed her concerns re the use of a biometrics system. Mr Morrison reassured Ms Gray that as an alternative method a PIN number could be issued to anyone not wanting to use the biometrics system. A consultation session had been arranged for parents which no one had attended. Any further issues were to be directed to Mr Morrison.

Item 12 – Code of Conduct

Roland Beever expressed concerns in relation to the above document, which had been adopted at the previous meeting, which were noted.

### 8. **Other Matters Arising**

There were no other matters arising.

## 9. **Receive Minutes of Committee Meetings**

Governors received the signed minutes from the following committee meetings:

Finance and Premises Committee – 5 April 2011

Finance and Premises Committee – 25 May 2011

Mr Kitchman as Chair of the committee reported on the main issues discussed at the committee. Specific reference was made to the schools' budgetary positions and the restructure/appointment to admin posts at HMS.

Community Engagement Committee – 26 May 2011 (minutes circulated separately).

Rosemary Theobalds gave a verbal update on business discussed at the meeting and recommended that Judy Lloyd be considered for the Community Governor vacancy. Governors decided to defer consideration of appointment to the vacancy at the present time.

Staffing Committee – 7 June 2011 (minutes circulated separately)

Peter Maxwell briefly summarised the business discussed at the meeting:

- Redundancy issues – update on current position from Neil Morrison.
- HMS – staffing appointments.
- Staff sickness record reported to committee.
- Single Status update – Bill Wilson commented upon the demoralising effect which this had had upon staff.

Pupil and Curriculum Development Committee (minutes circulated separately)

Committee examined HMS Ofsted report in addition to policies for both schools.

Food Policy, QEHS – suggested that a link governor for school meals might be helpful. Expressions of interest for this role to Neil Morrison.

**Committee Membership** – document circulated for information.

Noted:

- Vacancies remain on Pupil and Curriculum Development Committee and Community Engagement Committee.
- Pupil Discipline Committee – Robin Hodnett and Jacqueline Cameron to be removed from Committee due to any perceived conflict of interest.
- Agreed, membership numbers for individual committees to remain as they are.

## **SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS**

### **10. Headteachers' Reports**

Governors considered the reports from the Headteachers.

#### **Hexham Middle School**

A copy of Mr Watson's report had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting (Clerk to be supplied with a copy of the report).

Issues highlighted from the report:

- Headteacher wished to record thanks to SIP for support and challenge. SIP to revisit school early in the Autumn Term.
- Noted – staffing levels reduced, as a consequence ratio levels had increased.
- Thanks to be recorded to shortlisting panel for huge amount of work undertaken in appointing new staff to the school.
- Letter to be sent to Helena Hay expressing the school's good wishes.
- Exclusions – increased
- Attendance – currently 93.9% - extremely pleasing figure.
- Noted that there had been 77 trips out of school – over 3,000 children had participated in school outings.
- 1:1 Tuition / Fresh Start – Tremendous intervention initiatives with pleasing results. Work to continue with this. Thanks to Teaching Assistants and Teacher involved in initiative.
- Strike – 30 June 2011 – very likely school will close. Parents to be advised accordingly.
- Meeting with Neil Morrison and Leadership Teams to share ideas – particularly in the area of CPD. Mr Morrison commented upon observations he had made whilst attending other federated school's and the systems in place for reporting etc. The Chair commented that it would be useful to have a record of such meetings.

Mr Watson was thanked for his report.

#### **Queen Elizabeth High School**

A copy of Mr Morrison's report had been circulated prior to the meeting (copy filed in minute book).

Issues highlighted from the report:

- Admissions – originally expecting 290 pupils – now 299 + an extra 1 or 2 possibilities. Favourable for budget long term however there were issues in relation to group sizing etc. – management presently working on this.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Form numbers remain optimistic.
- Attendance presently at 93%. Tremendous effort put in by staff to increase attendance rates.
- Exclusions noted – 1 permanent exclusion.
- Exams – noted difficulties in terms of facilities to accommodate all of the students.
- Development Plan – progress being made against each of the key areas. SLT currently reviewing and evaluating. Various intervention strategies being used in school to raise student achievement.

