



A Report from the Governors of The Royal Grammar School, 2018 – 19

Introduction

The Government requires all Governing Bodies to focus primarily on four critical areas:

- Ensuring that the long term strategic direction of our Academy is clear
- Holding the Head to account for educational outcomes
- Overseeing the financial management and performance of the Academy, while
- Ensuring the safety of all members of the Academy community

This report will focus on these aspects during the academic year 2018 – 19

Who are we?

Your Governing Body is currently made up of twenty Governors, of whom most serve a four year term of office (with the exception of the Head who is ex-officio and Steve Ashton, Arif Hussain and Nick Warnock-Horn all of whom are serving a one year term). This breaks down as :

- 5 staff Governors – Louise Bignell, Martin Goodier, Rachel Gilyeat, Shradha Tan and Philip Wayne (the Head)
- 4 elected parent Governors – Raghbir Ali, Lindsey Masson, Gerard O’Keefe & Caroline Turney
- 10 community or co-opted Governors – Sarah Abbas Warrach, Steve Ashton (the Chair of Governors), Belinda Avery, Ben Casemore, Alex Hannaford, Dominic Hayes, Caroline Hodson, Arif Hussain, Johnny Nichols & Nick Warnock-Horn. All are current or past parents.
- 1 Foundation Governor – Tim Maunder, the Chair of the Foundation Trustees, a past parent.
- In addition we are supported by a “Responsible Officer”, James Newman, who acts as an independent internal financial reviewer

Community governors are appointed by the Governing Body and are people who, in our opinion, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the Academy. They are normally current or ex parents.

During the year 1 parent governor and 2 community governors have stepped down and have been replaced.

How do we work?

The full Governing Body meets once a term (twice in the Autumn term). There are four main committees which meet each term:

- Education – in order to ensure that all students are prepared for life in modern Britain it reviews:
 - the curriculum (KS3, KS4 & KS5) and the progress and attainment made by all
 - marking, assessment and reporting
 - policies and procedures in line with government guidelines
 - safety and pastoral care
- Finance – in order to ensure our funds are properly managed and that we achieve the best value for money it considers:
 - the current and three-year financial outlook
 - financial management, policies and procedures
 - future income generation strategies

- Personnel – in order to ensure that we have the best staff at all levels and that they are well trained and fairly paid it considers all matters related to the safe recruitment, employment, development and performance management of all staff
- Estate & Technology - considers premises matters, our technological infrastructure and health & safety requirements

Other additional committees/panels relating to pupil and staff discipline, parental complaints and admissions appeals are convened when required although these panels have not had to meet in 2018/19.

There is also a Strategy Committee, attended by the Chairs of the main committees, the Head and the deputy chair of governors. It meets termly to consider longer term issues and senior staff pay.

All governors are expected to sit on at least one committee. Many take on an additional responsibility. Governors have an excellent attendance record at termly meetings and no meetings have been cancelled because they are not quorate (the minimum required to make legal decisions).

Further information about the Governing Body can be found on the school's website – [click here](#).

A clear Vision for the future

Our Vision is an ambitious statement of intent around future goals. We believe it to be an invaluable aid in terms of attracting both the next generation of students as well as recruiting and retaining talented staff.

“Our vision is to be seen as world-class through offering those most naturally able, irrespective of their background, the best all-round education offered by a UK state school”.

This is not a description of where we are now, but our aspiration. It is an ambitious and demanding strategy but one to which the entire management of the Academy is whole-heartedly committed to delivering over the coming years.

Our Mission, being our statement of what we come to work for every day, is the constant yardstick for everyone's efforts. As such it applies principally to staff and boys, but is equally relevant to parents and Governors, to explain what the Academy is all about.

“Together our mission is to develop and to become worldly-wise, self-assured, high-achievers through an exceptional all-round education”.

These are then underpinned by a detailed strategy, divided under 5 headings:

- **Outstanding Teaching and Learning**, covering aspects such as: recruitment & retention of the best quality staff; development of teaching & learning;
- **World Class outcomes**, covering, for students: progress and academic results; the curriculum; co-curricular provision; the development of the 6th form; student development & considerations around university and beyond. For staff it includes the well-being and performance of both teaching and support staff
- **Inspirational facilities**, covering: refurbishment of all education facilities and how that is funded; the Boarding House; security; sports facilities; staff accommodation; upgrading of access points; disabled facilities.
- **An enthusiastically engaged community**, including: Branding and marketing; how we engage with old boys, parents and other stakeholders; how we support other schools; options for how we may expand our offering
- **Optimisation of financial resources**, the key elements being: achieving a sustainable balanced budget year after year; maximising income to fund future development

Progress against the strategy is monitored termly as part of the work of the relevant committees.

Academic Achievement

The Head attends all committee meetings and presents a formal termly report at full Governing Body meetings. This report tracks progress towards our annual plan and Vision objectives. It also outlines pupil progress, particularly any vulnerable groups, pupil premium children and those with special needs. Questions and challenges to the Head are recorded in the meeting minutes. We have a rigorous Performance Management Review process for all teaching staff.

The public examination results for 2019 continue to be excellent:

- 12 boys gained entrance to Oxford or Cambridge Universities (14 in 2018). 83% of boys intended to move on to tertiary education and 72% were admitted to their first choice institution.
- The percentage of A*, A and B grades at A Level was 73.5%, (compared to 74.4% in 2018). The average attainment grades at A level were 1A and 2Bs.
- At GCSE 100% of the candidates gained five grades 9 - 4 (100% in 2018); 89% achieved the English Baccalaureate (92% in 2018); and 71.0% of all results achieved 9 - 7 grades (72.6% in 2018).

