

Full Governors Meeting

2nd July 2025 at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

Item and Description	Notes
<p>1. Welcome, apologies and quorum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introductions and welcome b. Receive and agree whether to accept apologies c. Confirm whether the meeting is quorate (this can only be a quorum of designated PEF members) d. Confirm resignations or term of office end e. Elect a chair f. Declaration of Interests and/or Conflict of Interests 	<p>Attendees: Peter Croft, David Marchant, Natasha Marshall, Joe McGraw, Owen Price-Jones, Maggie Robson, Neil Ruddick.</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>Quorate: Yes</p> <p>Resignations: None</p> <p>Declaration of interest: No</p>
<p>2. Approve – Minutes to be approved from the previous meeting held on 7th May 2025.</p>	<p>NM – I would like to make two sections a little clearer please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Page 8, section 13 – the meeting was with Cumbria’s Eating Disorder Team, can this be added in so it is clear as it was their external advice. 2) Page 7, section 10 – the point here was around the past and mistrust towards the senior team due to actions made previously. <p>OPJ – Point two (NM above) needs to be governance and senior team.</p> <p>DSM – Agreed, this is all in the past. Keep in the last point NM raised “We need to build trust back up with them and change for the better.”</p> <p><i>All agreed that the minutes are approved taking into consideration the changes above.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Note - Policies</p>	<p>DSM – Following on from the last meeting tweaks have been made to policies. Those with typographical changes are changed/approved. Policies with substantive changes/challenges will always be brought back to Governors for further ratification.</p> <p>NR – I have missed emails from JEL regarding a meeting to discuss the Positive Handling policy.</p> <p>DSM – I am going to pick this up with secondary heads in September (Trust Wide) to raise multiple questions around this. I can also confirm that it is not a requirement for the LGB to approve educational visits. Further policies will be shared ahead of our next Governors meeting – it will be a busy one as there are several coming up for review in September.</p> <p>BJ – The Cared for Children Policy and the CLLT Accessibility Plan are now live on the website following approval in the meeting on 7th May.</p>

