

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all school governing bodies, the core strategic functions for The Royal Grammar School (RGS) Governing Body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding the Head-teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its students
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

while ensuring the safety of all members of the school community in accordance with the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" Act (2015)

1. Governance arrangements

The governing body of the school is currently made up of seventeen governors, all serving a four year term of office. This breaks down as :

- 3 staff governors (including the head-teacher)
- 4 elected parent governors
- 10 community governors (including the chair of governors), nearly all of whom are either current or recent past parents
- In addition the Board is supported by a Responsible Officer, who acts as an independent internal auditor

Community governors are appointed by the governing body and are people who, in the opinion of the governing body have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

In 2015/16 1 community governor, 2 staff governors and 1 parent governor resigned and have been replaced.

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

- Education – which focuses on the progress and attainment made by each student. It also reviews the curriculum (KS3, KS4 & KS5); marking, assessment and reporting; policies and procedures in line with government guidelines; safety / pastoral well-being of the students and ensures they are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Finance – which considers the current and three-year financial outlook; financial management, policies and procedures; and future income generation strategies. [Note that charitable fund-raising is overseen by the Foundation not the Academy].
- Personnel – which considers all matters related to the safe recruitment, employment, development and performance management of all staff
- Estate & Premises - which considers premises matters and health & safety requirements

Other additional committees / panels relating to pupil and staff discipline, parental complaints, admissions appeals etc. are convened when required. These appeals committees met 6 times in 2015/16, to hear 12 appeals.

There is also a Strategy Committee, attended by the Chairs of the main committees. 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 (see appendix 1 for details of committees and the attendance record). 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)

In April 2016, the Board of Governors conducted an in-depth self-evaluation, utilising “Evalu8” - software based on the Ofsted framework and the “20 Key Questions” against which judgements are made about the School’s Governing Body. This was supplemented by an internal skills audit, completed by all Governors. The assessment identified particular strengths in the areas of strategy, effectiveness, executive and impact. 4 key themes for improvement were identified:

- Succession planning
- Soliciting feedback for improved effectiveness
- Governor visits
- Engagement with the wider community

Specific action plans have been developed in support of each of these areas. Progress against these plans will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body.

2. How do we ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction?

September 2015 saw the arrival of the new Headmaster, Philip Wayne. One of his first priorities was to undertake a review of the long term strategy of the school, together with the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors. This has resulted in a new Mission, Vision and statement of strategy :

Our Mission is to develop and to become worldly-wise, self-assured, high-achievers through exceptional all-round education.

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.

We are passionate about:

- Instilling a love of learning through intellectual curiosity and independent and creative thinking
- Reinforcing a strong set of life-long personal values based on respect, honesty and courtesy
- Encouraging each individual to take personal responsibility, to challenge themselves to explore opportunities and to fully realise their potential
- Taking pride in personal achievements based on endeavour and commitment
- Encouraging an awareness of the world outside and a sense of service to the local and wider community

As a consequence our main objectives are to deliver:

- Well-rounded individuals who can articulate the difference between right and wrong
- An outstanding and inspirational academic education that allows each boy to achieve their full potential
- The widest possible range of extra-curricular activities through which boys establish important life skills and develop their social, sporting and cultural abilities
- A stimulating and rewarding environment that encourages and celebrates success
- The best modern facilities within which to learn and develop

In order to achieve these objectives, we recognise the need to:

- Attract, recruit, develop and retain excellent innovative staff who share our commitment and values and who will inculcate a lifelong love of learning in

the boys

- Develop and provide inspirational lessons that engage pupils
- Aspire to a modern, digital teaching and learning environment, exploiting technological advances
- Become a centre of excellence for boarding, developing facilities to meet evolving needs
- Effectively manage financial resources in order to fund continuing development across the school
- Develop a programme of wider community support in conjunction with local, national and international partners

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 school is whole-heartedly committed to delivering over the coming years.

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

3. How do we hold the head-teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils?

The head-teacher attends all committee meetings and presents a formal termly report at the 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-teacher are recorded by a clerk in the meeting minutes. RGS has a rigorous performance management review process for all teaching staff.

The public examination results for 2016 continue to be very good:

- 13 boys gained entrance to Oxford or Cambridge Universities
- The percentage of A* A B grades at A2 Level was 73%, (compared to 77% in 2015). The average attainment grades at A level were 2As and a B.
- At AS Level 74% of all grades achieved by the students were A or B, which compares very well with the results achieved in 2015 (62%)
- At GCSE 99.5% of the candidates gained five grades A* to C (99%, 2015); 93% achieved the English Baccalaureate (93%, 2015); and 63% of all results achieved A* - A grades (slightly lower than 68% achieved in 2015).

To ensure that standards are continually raised, the school 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.

Details of GCSE, AS & A Level results can be found on the school's website:

<http://www.rgshw.com/1864/academic/results-university-destinations>

We are in a significant transitional period in the way that GCSEs and A Levels are both delivered, measured and reported. GCSEs are to be rated from grades 9 to 1, replacing the former A* to F grades. Schools will be reported on the basis of “**Attainment 8**” and “**Progress 8**”. A Levels are becoming a stand-alone qualification, examined only at the end of year 13, replacing the approach of AS levels leading to A2. These are complex changes that will take us all time to

become familiar with.