The School's results significantly out-stripped the national rate for the highest grade 9.

- In Maths, 36.1% of our boys scored a 9 (national rate 3.7%)
- In English Literature, 13.4% scored a 9 (national rate 3.7%)
- In English Language, 13.9% scored a 9 (national rate 2.8%)

Our progress 8 score (the national measure of how well students have progressed compared to their peers since starting in year 7) is 0.68. This places RGS in top 4% of all schools nationally, which is truly exceptional.

To ensure that standards are continually raised, the Academy operates a programme of observation of lessons, staff training and visits by former inspectors. The Academy also undertakes a comparison of results from entry to Key Stage 3 and GCSE and from GCSE to A level, to assess value-added, and participates in national programmes looking at value added through the key stages.

Full details of all results can be found on our website:

- [GCSE Results](#)
- [A Level Results](#)

Finances

On the Finance committee 4 individuals have financial or commercial backgrounds. We operate within the guidelines of the Academies Financial Handbook and our internal Financial Regulations Manual. A scheme of delegation ensures clarity of expenditure authority limits. Governors approve the budget plan each year based on the key activities outlined in the strategic plan. There is also a review of the 3-year outlook taking into consideration likely student numbers and the costs of teachers and premises. We are grateful for the work of James Newman, our Responsible Officer, who runs a termly review to ensure that all financial policies and procedures are rigorously followed.

The Academy continues to operate against a very challenging financial background. The main source of funding is the General Annual Grant [GAG] received from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). In 2018/9 this grant increased by 1.7% (£104,000). While this was welcome there was still a significant challenge to cover increases in staffing costs through higher salaries, higher contribution rates for pensions and for National Insurance. Through careful financial management the school achieved a surplus for the year with income exceeding expenditure by £88,426. Within this there are some exceptional items such that the underlying surplus is £41,500 – effectively meaning that we have operated within a balanced budget.

The financial position of the school remains strong. The following is a summary of the key numbers in 2018/19 (£'000):

- Income from central Government : £6,252 (£6,132 in 2018)
- Expenditure : £6,511 (£6,501 in 2018)
- Other net generated income (from donations, lettings, courses) : £348 (£276 in 2018)
- In year surplus : £88 (-£92 deficit in 2018)

Overall expenditure significantly exceeds the income from Government, creating an operational deficit of £260K. The generous support of parents and other income-generating activities are essential to enable us to operate effectively and to invest in improvements.

These figures exclude the Boarding House which is required by the ESFA to generate a small profit (8% p.a.). These funds are “restricted” - they may only be used for the maintenance and development of the Boarding facility.

During the year we have approved significant levels of capital expenditure to be invested in improving the fabric of the buildings (£472K) and the boarding house (£10K). The majority of this was made possible by successful bids for central government grants. As a consequence unrestricted reserves increased over the year by £166K.

Careful management of the financial resources of the Academy and the support of parents and old boys means that we remain in a stronger financial position than many of our peers.

Full details of the income & expenditure and the assets of the Academy can be found in the full report on the website – [RGS High Wycombe Financial Statement 2019](#).

Safety

The Governors operate a risk management strategy which complies with current best practice and sets out the processes and responsibilities for risk management. Four broad areas of risk are carefully monitored – safety, financial, infrastructure and reputation.

- Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safety and security of students and staff. An annual Health and Safety audit is conducted, with a designated Health and Safety Governor. An effective Child Protection policy is in place and is reviewed annually in order to safeguard all students. Regular training is provided for all staff and governors on all aspects of child protection, safety and awareness of emerging issues, such as radicalisation.
- Financial risk is mitigated through the discipline of an annual plan, approved by Governors in the summer term for the following academic year, starting in September. This sets the expenditure limits for all departments. The financial aim of the annual plan is to operate within a balanced budget.
- It is a major challenge to maintain and upgrade the older buildings on the site. This risk is reduced by managing a planned maintenance programme. The Academy has produced a strategic development plan to upgrade the buildings and the facilities over the long term.
- Demand for student places at the Academy is good, based on its reputation for providing an outstanding and rounded education. This reputation could be undermined should academic standards fall or be perceived to be deteriorating. Student progress is closely monitored throughout their school career, not only at the time of exams and there is a major focus on academic performance within the strategic plan. Students are constantly mentored and coached to achieve their full potential.

The future

Over the coming year the Governors have agreed the following priorities with the Head :

- Continuous improvement in the quality of teaching & learning, with a particular emphasis on the curriculum
- Continued focus on well-being to support recruitment and retention of staff
- Setting ever higher expectations for students' aspirations, ambition and progress
- Develop the 6th form so the experience is even more of a bridge to university and life beyond, with high levels of academic attainment and demand for places as in the lower school
- An ambitious and exciting programme of improvement of facilities and infrastructure while maintaining the financial discipline required to operate within a balanced budget.

Many of these entail a longer term perspective and more detail will be shared as the year progresses.

Want to get involved?

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents or the local community. Perhaps you are interested in becoming a Governor? The Chair of Governors, Steve Ashton, can be contacted via e-mail to the Clerk to the Governors, Caroline Cobb (cyc@rgshw.com)



Steve Ashton
Chair of Governors