



RAINFORD HIGH TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE
GOVERNING BODY ANNUAL REPORT
2016- 2017

Introduction from the Chair

I have great pleasure in presenting the annual report for Rainford High's Governing Body covering the academic Year 2106-2017. The report provides a summary of the main responsibilities and activities undertaken during this period.

The Governing Body sets and monitors a variety of aims and targets intended to ensure that the school continues to strive for improvement and all-round excellence; for example a close scrutiny is kept upon examination results and in-year progress of students in order to ensure that all students enjoy the highest levels of teaching and support. The school currently has 15 members on its Governing Body, all of whom are volunteers drawn from a variety of backgrounds, not only education, but also including such areas as the legal profession, accountancy, the police and local government. One thing which all governors have in common is a commitment to ensuring quality in all aspects of the school, not only in its academic dimension but also in its management and deployment of physical resources, finance and personnel.

Governors attend meetings of the full Governing Body during the course of the year and are each part of at least one additional committee, the established ones of which are Curriculum and Progress; Finance, Administration & Personnel; and Safeguarding, Inclusion & Student Support. Individual Governors also have specific responsibilities to provide greater scrutiny in aspects of the school, such as Special Educational Needs, Health and Wellbeing, Safeguarding and the Sixth Form

Governors play a key role in setting the vision and values of the school and make key decisions about its development and culture in a changing and ever more demanding world. A very important decision was taken in academic year 2015-2016 to convert to a Multi-Academy Trust and thus leave the control of the Local Authority. During 2016-2017 governors have worked closely with the Principal and senior leaders to take forward this important development. To this end an Academy Working Group was established to meet regularly in order to ensure that a smooth transition would be enabled and, most importantly, that the steps which would have to be taken would not in any way undermine the high and improving standards which have been achieved within Rainford High. The development of Multi-Academy Trust status has been gradual and painstaking; however I am delighted to report that the DfE has approved our application to convert and that the new status will be officially established from 1st September 2017. Further details on what this transition will mean for Rainford High are given later in this report.

One of the main judgements which is made on any school relates to its examination successes. An important aspect of this judgement which has been given greater emphasis by Ofsted and the DfE over the last two years is the progress made by individuals and groups of students in relation to their initial starting points. Governors therefore need to be more forensic than ever before in their analysis of progress and performance, in order to ensure that success is available for all and not for just the continual high achievers. I am pleased to report that at both A Level and GCSE our students are achieving commendable pass rates and in most cases are demonstrating excellent progress across the ability range. The Governing Body is delighted with this level of success which provides our students with the qualifications, skills and personal confidence for further study, including degree courses at the best universities in the country, and for technical, professional and artistic careers of all kinds. During the coming year Governors will continue to receive regular reports and data regarding the progress of the different year groups and will take particular interest in the efforts which are made to ensure that all students, irrespective of ability and personal circumstances, are encouraged and supported to attain to their highest potential.

As in previous years, governors have made regular visits to the school, not just to attend meetings but to observe behaviour and general conduct during a typical day. We have spoken with groups of students across the full age range and with subject teachers and support staff and have listened to their comments and suggestions for improvement and innovation. I am once again pleased to report that governors have continued to be highly impressed by the mature and thoughtful attitude of students and by the dedication, hard work and willingness to go the extra mile of the staff. The Governing Body looks forward with confidence towards another highly successful year in 2017-2018 and is committed to playing an active and important part in the challenges which lie ahead.

Frank Gill,

Chair of the Governing Body

August 2017

The Structure of Rainford High's Governing Body

The constitution of Rainford High's Governing Body comprises:

- The Principal
- 1 Staff Governor
- 5 Parent Governors
- 1 Local-Authority Governor
- 7 Co-opted Governors

Governing Body Meetings

- **The Full Governing Body**

During 2016-2017 there were six meetings of the Full Governing Body. The business covered on the agenda of these meetings is wide-ranging although some items such as monitoring of progress and outcomes for students tend to feature regularly. The full meetings also review and update key policies, receive minutes and recommendations from the committees and receive and analyse reports from the Principal, senior leaders and those members of staff with specific responsibilities appropriate to the agenda of a particular meeting.

The committees and their key functions are:

- **Finance, Personnel & Administration Committee**

- analyses detailed business and financial information in order to ensure the best use of monetary, human and physical resources and to keep a close watch on the financial security of the school.
- monitors expenditure in order to ensure that, in return for its financial allocation, the school provides value for money, as evidenced by the academic and social benefits available to all students within the school

The committee met three times during the last academic year.

- **Curriculum & Standards Committee**

- analyses results and trends in examination performance and monitors student progress across the whole school.
- receives and discusses proposed changes to the school curriculum.
- considers national developments in curriculum and assessment regimes and discusses the school's response to these

The committee met three times during the year.

