



The Times/Sunday Times Best School rankings published in December

Best state and grammar schools in the northeast

1. [Durham Johnston Comprehensive School](#) (177=)
2. [Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham](#) (239)
3. [St Mary's Catholic School, Newcastle upon Tyne](#) (249)
4. [Ponteland High School](#) (281)
5. [Gosforth Academy](#) (290)
6. [Carmel College, Darlington](#) (321=)
7. [Framwellgate School Durham](#) (339=)
8. [Whitley Bay High School](#) (352)

Governors were delighted to see FSD listed as 7th in these rankings.

Mr Byers said *“Although it is always worth being cautious about these things, it's better to be on the table than not and we're back in the Top Ten schools in the north-east ahead of many excellent schools. It is interesting that we probably have the highest number of disadvantaged/pupil premium students of all the schools above us (in some, cases by a distance) and that almost all of those above us have new buildings/much better learning environments than we do. So, it's something to be quietly proud of.”*

The governors agreed and congratulated Mr Byers and all the staff in their December LGB meeting. The points made about the number of disadvantaged pupils (which is higher at FSD than in the other schools listed) and the new buildings of most of these schools are especially significant.

Thanks and good luck to Mr Gargett

Mr Gargett was Head of Science and also the staff governor for the last seven years. He left the school at the end of the Autumn term, after many years at Fram, to take up a new role as Head of Science at a school in Dubai. The governing board were sorry to see him go because he has been a very loyal and supportive governor. In particular, he was always keen to give the opinions of the staff on a range of issues under discussion such as curriculum changes, behaviour, length of the school day etc etc.

He is replaced by Mr Sands, Head of PE, who was elected last term as our new staff governor.

Governor Up-date December 2023

Governor Training – Suspensions and Exclusions

The December LGB meeting focused on the challenges faced by governors in both suspension panels and exclusion meetings.

The NGA, in a recent survey on governance workload, found that this was the first issue of concern for governors nationally. There are an increasing number of exclusions nationally. Exclusion panels demand additional meeting time, huge amounts of preparation and require specific training. They can also have a demanding emotional impact on the parents, staff, and governors involved.

Although Framwellgate has very few exclusions, compared to local and national figures, it is important that all governors are trained for their involvement three different panels:-

A 15-day Suspension panel – when a student has had 15+ days of suspensions in one term.

A panel to examine Permanent Exclusion (Pex).

Governor Panels – where governors work with teachers, students and parents to support those students at risk of exclusion.

Governors cannot participate in more than one panel for the same student. This is why we need the training.

Mr Byers took governors through the regulatory framework, linked to the DfE documents and the school behaviour policy. It was explained that a review panel must check that procedures are Lawful, Reasonable and Fair. The function of the governors' panel is to consider the Headteacher's decision to exclude a pupil. It can then direct that a pupil be reinstated into school or not reinstated.

A lengthy discussion by governors followed, including the following comments:-

Staff must be supported when dealing with badly behaved students. In a teacher recruitment crisis, we cannot afford to lose staff who feel unsupported. The staff work very hard to support students and no hasty decisions about permanent exclusions are made. Staff support and the safety of other students is of the utmost importance. The school cannot tolerate any disruption to learning or danger to other students. Some exclusion meetings can be highly emotional and adversarial which is challenging for all.

Mr Byers concluded that all the governors on these panels have been superb, coping very well in some challenging meetings. Governors were all thanked by the Headteacher and the Chair.