



THE FULHAM BOYS SCHOOL

GOVERNING BODY IMPACT REVIEW

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1. Introduction

This review is additional to the Trustee's report and accounts. It follows the governing body's previous impact reviews and summarises the key areas of governors' activity and impact in the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21.

2. Governance structure

The school's governing body is answerable to the school's Founders for the ethos of FBS, and to the Department for Education, Ofsted, parents and other stakeholders for delivery of the objectives outlined in the school's funding agreement.

The governing body reflects the combination of interests that created the school. It meets at least once a term and comprises:

- 4 governors appointed by FBS Founders
- 1 appointed to represent the local community
- 1 appointed by the London Diocesan Board for Schools
- 1 appointed by the Deanery
- 2 parent governors
- 1 staff governor
- The Headmaster
- Governors co-opted for their specific expertise

The governing body's core function is:

- To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- To hold the school's leaders to account
- To oversee the school's finances

For the academic year 2019-20 the governors were: Mark Coward, Alun Ebenezer (Headmaster), Paddy O'Donnell (staff governor), Mark Jarvis (Deanery appointee), Jessica Hopkins (parent governor), Jason Khan (parent governor), Michelle McIntosh (Community governor), Elizabeth Phillips (LDDBS appointee), Meriel Stinson, Alex Wade, Liam Walker.

In the academic year 2020-21 Mark Coward was replaced by Claire McAloon, Bethan Harding was co-opted to the governing body for her educational expertise and Ian Holdcroft was co-opted as governor for enterprise.

2.1 Committees

The main work of the governing body is delegated to four committees, which meet at least once a term to review progress against key aspects of the school development plan. Each committee is chaired by a member of the main governing body, attended by the Headmaster and another governor, and co-opts in additional expertise for challenge and support. The scheme of delegation was reviewed in 2020:

- Finance and Resources Committee (Finance, Premises, Health and Safety)
- Personnel Committee (Appointments of staff, staff appraisal, pay policy, equality of opportunity, employment policies)
- Education Committee (admissions, attendance, standards of attainment and achievement, curriculum and safeguarding)
- Sport and Enterprise Committee (communications and marketing, parental and community relations, sport, co-curricular, enterprise)

2.2 Link governors

All key areas of the school's curriculum and co-curriculum are linked to individual governors, to help build informed and constructive partnerships between the school and governing body. Link governor visits take place termly and are used to check on progress against the school development plan, and for support and advice. In addition, the safeguarding governor provides an annual update to the main governing body.

3. Review of impact September 2019 to July 2021

The governing body's objectives for the period reported on have been:

- To ensure all decisions reflect and build on the Founders' vision for the school. FBS is built on the Christian faith, with an educational vision wholly geared to bringing out the best in boys, and with a specialism in social and business enterprise. Governors drive the vision and strategy for the school and its ambitions to grow a Multi Academy Trust.

- To ensure the school provides value for money and is using its financial and physical assets effectively.
- To be rigorous in holding senior leaders to account, focusing on Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Progress; governors will seek to continually improve their impact individually and collectively as a governing body.
- To ensure governance of the highest standard.

3.1 Embedding the Founders' vision

Growth of FBS as a MAT: In Autumn 2019 governors reviewed proposals to establish a multi-academy trust (MAT). The potential benefits were agreed to outweigh potential risks, and subsequent public consultation confirmed broad overall support to proceed. The governing body and school leadership explored options for expansion via: a) working with local groups to establish new free schools; b) working with local authorities to establish new free schools (via the presumption route); c) welcoming existing schools into an FBS MAT. To support development of a MAT, Governors agreed to restructure the school's senior leadership, creating acting roles for an executive head, to lead the strategic development of the school and MAT, and head of school, to give full attention to day to day operations and to improving the quality of education at FBS. Despite considerable efforts, progress in establishing a MAT has been slow, largely frustrated by the combined impact of Covid lockdowns and increasingly restrictive options for setting up new schools. Governors continue to review possibilities and remain committed to growing a family of schools for as long as the educational benefits of the strategy hold good.

