



Governors were delighted with the Ofsted inspection report published last term. The push for constant improvement in the school is clear to see throughout the report. The judgement on Leadership and Management (which includes Governance) was especially gratifying as this improved from R. I. to Good.

The inspectors said:-

- Following the last inspection, a review of governance enabled the trust and the governing body to reflect on their practice. The responsibilities of the trust, and the governing committees, are now clear. **Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account.**
- Governors engage in a wide range of training to ensure that they have the skills to be effective. This has recently included training on safeguarding, teaching and learning, and understanding pupil-progress information.
- **Governors are committed to bringing about improvement.** They routinely check pupils' progress in key stage 4. They also discuss reports on pupils' behaviour and attendance. For example, when attendance 'dipped' at the beginning of this year, the minutes of governing body meetings show that they challenged school leaders about how this was going to be tackled promptly, and it was.

Self Review of Governance – June 27th

Part 1 – Self-Review

Governors have had a busy year supporting our new Headteacher. In June they met to discuss **“What have we done well and what do we need to improve for 2018-19?”** The Ofsted document “Key characteristics of effective governing boards” was useful as an audit of our strengths and areas for development. Last year new ways of working were set up. The effectiveness of our Local Governing Board meetings, sub-committee meetings, link governors and governor training were all discussed.

Part 2 - The Ofsted report

Governors discussed this in detail, using a summary of the key areas for improvement which will inform the next school development plan. Governors must ensure that they monitor additional funding for year 7 pupils who need to catch up together with funding for pupil premium and SEND pupils. Attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils needs to be tracked carefully. The quality of teaching needs to be more consistent to improve pupils' outcomes.

Inspectors said the school has the following strengths:-

- The new head teacher, supported by a recently appointed and skilled senior team, has brought much-needed drive and ambition to the school. In a short period of time they have tackled a significant number of weaknesses effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour, sixth form achievement and pupils' progress in English and mathematics have improved. The quality of teaching is also improving.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. Most are attentive in lessons and show respect for each other's opinions. Parents and pupils value the high level of support provided by the school's pastoral team
- The sixth form is good. Most students make strong progress in their chosen studies. They are well supported to go onto higher education, training or employment.

Strong Parental Support

The inspectors drew particular attention to the strong support from parents they had received during the inspection. **They had received a very high number of parental comments and opinions; 104 questionnaire returns and 176 free text comments.** Such positive support is highly valued by staff and governors.

Thanks to Councillor Amanda Hopgood

Councillor Hopgood has left the governing board to become the Chair of the Excel Academy Partnership. She replaces Derek Hall who is stepping down as Chair of the Trust. The governors thanked Amanda for all her hard work and commitment to the governors over many years. Although we will miss her forthright approach and her challenge, FSD is fortunate that her skill and experience will now be just as important in the work of the Trust.

New governor – Dr Amy Russell

Amy is a lecturer in the Classics department at the University of Durham and lives locally. She brings a range of skills to the governing board with her administrative and committee experience in the university. She also offers valuable knowledge for our sixth form students with regard to university applications, interviews and career choices.