

KGA Kent Governors' Association



Minutes of the KGA County Assembly Meeting Monday 17 June 2019 @ 1900 hrs John Wigan Room, Oakwood House, Maidstone Kent ME16 8AE

Welcome and Chair's Update

Jack Keeler opened the meeting in place of Mrs Janice Brooke who was unwell. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and greeted the guest speakers for the evening, Roger Gough, KCC Cabinet for Children and Young People and Katherine Atkinson, Assistant Director - Management Information & Intelligence. Jack said he was disappointed with the low numbers in attendance but assured the speakers that their word would reach a much wider audience of governors.

➤ Roger Gough

Fairer Funding for Schools

Roger Gough introduced himself to everyone and explained that the LA were proud of the education system in Kent. The Ofsted ratings in primary, secondary and special schools had increased. The performance in KS2 had been transformed in recent years. Overall, many good things had been accomplished.

• School Numbers and Capacity

- The demand for secondary places would remain strong in years to come
- Places had been well managed and since 2010 the LA had expanded primary schools by 96 forms of entry and 39 forms of entry for secondary schools.
- The LA had noticed that increased numbers were no longer coming into primary schools but the number of children requiring secondary places was a rising trend for the next 3 – 4 years.
- If the District Councils delivered on the proposed housing plans in various areas, there would be strong demand for new places, classes and new schools. The demands would be less if the historic trends continued.
- There were currently 126K children in primary schools in Kent and if the proposed housing developments materialised, that would increase to 136K. However, without these housing developments, the number would remain unchanged. The number of children in secondary school would increase from 83k to 107K if the housing plans were delivered, and by a smaller amount (to 96k) if not.
- **Where would that leave primary schools if the proposed housing developments did not materialise?** It would present a challenge for some schools, in particular, small to medium sized schools.

- **School Funding and Fairer Funding**

- If the number of children wanting places did not increase it would affect the funding for all schools who would be under extreme pressure and that was without increased salaries, pensions and the minimum wage increases.
- The extra money from the National Funding Formula had mostly been distributed to secondary schools. The LA had not been able to deliver on all the rates that were within the national funding as there had been particular demands for high needs funding.
- The LA had been part of the Fairer Funding campaign and had been a leading member of the F40 Group for a number of years. The F40 Group's 'activity-based' model looks at what it actually cost to run a school with a total breakdown of the costs without all the caps, floors and minimum funding levels. From the LA's point of view a better allocation between areas was required along with greater aggregate funding.

- **High Needs Funding**

There was extreme pressure on High Needs funding and the LA was constantly having to balance the day to day funding of schools, SEN and other particular needs of the children. This was an explosive area of growth. The LA now oversaw more than 12000 Educational Healthcare Plans. Special School places had been expanded by 1000 places and the independent sector places had also increased. The LA was forecasting a budget gap of £14M for 2019-20 but that situation was not exclusive to Kent.

- **Special Educational Needs**

The LA was overspending, and families and schools were stressed with the lack of funding. The Area (LA, NHS and Schools) had had an Ofsted/CQC Inspection earlier in the year, the result of which had not been encouraging. Roger Gough explained the reasons why and the pressures against inclusion in schools.

One of the key elements of the written Statement of Action was about inclusion in schools. The LA had to work jointly with schools, develop local groups, support for Educational Psychologists and would be a large task for the school system during the next few years. The new Ofsted Framework gave some points towards something better and how governors could play that key role on holding leadership to account.

Governor Comments

It was quite clear that the system did not allow for any loss of pupils and the funding had become desperate. Closing schools would leave a vast area without a school. Roger Gough commented that the changes to the school funding went back to 2013 and had not been helpful to schools. It could be worse for secondary schools as the sheer range on which the schools operated made it harder to scale down. Closing schools could happen very quickly and it was important to support schools to work collectively.

Off rolling and other forms of 'hidden exclusions' were a concern. The LA was trying to make changes in alternative provision and the publication of the Timpson Review made certain observations, but Roger Gough would like to know what it meant in practical terms.

