

# **Governing Body Report for the Academic Year 2018 – 2019**

## **Purpose of a Governing Body**

The 3 core strategic functions of the Governing Body of Steyning Grammar School are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

This is a requirement for all governing bodies.

## **Our structure**

Our Governing Body through the year had 16 Governors of whom:

- 4 were Foundation Governors (the vicar of Steyning and the Rector of Ashurst), a Diocese appointment and 2 from the Steyning Grammar School Foundation (Charity number: 307031)
- 7 Co-opted Governors
- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Representative
- 1 Staff Governor
- Head Teacher.

There were also 4 Associate Governing Body Members. Associate Members support the school and join in discussions but cannot make decisions, and attendance at Full Governing Body meetings is optional. They sit on Sub-Committees and bring their expertise and specific skills to support the school. By doing so, the school benefits from their expertise.

Due to the size and complexity of the school the Governing Body delegates part of its workload to a number of Sub-Committees.

These are:

- Boarding Committee
- Curriculum and Assessment Committee
- Business Committee

- Student & Staff Welfare and Development Committee

These Committees meet at least once a term and this is in addition to the 4 Full Governing Body meetings held each academic year.

Each Head of Faculty has a Link Governor who reports into the Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

There are also Governors with specific remits who act on behalf of the Governing Body, and who report into either a Committee or the Full Governing Body on the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs
- Inclusion
- Collective Worship and Chaplaincy
- Pupil Premium
- Health & Safety
- Governor Training
- School Council
- Induction

Governors' attendance at meetings this year has been very good. Full details of individual governor's attendance can be found on the school website in the 'Governors' section. On the website you can also see our Register of Business Interests. Our Governing Body has adopted a code of conduct which reflects the individual governor's role and the behaviours that are expected.

### **Academic Year 2018 – 2019**

As always this has been a very busy year for the school and the Governing Body - rising to the challenges that the current financial position of schools in West Sussex find themselves, increasing pressure and workload on staff and ongoing curriculum changes in an uncertain political environment.

The majority of the work of committees focuses on the School Development Plan which identifies the priorities for the school and actions needed to achieve them. To ensure that the Governing Body has adequate skills to monitor this effectively there is an individualised training program for each Governor depending upon the role they undertake. As a group the Governing Body has sufficient skills to fulfil its purpose.

Monitoring our pupil progress is at the heart of what we do and is a particular focus of the **Curriculum & Assessment Committee**. Not only

does the Committee scrutinise public examination results but also the current in-year progress of each year group through the Key Stages, and progress within each Faculty. Additional focus is given to Pupil Premium students. Particular scrutiny this year has been given to the core subjects (English and Maths) and ensuring that appropriate student interventions are in place, where needed, to ensure the best possible progress for all students. This has been linked to Learning Character and Optimism data, which has shown strong correlations to student progress. A more positive Learning Character and Optimism score of a student is linked to a stronger student progress. Steyning Grammar School, therefore, continues to focus on developing the whole student and not just academic development. This is evidenced in the changes to student reports and award ceremonies each year, as well as Induction material and Next Steps records within the Sixth Form.

**The Business Committee** has worked very closely with the Leadership Team to ensure that public money is used effectively and in such a challenging financial climate prudent steps are being taken to anticipate future financial pressures. Sixth Form funding is particularly challenging. Steyning Grammar School runs three budgets; Day School, Boarding and Catering. The Business Committee spends time monitoring each of these. Health & Safety is delegated to this Committee, as is GDPR. Health & Safety has been a particular focus this year. Central Government funding has been obtained and work to replace the huts began in July. West Sussex County Council has provided funding to make the Shooting Field site safer with the installation of perimeter fencing.

**The Boarding Committee** continues to monitor Boarders' progress, both academically and personally. Not only was the Boarding provision judged Outstanding by OFSTED in all categories this year, but OFSTED made no recommendations. The role of the Boarding Committee involves monitoring and supervision of progress on Boarders' health, education and emotional, social and psychological wellbeing. Compliance with the National Minimum Standards is reviewed regularly and robustly by the Committee. There is a continued focus on promoting the school's boarding facilities both nationally and internationally, and ensuring that boarders' voices are heard. Boarding has 118 students (as of May 2019) who board in one of 4 houses near the Church Street site in Steyning. Governors regularly attend functions at the Boarding House. Committee members continue to work alongside members of the Business Committee to confirm the school's ownership of two cottages that sit in the middle of our Church Street site and have been used by school staff over many years. We feel that it would be a disadvantage from a safeguarding point of view if WSCC sold these into public hands. This work is on-going. These are uncertain times for Boarding, due to Brexit,

but the school and governors are working hard on marketing to ensure numbers are maintained.

**The Student & Staff Welfare and Development Committee** has continued to monitor the Leadership Team's work on the well-being of our students and staff. In addition, it has looked at the professional development of the staff. The Committee links into the school council work for Pupil voice and Friends of Steyning Grammar school for parent voice through their Parent Forums. Governors regularly attend school events, such as parents evenings, to obtain parent / carer feedback. Equalities, student passports, staff workload, mental health issues, and safeguarding are also looked at by this Committee. Student attendance continues to be a focus, as well as staff workloads. Good attendance is fundamental to achieving good outcomes for our pupils and parent / carer support for this is essential.

Steyning Grammar School firmly celebrates diversity and this year it has been evident in the equalities work with primary schools, the work of the student equalities commissioners, as well as in the updated Equalities and Diversity statement and Equalities Objectives.

Safeguarding the young people in our care is at the core of everything that we do. We have 3 safeguarding Governors that report into the Student and Staff Welfare and Development Committee. They meet regularly with key staff at the school.

The Governing Body also has a **Pay Panel Committee** which meets when necessary to look at staff appraisal within the school and to ensure that it is implemented rigorously and fairly.

Governors review and agree key school policies. Most of these policies are published on the school website and a review programme is underway, along with a review of the website content itself.

The school's Headteacher, Nick Wergan, announced he will be leaving in December of this year. Governors are delighted for Nick who will be taking up a senior position leading a number of International Schools. Nick has been a strong and positive influence leading our school for the last 6 years. A reflective leader with a passion for education and the equality that a good education can bring for all. Nick will continue to lead the school as Executive Head until he leaves in December. The current Deputy Headteachers, Nat Nicol and Noel Kennedy, will be Interim Co-Headteachers for the next academic year, effective 1<sup>st</sup> September. Whilst Nick will be missed, he is leaving the school in a strong place with an excellent leadership team in whom the governors have great confidence

will lead the school well through the next academic year. A decision on possible further recruitment will be taken in the New Year.

The Governing Body continues to focus on the OFSTED trails from the 2018 inspection, with a particular focus on pupil attendance in all Key Stages and ensuring quality of education in all Faculties for all abilities.

If you have any queries regarding this report or the Governing Body, the school governors can be contacted through our clerk at [governorsclerk@sgs.uk.net](mailto:governorsclerk@sgs.uk.net)