

KGGS Governors visit form. Please complete and return to the clerk to governors

Link Governor	Ian McBain		
Faculty / Member of staff Visited	Mrs Julie Lennie (Deputy Head and SENCO) Mrs Shevaun Kern (SEN&D Administrator) Mr Shaun Tarver (Learning Support Teacher)	Date	24/01/2018
Purpose of Visit	- to gain an insight into the work the school does to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities - to begin to understand the key issues and challenges		

Key observations:

1. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Julie, Shevaun and Shaun (along with a number of other staff) for the work they are doing to try to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to enjoy a rewarding and fulfilling experience at KGGS. Although we barely 'scratched the surface' of the many ways they intervene to support our pupils during this meeting, I am in awe of the scale and quality of the work they appear to be doing.

2. The SEN&D challenge for the school is significant, and the range of issues some of our girls are experiencing (and, therefore, need support to help deal with) is extremely broad. Alongside our 75+ pupils with dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia and various physical conditions, the school is also providing support for a large number of girls with mental health issues and emotional troubles.

Some of our pupils are facing extraordinarily challenging home lives, and I heard of examples of the school going above and beyond to try to help these girls maintain suitable access to a stable school life.

3. As a governing body, we need to be aware of the SEN&D challenges facing the school. We must do everything we can to support the school to continue to find ways of helping the girls who need additional support, and this includes supporting the funding of a full-time school counsellor. If the number of girls seeking emotional support increases in future years, the school may need to increase its counselling provision.
4. SEN&D is a priority for the school, and is foci 5 on the current School Development Plan. Progress is being made to ensure that "all staff are aware of their statutory duties in relation to SEN&D, and that systems are established to ensure that information is shared more easily between SENCO, teachers, students and parents".

Dyslexia training is currently being provided for all teaching staff, and all faculties now have a SEN&D representative. Pupil Voice is enabling all pupils to give their feedback, and lessons are being observed to ensure that SEN&D is at the forefront of lesson planning and delivery.

I was also given a short demonstration of the Provision Mapping software used by the school. This system enables the progress of every pupil (SEN&D and non-SEN&D) to be tracked, with intervention information being documented and shared quickly and efficiently. Recently introduced at a cost of £1k/year (tbc?), this is a tool that is helping the school to deliver on its SEN&D foci. It is also helping the SEN&D team to keep track of the financial and time costs of

delivering SEN&D support (providing evidence of costs incurred is essential when attempting to access additional financial support). From what I have seen I would strongly recommend that the school continues to fund the use of this system.

5. Peer-to-peer support for pupils with SEN&D is actively encouraged and is a credit to the ethos of the school. I was told that there have been many examples of staff being informed of issues by concerned friends and classmates, and I understand that these timely peer-to-peer interventions have prevented a number of serious issues from escalating.
6. The practical impacts of SEN&D for the school must not be overlooked. The need for specialist equipment and facilities for pupils with physical conditions is one part of this, but so too are issues such as finding extra exam rooms for pupils who need additional time, or for those who require a scribe or reading support. We need to be aware of the additional pressures this places on our staff and facilities.
7. I was surprised to be told that a large number of pupils are not successfully diagnosed with conditions such as dyslexia until they reach year 10 or above. I had (naively) assumed that the majority of girls would have been diagnosed prior to joining KGGS, but I was advised that many pupils become very adept at hiding or compensating. As such, it is only when workloads begin to significantly increase in years 10 and onwards that the true extent of their issues are revealed.

Appropriate testing for conditions such as dyslexia incurs a considerable cost to the school (up to £180/test (tbc), and demands a great deal of time from teaching and support staff.

8. I asked if there were opportunities to share SEN&D best practice with other schools in the area, and was told that the SEN&D teams from various schools in Grantham meet fairly regularly. These meetings can be very useful, if only to share ideas for negotiating the seemingly constantly changing (and very challenging and time consuming) systems for accessing support from local authorities. KGGS has pupils from a number of different local authorities and systems and processes can apparently vary enormously.

I believe that there are unique pressures on grammar schools when it comes to providing SEN&D support, and I would have thought that it would be in the interests of all selective schools to collaborate in terms of best practice. As always, however, it is important to find ways to do this which are cost and time effective.

9. The recent focus on mental health for all staff was seemingly a welcome and productive exercise. We must continue to prioritise 'looking after our team', and we must recognise the need for support to be offered to the people providing the support to our pupils.

In conclusion, this was an eye-opening but enormously useful first visit as the new SEN&D link governor for KGGS. I look forward to my next visit, during which I hope to observe a lesson and be shown an appropriate SEN&D case study.

Signed: Ian McBain Date: Wednesday 24th January 2018