The KGA representative for Dover asked what would to happen to schools if the £160K from the Section 106 funding did not materialise for the new builds? The birth numbers were different in all areas in Kent. In some districts the birth rate had increased and remained at a high level. **Was there the suggestion that the housing projects in the coastal areas was not coming through on track?** The commissioning plan had considered housing numbers. The LA was monitoring the number of new houses being built and at present the number being built was not in line with what had been predicted. The LA

would not rush to build any more schools that what was really needed. The scale of new housing was dramatic in Dartford and Ebbsfleet.

A governor asked if the LA had carried out an assessment on what the children had achieved as a result of the 2014 reforms bearing in mind the amount of money that had been put into the high needs budget? No, and not getting much for it. More widely across the country, demands and costs were increasing and therefore systems were overspent. Levels of conflict in dealing with Local Authorities were at an all time high. The LA was playing catch up but had expanded the special school capacity.

Jack Keeler thanked Roger Gough for attending and delivering his presentation to governors.

➤ **Assessment Data and the new Inspection Framework – An Overview for Governors**

Katherine Atkinson, Assistant Director - Management Information & Intelligence

Katherine Atkinson introduced herself to governors and went through a presentation covering the following points:

• **Why should governors use data?**

- School self-evaluation fed into Ofsted
- School accountability
- Setting challenging and aspirational targets
- Monitoring pupil progress
- Developing the school improvement plan
- HT performance management
- Allocation of resources i.e. Pupil Premium

• **Ofsted Key Judgments**

- Quality of Education – Intent, Implementation, Impact
- Inspectors will listen to pupils read in primary schools
- They will talk to pupils about what they have remembered about the content they have studied
- Pupils progress focus on knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more
- Seeing how well pupils with SEND are prepared for the next stage of education and their adult lives

➤ **The School's use of assessment**

- Too often carried out in a way that creates unnecessary budgets for staff and pupils
- Leaders and teachers must understand its limitations and avoid misuse and overuse
- Should support the teaching of the curriculum
- Schools should not have more than 2 or 3 data collections per academic year, and they must inform actions
- Inspectors will monitor to see if assessments and data are disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff

• **Inspectors will not use school's internal assessment data as evidence**

- They will instead consider if its use is appropriate and ask why they are collecting what they collect
- More focus on the curriculum and less on schools' generation, analysis and interpretation of data
- Inspectors will ask what conclusions are drawn from data and any actions but will not check the information first-hand
- Inspection Dashboard Summary report will be the starting point

- **Behaviour and Attitudes**
 - High expectations for behaviour and conduct which are applied fairly and consistently
 - Positive attitude to learning and pupils know how to study effectively
 - Good attendance and punctuality
 - Positive and respectful culture in school – bullying, abuse or discrimination are not tolerated

- **Personal Development**
 - The curriculum

- **Leadership and Management**
 - Clear and ambitious vision for providing high quality inclusive education to all
 - Continuous improvement of staffs' subject and teaching knowledge
 - Should aim for all learnings to complete their studies
 - Community involvement
 - Safeguarding Culture

- **Leadership and Management – Governance**
 - Ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are well managed
 - Hold leaders to account for quality of education
 - Ensure the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities e.g. around the Equality Act 2010 and in relation to Prevent and around safeguarding

- **Key Data from DfE/Ofsted**
 - Inspection Data Summary Report
 - ASP
 - Will inform Ofsted prior to inspection

- **DfE Performance Tables**

A slide was shown on screen and governors were informed that a search could be undertaken for a range of different criteria i.e. local benchmarking for primary, secondary and post 16 data.

- **Use of Pupil Premium**
 - Current FSM eligibility plus any eligibility during the past 6 years
 - Reports in ASP to support data
 - Also need to analyse data in the schools' pupil tracking system to see impact across all year groups
 - Need to be able to demonstrate how pupil premium has been spent/targeted and what difference it has made to narrowing the gap (for progress, attainment etc)

- **Other Pupil Groups**
 - What are the other key vulnerable groups in your school, and do they differ across the year group?
 - How do your vulnerable groups issues link to your school improvement plan?