- Staffing – Leavers / Appointments noted.
- Single Status – Update, enormous amount of work particularly for Sue Hope.
- Curriculum and Options – New timetable in place.
- Premises – Update on issues – Astro Turf Pitch to be replaced during the summer holidays.
- Comment made that Science GCSE was to change,

Mr Morrison was thanked for his report.

## 11. Budget Update

HMS – report by Bill Wilson:

- Out-turn - Deficit £149,000 in line with expectations.
- Budget shows credit in next 2 years.
- Applied for licensed deficit for current year.

QEHS – report by Neil Morrison, Headteacher:

- Presented financial report – anticipated deficit £165,000 – in discussion re licensed deficit application. Hopeful that recovery plan would be accepted. Governors voted in support of stance re deficit position.
- Strike Action on 30 June 2011 – Advised governors that 50+ members could potentially be on strike on this day therefore it maybe difficult to open the school!
- 

## 12. Visiting Governors' Report

Governors received and considered the written report from Kate Gessey and JB Jonas who had visited the modern foreign languages departments of each school during March/April 2011. Copies of the reports are filed in the minute book.

Robin Hodnett made particular reference to the fact that the report made judgements on teaching which was clearly not in line with the 'Code of Conduct'.

As a result of discussion Mr Morrison commented:

- For the process to work well more preparation should be done prior to the visit.
- Clear objectives re the purpose of the visit should be set.

Furthermore, Governors received the report from Lindsey Bevan, Head of MFL Dept, QEHS. (Agreed – confidential report not for public domain).

Visits agreed for the Autumn term:

Sarah Buchan / Adrian Woolley – Science  
 Simon Kitchman / Sandra Thompson – History  
 Alison Killen / Jane Wrigley – Pastoral Support.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS –**

**Copies of documents available on the personnel page at:**

**[www.northumberlandlea.net](http://www.northumberlandlea.net)**

**13. Update of HR Policies and Procedures**

Governors were reminded that every HR Policy and Procedure that was currently part of the Personnel LMS Manual was to be updated over time. These updates are driven by legal requirements, particularly the Equality Act that came into being in October 2010. Governors particularly noted that all Trade Unions had been consulted and were in agreement.

**Managing Underperformance Procedure**

Governors noted that this procedure replaces the capability section of the current Capability & Disciplinary Procedure for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Church of England Voluntary Aided Schools. Governors also noted that Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools might choose to adopt this procedure for all staff or for support staff only. Governors further noted that a revised Disciplinary Procedure would be provided at a later date.

Governors agreed to delegate consideration of the procedure to the Staffing Committee.

**Staffing  
Committee**

**Flexible Working Policy**

Governors noted that this was a new, school specific policy designed primarily to assist staff with caring responsibilities. It was further noted that whilst this policy is open to all staff, the rights under employment law apply only to parents or guardians of children under 17 or under 18 if the child is disabled and to carers of adults.

Governors agreed to delegate consideration of the policy to the Staffing Committee.

**Staffing  
Committee**

**Sickness Absence Policy**

Governors noted that this new policy replaced existing documentation and aimed to maximise attendance and to provide an effective, fair, sensitive and easily understood mechanism for dealing with sickness absence in schools. Governors noted that the new policy and guidelines would apply to all employees in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Governors also noted that Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools might choose to adopt this policy as appropriate.

Governors agreed to delegate consideration of the policy to the Staffing Committee.

**Staffing  
Committee**

**14. Repeal of Age Retirement Provisions**

Governors noted the repeal of the compulsory age retirement legislation and that as a consequence, Northumberland County Council had decided that it could not objectively justify imposing an organisation wide retirement age from October 2011. It was noted that this would apply to all community and voluntary controlled schools.

**Staffing  
Committee**

Agreed – Staffing Committee to give further consideration to report.

## **CONCLUDING ITEMS**

### **15. Urgent Business**

Governors considered Part II of agenda – confidential business.

The Chair, on behalf of governors presented Bill Wilson with a gift to mark his retirement from HMS. He wished him a long and very happy retirement.

### **16. Date of Future Meeting**

Governors agreed the date of the Autumn term meeting as follows:

- Wednesday 9 November 2011.  
Time to be confirmed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chair**