- **The Safeguarding, Inclusion & Student Support Committee**

- receives and discusses safeguarding reports and information regarding support for students with special educational needs and for those belonging to minority groups.
 - monitors the steps taken to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the student population.
 - monitors the support and actions taken to ensure that the school provides a fair, balanced and inclusive academic and social experience for all its pupils.
- This committee met three times during the year.

Principal's Performance Review Committee

This committee meets twice per academic year and has a responsibility for agreeing targets and actions against which the performance of the Principal can be judged and appropriate remuneration points agreed.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The role of Clerk to Governors is an important one as this person is responsible for taking an accurate and clear record of meetings and the actions and decisions taken. The maintenance of minutes of Governing Body meetings is a statutory requirement and these minutes are a matter of public record. The Governing Body was pleased to be able to retain the services for the third year in succession of the same experienced and knowledgeable clerk who arranges meetings and the related paperwork and who produces detailed minutes showing matters discussed and the comments and questions raised by governors. The clerk also helps to keep governors informed of national policy changes and recommendations relating to matters of governance.

Governor Mornings

Rainford High's governors take part in a number of 'Governor Mornings' as part of their responsibilities. These are intended to bring governors into the school so that they can focus more closely on specific areas of school life and can experience first-hand the atmosphere and day to day activities of the school as well as observing the conduct and behaviour of the students. Amongst the themes approached by governors during the Governor Mornings of the past academic year were:

- student welfare and support
- mental health support
- Key Stage 3 issues

A number of individual governors also take responsibility for certain key aspects of the school which are considered to require additional scrutiny. In addition to analysing reports and data relating to their area of investigation, these governors also make extra visits to the school, in order to meet with relevant members of staff. The themes currently undertaken by these governors are:

- health and wellbeing
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- Sixth Form issues

Governor Training

Governors take part in a number of training events during the academic year. These are designed to develop governors' understanding of the challenges and influences faced by the Principal and his staff and to give governors an opportunity to share and discuss strategies for the further development of the school. This in-house training during 2016-2017 has included items on the financial and legal responsibilities of Academy Trust Boards, interpreting examination data and understanding changes in measuring and reporting value added performance. Awareness of safeguarding issues and responsibilities is a continuous training item for the Governing Body and governors receive invitations to participate in the training which is offered to school staff.

Progress towards Academy Status

Following the resolution taken by the Governing body in April 2016 that the school should proceed with a formal application to the DfE for conversion to Academy status, the necessary legal and financial measures were initiated during 2016-2017. The conversion process is by necessity a slow and carefully planned one, requiring close cooperation between the school and St Helens local authority. I am pleased to report that the school has received approval from the DfE to be recognised as a Multi Academy Trust from 1st September 2017.

By becoming an Academy Trust the school will cease to be a part of Local Authority control although it will continue to work very closely with the Authority and with the other schools in the Borough. The additional autonomy and freedom, however, allow the school to develop existing strengths and to create new opportunities for all-round improvement. Its role as a Multi Academy Trust allows the school to build on its current status as a successful institution in its own right and to invite Secondary and Primary schools to become partners in the Trust in order to forge a mutually beneficial pathway to educational excellence.

The advantages of leading and sharing the development of a Multi Academy Trust include:

- A more flexible and open career structure for staff which will allow them to take on new challenges and develop innovative approaches to curriculum, teaching and student support – this in turn will help to ensure a high calibre of applicants for teaching and other vacancies
- Opportunities to develop new learning pathways in order that a wider range of abilities and interests are catered for, for example in the area of vocational education which can be supported by closer links with local employers
- A greater scope for specialisation in curriculum areas, for example in provision for students with special educational needs, which could lead to recognition as a centre of excellence
- The opportunity to implement a radical staff training and development programme which could see staff at Rainford High sharing their expertise and knowledge amongst colleagues in other schools where improvement needs have been identified, with the school receiving reciprocal training and staff development from the best practitioners in other schools and organisations

Challenges for the Governing Body in 2017-2018

- A major responsibility will be the need to provide strong and secure governance to the school in its new Academy status, including the establishment of a radically different governance structure with clear and robust lines of responsibility and accountability

- A continuing challenge for the Governing Body is the detailed monitoring and scrutiny of the school's performance data, and this role will become more demanding as methods of reporting progress and attainment are embedded in both internal assessments and in public examinations
- Governors will continue to provide support and challenge in the important aspect of closing the attainment gap in order to ensure that all students are working towards their maximum potential and that success is available to all and not just to the naturally high achievers.
- Governors' own training needs will be placed in sharp focus by the increased financial legal and administrative responsibilities imposed by Multi Academy trust status. The new examination and performance reporting methodologies will also place additional knowledge and skill requirements on governors.
- Perhaps more than ever before governors will need to be assured that students are being prepared educationally and emotionally for an increasingly complex and demanding world both in terms of employment pathways and in the personal and intellectual challenges presented by today's technical, political and cultural climate.