4. How do we oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent?

On the Finance committee 4 individuals have financial or commercial backgrounds. RGS operates 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 RGS 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 Emer Beard, our Responsible Officer, who runs a termly audit to ensure that all financial policies and procedures are rigorously followed.

The school continues to operate against a very challenging financial background. The main source of funding is the General Annual Grant [GAG] which we receive from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). In 2015/16 this grant increased for the first time (by 1.9%) since becoming an Academy five years ago. However, this increase was more than absorbed by increases in staffing costs, particularly through higher contribution rates for teachers' pensions and for National Insurance.

Despite this difficult background the financial position of the school remained strong during the financial year. We operated a balanced budget (in which expenditure was fully covered by income). A summary of the key numbers in 2015/16 (£'000) :

- Income from central Government : £6,196
- Expenditure : £6,340
- Other generated income : £230 (from donations, lettings, courses)
- In year surplus : £86

Overall expenditure significantly exceeds the income from Government, creating an operational deficit of £144,000. The generous support of parents and other income generating activities are essential to enable us to balance the budget and to invest in school improvements.

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

Unrestricted reserves declined over the period by £43,000 due to investment in the facilities of the school. Nearly £400,000 has been invested in improving the fabric of the school and the boarding house. The most visible example is the completion of the all-weather sports pitch, but there is a continuous programme of upgrades to our class-rooms and equipment such as IT.

Careful management of the financial resources of the school means that we remain in a stronger financial position than many of our peers.

Full details of the income & expenditure and assets of the school can be found in the full report on the website.

[http://www.rgshw.com/userfiles/rgshw/Royal%20Grammar%20School%20\(High%20Wycombe\)%2031%20Aug%20Dated%20\(website\).pdf](http://www.rgshw.com/userfiles/rgshw/Royal%20Grammar%20School%20(High%20Wycombe)%2031%20Aug%20Dated%20(website).pdf)

5. How do we ensure the safety of all members of the school community?

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.

- Effective 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 school site. This risk is obviated by managing a planned maintenance programme. The school has produced a strategic development plan to upgrade the buildings and the facilities over the long term.
- Demand for student places at the school 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.

There have been no episodes during the year resulting in a significant detrimental impact on the school.

6. Future priorities for the governing body

Over the coming year the Governors have agreed 4 priorities with the Head :

- Teaching and Learning – continuously improving the quality of education and reinforcing an ethos of learning
- Progress and Attainment – ensuring that every boy achieves their full potential at each stage of their education
- Getting all boys involved in the co-curricular programme – the extra-curricular opportunities are outstanding and a core strength of the school, from which each individual should benefit
- Development of Staff – supported by training, mentoring, professional development and clear career paths and opportunities

7. How you can contact the governing body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents or the local community. The chair of governors, Steve Ashton, can be contacted via the clerk to the governors, Pippa Gamester (phone 01494 551432 (direct line)) or email via the website <http://www.rgshw.com/382/about/governors-2016-2017>
The school website also contains more information on what we do & how to become a governor.

Appendix 1 – Governor membership, responsibilities and terms of office (January 2017)

Governor name (type)	Term ends	Education committee	Finance committee	Personnel committee	H & S committee	Attendance 2015/16	Other post held/ responsibilities
Sarah Abbas - Community	7/7/ 2020			√		100%	Child Protection Governor
Alan Armstrong – Community	17/5/ 2017	√ (Chair)				75%	Boarding Governor
Steve Ashton – Community (& Chair)	4/10/ 2017	√	√	√	√	100%	Chairman of Governors
Christine Biondini - Community	9/ 9/ 2017	√				100%	Development Governor; Trips & Expeditions Governor (co)
Karen Clark - Parent	16/12/2018	√	√			100%	
Peter Glendinging - Staff	1/9/ 2017		√			100%	
Alex Hannaford – Community	26/11/2016	√	√			100%	SEN Governor; Trips & Expeditions Governor (co)
Alison Houston – Community	4/10/ 2017	√		√		100%	Safe Recruitment Governor : Vice-Chair of Governors
Arif Hussain – Community	31/8/ 2018				√ (Chair)	75%	Anti-Bullying Governor; Disability Governor
Lindsey Masson - Parent	6/12/ 2020			√		n/a	
Johnny Nichols - Community	7/7/ 2019			√ (Chair)		100%	
Gerard O’Keeffe	6/12/ 2020		√		√	n/a	Health & Safety Governor
Raza Rizvi – Community	4/10/ 2020	√			√	75%	Equality & Diversity Governor
Mark Sudaby	15/3/ 2020		√			100%	
Shradha Tan - Staff	1/9/ 2018	√		√		100%	
Nick Warnock-Horn - Community	31/8/ 2018		√ (Chair)	√		100%	
Philip Wayne – Head-Teacher	n/a	√	√	√		100%	