Re-invigorating the educational vision: FBS is an academic school and the first set of GCSE results in August 2019 were not in line with expectations. Governors worked with an external expert better to understand how to review data, hold the school to account for progress, and for advice on remapping the curriculum. The realignment of senior leadership (see above) and appointment of head of school has brought new focus to the curriculum, to data analysis and to reporting, allowing more informed and rigorous scrutiny by senior leaders and governors. Despite Covid and the challenges of moving to on-line learning, the school's second and third sets of GCSE results showed solid improvement in both attainment and progress, and the first A level results in

2021 were exceptional. The A level results were a particularly pleasing endorsement of governors' earlier decision to open the FBS Sixth form for the first cohort of FBS pupils (see below).

Embedding Enterprise: The NGA's review of governance (see below) confirmed that the enterprise pillar of the school was not readily understood. Governors, senior leadership and key stakeholders discussed options at a strategic working session; a governor for enterprise has been co-opted onto the governing body to drive the enterprise vision, to develop an enterprise forum with external organisations and to work with school to identify needs from the enterprise programme.

Establishing ethos: The chair of governors and headmaster meet all new parents before their sons start at FBS to ensure ethos is understood, and this programme continued through Covid. Governors commissioned a review of school communication and parent engagement, with particular emphasis on improving understanding of how FBS finances its co-curricular activities, smaller class sizes, enterprise and staffing. A parent kindly donated his company's time to the project. This resulted in clearer messaging being developed, including a new 'social contract' which now accompanies the home-school agreement. Parental engagement is high.

3.2 Finance and resources

Premises: Governors continued to manage the twin challenges of ensuring the temporary premises remained fit for purpose despite expanding numbers while maintaining pressure on the ESFA and its contractors for delivery of the permanent site. In the period in question, the projected date for completion of FBS's permanent home moved from September 2019 to August 2020; Covid then enforced further delays, first to Christmas 2020 and then February 2021. School finally moved during the Covid lockdown in February 2021, with all staff and pupils moving in as schools reopened in March 2021. FBS finally has a purpose built, state of the art building. For the first time in the school's development, premises are no longer a limiting factor in governors' strategic thinking.

Finance: Governors had decided to open the Sixth form in September 2019 despite the known financial risks of carrying an undersubscribed cohort through two years. However, projections for Sixth Form numbers were hit by unforeseen events impacting marketing and student recruitment, most notably the further delays to moving to the school's new site, the head of sixth form resigning for reasons of ill health, and then Covid. Governors agreed compensating measures to rectify some of the deficit, including an increase in year 7 PAN and renewed focus on sources of additional funding. A lettings agency was engaged to optimise income from school premises, The FBS Foundation was relaunched and governors commissioned a review of communication better to understand what parents understood about how school financed its full educational offer (See above). Despite best efforts, school submitted a deficit budget for the year, and agreed with the DfE to a review of audit and governance by NGA (see below).

3.3 Teaching and learning, assessment and progress

Improved scrutiny and challenge: In addition to the actions following the external expert's review (reported above), governors have sought to improve scrutiny through link governor visits, through training in go4schools and through additional challenge at education committee and main governing body meetings. Meetings were maintained through Covid, with emphasis on learning lessons from the first lock down to improve engagement and learning in the second lock down. Governors are monitoring the progress in embedding the new curriculum across departments, and by HPA pupils, SEND students, Pupil Premium (PP) pupils, the PP policy and the ways the PP monies are spent. Governors monitor school exclusions via a termly report from the Headmaster, and have ensured that all permanent exclusions in the period have been rigorously examined and are justified.

Staffing: Governors continue to advise in the interview process for all key appointments, helping to draw the best talent into the school; supportive links are maintained via link governor visits. Governors continue to review options for non-financial incentives for staff and review financial incentives, including a staff bonus structure. Staff welfare is reported to each governing body meeting; morale is reported high and

turnover remains remarkably low compared with other schools locally.

3.4 Effective Governance

Members of the governing body come from varied professional backgrounds and expertise, bringing a rich and broad perspective to the school's governance. To ensure governance is of the highest standard training is undertaken at a whole governing body level and individually. The governing body instructed the National Governance Association to carry out an independent review of governance subsequent to submission of the school's deficit budget to the DfE. Following discussion of the recommendations, changes were implemented to the committee structures, skills were supplemented by co-opted governors and through specific training, and a full audit was conducted of financial governance. The new structures are in place for September 2021.