- **Key Questions for governors to ask**

Two pages of questions were shown on screen governors to ask

- **Governor Questions**

One of the gaps that was perplexing was between girls and boys which never used to be as big as it is now. It will be interesting under the new framework whether schools will think about different styles of teaching that could work and types of pupils. Change in style of teaching i.e. outside environment can motivate pupils. Data can help determine the actions that need to be taken and there should be a variety of ways of teaching. Approaches need to be mixed up as pupils prefer certain styles of learning. Children need to have a flexible approach to learning.

Were there any signs that schools might receive data earlier as at present schools seem to be receiving data later and later? The data should be on time this year. There being no further question, Jack Keeler thanked Katherine for her very full and enlightening input to the meeting.

Jack then introduced David Hill to the assembly following his very successful input and facilitation at the last assembly held in Canterbury.

➤ **Succession Planning for Governing Boards**

Mr David Hill – KGA Executive Member

Why do we need it?

Succession planning ensures that members of the governance team are developed to fill key positions in the future, in particular the Chair of Governors.

It encourages team members to take on additional responsibility, govern at a greater depth and brings new thinking into the FGB.

What internal processes are needed?

- A succession planning strategy.
- Job descriptions for each key role.
- Training to fill in the gaps in knowledge and experience.
- Opportunities to experience the new role
- Mentoring from within the team

What are the potential problems?

- Vice chairs who don't want to chair
- Nobody on the board wants to chair
- Time to train - working / parenting life gets in the way
- High turnover of governors
- Lack of a succession strategy
- Recruitment – not recruiting a potential chair
- Lack of chairing skills
- Lack of chairing opportunities now that many FGB's have moved away from committees
- Failure to self-evaluate
- Lack of a clear understanding of what the role requires in time, knowledge and skill

What are the solutions to these problems?

- Inspirational Chairs who encourage participation
- Recruiting governors who would be keen to be Chairs
- Good development of all governors and retention of good parent governors through co-opting.
- Having a succession strategy
- Encouraging potential chairs by

- Chairs Training
- Sharing chairing FGB meetings
- Coaching and Mentoring availability
- NLG on hand
- Co-chairing and co-vice chairing to spread the load
- Delegation of Tasks
- Having a professional clerk

Jack Keeler thanked David Hill for his Workshop for governors. He then introduced Deborah Bruce who had given some thought to the transition between Primary and Secondary education.

➤ Transition

Mrs Deborah Bruce

Deborah Bruce went through various reasons why transition at different levels was a stressful process:

- Stressful for the children changing groups
- Friendship groups to build up
- New environment to master
- New teachers to get used to
- New different travelling arrangements on their own
- Governors should be asking questions in schools what the school is doing to assist in the transition process between Nursery and KS1 and KS2 and Secondary
- What does the school do to help pupils acclimatise to the new environment?
- Is sufficient time allowed for teachers to get to know their pupils?
- Are staff familiar with the curriculum that the children have already covered?
- Some of the pupils would find it harder than others i.e. SEN needs but it may just be their personality. How will the school find out about that?
- Baseline testing for Reception has now been delayed
- Secondary school immediately test the children that have just sat their SATs test
- Does your school engage with other schools cross-phase?
- If governors are to provide a moral compass for their school, we should be looking at the interests of the children and ask the right questions of the school.

Overall there was a lack of communication between some primary and secondary schools

Jack Keeler thanked Mrs Bruce for her presentation to governors.

Governors asked if Matt Dunkley could be invited to the next Assembly meeting to present his findings on transition.

The date of the next Assembly meeting was scheduled for Monday 14 October 2019 at Park View Suite, Mercure Great Danes hotel, Maidstone Me17 1RE.

The Meeting closed 21.00 hrs