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<p>3. SDP</p>	<p>DSM – I would like to start with the Senior Leadership Team structure for next year as we all know the challenges we have had delivering the School Development Plan, linked to the support we have committed to WLA. PRC will be supporting the Trust with a Trust wide data role next year, as well as his Deputy Headteacher role at QEGS. PRC will be based here, but I appreciate this will take his time elsewhere, however, this is a great opportunity to feed into the Trust. On paper it is a 60/40 split but he will be based at QEGS five days a week. My question is now, how do we then create capacity? I have already stood in front of staff and told them I would not appoint another Assistant Headteacher this year. My plan is to appoint an Apprentice for the school office, taking specific jobs away from the SLT team e.g. marketing, social media, activities week. Releasing capacity and putting money where our mouth is will enable us to achieve what we need to for the SDP. We have not been able to deliver the Teaching & Learning actions as SN has been teaching RE due to long term staff absence. We have advertised for a Lead Practitioner on a two-year fixed contract, which aims to create capacity and put T&L at the heart of the SDP.</p> <p>The SDP has been reduced from 59 lines to 39 so we can focus on the areas that really need it, which are Teaching & Learning and Curriculum.</p> <p>PRC has met up with Subject Leaders regarding 2025-26 plans and expectations. It is really promising to see how they are planning for the next academic year.</p> <p>We need to hold everyone accountable with a set of non-negotiables. T&L should have expectations e.g. children should come into class, see a task on the board and start working. Assessment for learning should be at the heart of every lesson. We need to check the understanding of where pupils are and support them to make progress. This is the core for what we are trying to achieve next year. Feedback from learning walks should be shared at SLT meetings and we need to identify where colleagues need support. We also need some non-negotiable expectations. Students should be ready to learn e.g. have their calculator for a maths or science lesson.</p> <p>Some priorities are still in the SDP as we haven't made enough progress this year with everything we have had going on. However, they have been adapted accordingly.</p> <p>PRC – Historically curriculum work has looked at the approach to curriculum planning. Work has now been done for core component knowledge and consistency with all subject areas.</p> <p>MR – Have time implications for the role and timetable been considered for the T&L lead?</p> <p>DSM – Yes, it is a challenge with a number of these roles out. Time is being crafted in but some are brand new and we know time demands. We need flexible options e.g. temporary /part-time basis.</p> <p>DSM – Teacher of Food interviews are taking place this Friday and all final interviews are taking place after activities week (last week of term).</p> <p>MR – Do you feel that having this one T&L lead will take the pressure off all of you? PRC will be here but his time will be split again.</p> <p>OPJ – There are two adverts for Assistant Head of Sixth Form, which will free up more time.</p>
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	<p>DSM – NM did pick up a lot of PRC’s work when he was out supporting WLA. She has done a phenomenal job and kept all the plates spinning.</p> <p>NM – Not to the standard I would have liked, but I have kept everything going as best as I could.</p> <p>DSM – NM has spoken with the Sixth Form Team about the two adverts and explained it is the same time allowance (to what we have currently with 1 role) but split across two people.</p> <p>NM – Other schools have a Head of Y12 and a Head of Y13 with SLT oversight. Here we have a split site which means there is pressure on the Career’s Advisor and the Sixth Form Pastoral Manager as I am on the main site. A level results are currently not where we would like them to be. AL has been supporting at WLA also. MMM is doing intervention work. My question is what are we doing here to show what we are really capable of? Two roles will mean more presence in Sixth Form, hopefully meaning the culture will then shift e.g. spaces for learning. Our students need to have access to staff. There is a progression opportunity here for two staff – one year with x number of deliverables then the next year swap over. They could then apply for a Head of Sixth Form role at a later date or go into being a Head of Year.</p> <p>MR – Are these two roles permanent?</p> <p>DSM – Yes, they are. We used to have an ITT coordinator, we don’t have a large number or early career teachers but it is a healthy number to grow. Staff CPD is needed around T&L to make sure everyone is clear that we have breadth and staff understand we are all working to the same common goal. SLT to celebrate and thank them. We should also feel comfortable to ask how something is going in a non-judgemental way.</p> <p>PRC – We have grown our curriculum for next year. The more people we have the more successful we will be.</p> <p>JM – The SDP is so detailed, but does it put too much pressure on staff trying to achieve all of this? I agree the T&L focus is the right thing to do. There is so much on here, which is fantastic, but where are the risks? It would be good to identify, ready for next year. Are you stretching yourselves too far?</p> <p>DSM – It has been condensed and there is interconnectivity between parts. The risk with so many things is about consistency, rises and falls. Do we get ourselves into lessons each week? Even if it is just for 5 minutes? If we can’t achieve this then I see this as our biggest risk. Equally we need to challenge where practice is not high enough. Some risks may be symptomatic on a phase, if we are working to such high standards, some may struggle and not want to do X/Y/Z. This may have its own issues and lead to staff absence, capability issues etc. I have spent three years trying to build expectations and put support in place.</p> <p>When I started teaching staff were judged with someone in lesson. When I first started here this was the culture I saw. I wanted to shift this and celebrate successes and what is going on. We need building blocks here.</p> <p>We do not want a repeat of the past year and the capacity issues we have experienced. JS and the board are aware of the pressures that were placed on the team and understand this can’t happen again.</p>
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	<p>OPJ – Sixth form some subjects had x3 classes of approx. 15 per class. Next year the plan is to have x2 classes of 22? How is this appealing to others?</p> <p>DSM – We will look at the curriculum model and see the financial and quality levels.</p> <p>OPJ – Numbers will drop as they do.</p> <p>DSM – Some classes have class sizes of 20-22.</p> <p>OPJ – How do results compare between classes?</p> <p>DSM – We will keep this under review. We have reduced class groups in a number of areas e.g. PE.</p> <p>OPJ – We need to keep Sixth Form competitive. We have students leaving us in Y11 that we want to retain. New subjects being introduced is great but bigger class sizes may put people off.</p> <p>DSM – We will keep this under review, Science have approx. x20 at A Level but other schools can push x30. We can come back to this.</p> <p>PRC - Further Maths is needed.</p> <p>OPJ – Maths and Further Maths can be joined, there are ways of doing this.</p> <p>DSM – We need to consider ability setting and unplanned consequences.</p> <p>OPJ – We have this already. I'm thinking of the way the blocks work across the school. Maths is the example I know.</p> <p>NM – I get it, we have the same issue with Geography.</p> <p>DSM – There are risks of putting people off subject choices or individuals going elsewhere to study. If you gave me a choice of smaller classes then yes.</p> <p>NR – We may need to look at further educating the students on how the blocks affect them.</p> <p>OPJ – Bigger classes will increase the workload on staff and impact the quality of teaching or marking feedback. At some stage something has to give.</p> <p>MR – Sadly this is education at the moment nationally.</p> <p>OPJ – Yes, we all understand this but it doesn't help anyone day to day.</p> <p>DSM – I agree with you OPJ and understand your point regarding smaller classes. In the current climate this feels like a luxury.</p> <p>PRC – Constraints that take us over the threshold have to be considered e.g. more classes/ staff wages.</p> <p>DSM – Reducing class size is a high cost and potentially the least effective thing you can do and has been based on evidence by the EEF (or Sutton Trust as it was then called)</p>
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	<p>MR – There has been lots of research around this which backs your point.</p> <p>OPJ – If I have 15 (vs 22) I can get around the full class and talk to students about their individual difficulties.</p> <p>NR – Can you share resources with technology e.g. 3 teachers 2 classrooms?</p> <p>OPJ – It is a nightmare, something similar was tested during covid.</p> <p>DSM – I have only heard of this being done effectively in a school with 4 children studying Further Maths, it was Skype at the time. It was OK, but it is not the same as the class teacher being in the room.</p> <p>PRC – Fundamentally remote teaching is not effective. Reputationally, we do not want this as a marketing tool.</p> <p>DSM – SL has done extra teaching over teams and the experience for students has been nowhere near as good.</p> <p>OPJ – Oak National Academy is a time-saving teacher resource but this does not exist for Sixth Form.</p> <p>DSM – I'm not sure if this would even be considered. It may work for lower uptake subjects but how would you do this for practical subjects remotely? Efficiencies would not be the same. Some considerations could be thought about for high-cost subjects but we have to be mindful of the impact, attainment and outcomes. This is not the route I want to go down.</p> <p>MR – Is the SDP a new model, now QEGS are part of CLLT?</p> <p>DSM – This is one I have worked with in the past and I like it. I take JM's earlier point on board about it being very busy but we can break this into manageable chunks.</p> <p>MR – What are the colours?</p> <p>DSM – This is to distinguish between topic. We will RAG rate this in November.</p> <p>MR – Can you explain the vertical tutoring? Are tutor groups linked to next steps?</p> <p>NM – This is just for Sixth Form with the intent of mixing students in Y12 and Y13, based on what they want to do after Sixth Form e.g. groups of students who want to be medics, go into law, STEM etc. I am speaking with DJC about apprenticeships as they are so different. The hope is that individuals go off and have interviews and then come back to their group and share their experiences around what they have been asked and what they need to be doing etc. One morning in tutor time could be around reading an article, bringing something in to talk about/present. Personal Development on a Friday as a two-year programme. I have spoken with KJD about PSHE things that have to be covered. We would link the tutors to the areas they are strongest e.g. SI with medics. We could present students with 10 areas and ask them to choose what the best fit for them would be right now, maybe based on subjects or interests.</p> <p>DSM - They could move tutor groups and flag any issues.</p>
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	<p>NM – We are meeting with other schools doing similar things/ that have fantastic ideas. We will build on this and tailor these concepts to our working groups.</p> <p>OPJ – Are there a number of form groups changing?</p> <p>NM – Going down to 10.</p> <p>PRC – Where possible we would like full time tutors for continuity, with part time employees supporting with any gaps.</p> <p>NM – We will make small gains where we can.</p> <p>PRC – The model has not been shared yet.</p> <p>MR – I am really interested to hear how this goes.</p> <p>NM – We have spoken to Sixth Form tutors and the staff body and haven't had significant concerns raised. We are going to speak to the student leadership team first then speak to all students. Prefects will hopefully play a big part in this.</p> <p>PRC – Our aim is for more quality time with tutors that is more meaningful/specific e.g. presenters invited in for relevant cohorts.</p> <p>MR – Under the impact and evidence column there are great examples in number 18. Others I feel have no evidence, such as, example 28. Having a procedure in place does not mean it is happening.</p> <p>PRC – We need to look and see if these are strategical developments, or areas to improve? This can be polished.</p> <p>DSM – We will develop the evidence. It's an easy fix, things are really clear in my head, I will work on the articulation.</p> <p>NR – Great and it would be good to add how things will be measured.</p>
<p>4. Admissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Test provider from 2027 ○ Admissions policy wider discussion 	<p>DSM – On the Agenda as Neil wanted us to revisit the conversation about whether our approach is right. We have looked at what we are trying to achieve and we need to confirm we are happy with the principles. We want to ensure the school feels accessible to the community (& not based on achievements alone). I have had adhoc conversations and the old policy was also just based on score. It didn't feel right that people on our doorstep were not offered a place going off the score alone. I then questioned if they weren't coming to us because they thought they weren't capable – were there perceived barriers?</p> <p>Based on feedback from previous years, we know that many pupils are not used to the style of questions in the entrance test and this can be a barrier for pupils who would be really well suited to joining QEGS when they move up to secondary.</p> <p>This year teachers including the Senior Leadership Team have visited catchment primary schools to speak with Year 5 children ahead of the Entrance Test Deadline for September 2026. We have seen children of all abilities including individuals with TA support. It will be interesting to see how many sign up for the test off the back of this support/engagement.</p> <p>Historically the test, as we know, has been held on a Saturday, but this year the entrance test day is on Thursday 18th September. This could</p>

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have been a barrier, so we have agreed with primary catchment schools that the test can be done in their school on this day. Children from primaries out of catchment who have applied to complete the test have now been invited into QEGS on the 12th July, where SLT will hold a familiarisation session. We are trying to be more inclusive and offer different opportunities – we stay within the boundaries of the Y5 curriculum, offer universal contexts, access skills that are indicative and ensure language is assessable.

We are in contact with GL Assessment for the entrance test.

This September we have 90 boys joining and 70 girls.

At our next meeting we could put time aside for a group of Governors to look at the entrance test and the pitch from providers, almost like a tendering process – also invite Admissions and the Head of Inclusion at the Trust. Even if children are being coached, they should match what they are being taught in school. We could look at other providers – other Grammar schools are going down this route e.g. Batley Grammar, Heckmondwike Grammar, Clitheroe Royal Grammar, Lancaster Grammar.

PRC – This is added value for sure, one way or another.

JM – It's certainly positive networking and opening people's minds up.

NR – It is only for the catchment area though? The reputation/boundary should be wider, it is not fair to me. My main concern is unfairness and subjectivity.

DSM – The catchment area is not defined by QEGS, it all links back to the LA and this defines school transport etc. Most village schools sit the entrance test but town schools feel disproportionate.

OPJ – Some children live very close to school but maybe don't feel they have a chance. If we didn't have a catchment area it would be at the expense of the students who live locally.

DSM – When the line is drawn around the pass mark (by the team with anonymised data) there is still a reasonable waiting list, it is not excessive and we do go out of catchment.

NM – Next year some of our biggest feeder schools are from Carlisle.

NR – I still think that the catchment element should be taken out to make everything much simpler / a better solution.

OPJ – That's what we changed from though – there was a perceived image of being "better than us". With the catchment in place, it makes us more inclusive and we should serve schools in the local area. We are not a local school if people are coming from afar and taking all the places.

NR – The catchment area looks skewed and down to the south, with no justification.

DSM – It didn't sit right with me that a family could live across the road but their child could be on the waiting list. When I first joined QEGS there was a case where parents did not buy school uniform (for their offered school) as they were holding out for a place to become available at QEGS. This showed me that the balance was wrong. If local children don't get in here, they have to go to the other local school in town or commute further, but

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	<p>not by choice. The catchment is likely to vary slightly each year. Catchment is applied at the end of the admissions process.</p> <p>NM – Has there been a big impact since the change?</p> <p>DSM – Only 6 children didn't get a place with the new scheme.</p> <p>NM – So it hasn't dramatically changed the intake but has changed the perception of applying.</p> <p>OPJ – NR I think what you are suggesting is going back to the old policy, taking out the catchment and offering places based on the top results (putting other elements to one side for a moment e.g. PP). This was the issue and reason it was changed, there were so many people.</p> <p>DSM – Any admission system is going to have a degree of perceived unfairness. Most policies help with their oversubscription criteria, some include siblings and children of staff members. In terms of what makes admission to the school unfair is currently; the access/preparation for the entrance, support from families, open and inclusive tests with the right questions for abilities. There will always be a degree of unfairness and we should make it clear that our priority is making sure we are seen as part of the community.</p> <p>NR – We may need to educate parents around the equal preference system also.</p> <p>JM – It will confuse people if we go outside of the LA system e.g. bus scenario and catchment work.</p> <p>DSM – Everything we do is in the catchment – constituency boundaries, access to education, transport.</p> <p>If our 160 students for Year 7 came from anywhere but with the top grades then this would be the definition of elitist.</p> <p>MR – I'm sorry NR it looks like you are a lone voice on this one.</p> <p>NR – I want us all to vote.</p> <p><i>NOTE: all except NR agreed they were happy to support/keep the policy in its current form.</i></p> <p>OPJ – Under the in-year admissions, is there a reason that cat 4 test numbers are at 102?</p> <p>DSM – The average is between 90-110.</p> <p>PRC – 80 and 140 is full range.</p> <p>OPJ – Why aggregate data?</p> <p>DSM – This stops spikey profiles. The profile that we are looking for is slightly above average and is deliberately slightly different as it allows scope to be better in some areas, not all.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Appeals go to the clerk of governors but appeals panels also have to be satisfied that they should have passed the test if they didn't on the entrance test day.</i></p>
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5. Ratify actions taken since the last meeting	Waiting for policies, which we agreed would roll to the next meeting.
6. Note – correspondence to The Chair	No.
7. Confirm – actions/information for other committees of the Academy Board and Trustees from this meeting	Nothing else to confirm.
8. Other Diary Dates	<p>Next Year’s Local Governing Board Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22nd October • 10th December • 4th February • 18th March • 20th May • 1st July – please note this may need to move due to school closure at 1pm for staff training. Potentially 24th June? TBC! <p>DSM – The aim is to have each meeting focusing on a different area/topic.</p> <p>MR – I liked the pre-meetings for linked Governors with the relevant individual(s) in school.</p> <p>DSM – Do people like meeting face to face or would we prefer TEAMS daytime or after school? We can be flexible?</p> <p>OPJ – In person is more productive.</p> <p>JM – Agreed.</p> <p>DSM – Please feed thoughts into MR and then we can discuss times etc.</p>
AOB	<p><i>NOTE: The governors resolved to change the name on the Penrith Building Society account from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith to Changing Lives Learning Trust. Governors agreed to remove all existing signatories and add Judith Schafer, Tracey Shackley and Laura Watson as signatories. Governors were informed that the account would then require two signatories to authorise any withdrawals/changes. A vote was held and carried unanimously.</i></p> <p>NM – Earlier DSM mentioned that policies would be brought to the next meeting. Please note, the safeguarding policy is due for renewal in September, however we are expecting some substantial changes to be brought to our attention, so would like to see these before we update and circulate - more information to follow.</p>