

HODGSON ACADEMY

Minutes of the Business & Resources Committee meeting held at the Academy on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 at 4.30pm.

**Present:** Mrs K Harvey (Chair)  
Mrs L Brunskill  
Mr C Jackson  
Mr C McConnachie  
Mrs S Molloy  
Mrs T Roethling (Principal)

**Also Present:** Mrs L Carter-Davies (Teaching School Director)  
Mrs KH Davies (Clerk)  
Mr A Nicholson (Executive Principal)  
Mr M Pickles (School Finance Director)

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received and **ACCEPTED** from:  
Mrs N Galloway

**15.01 APOLOGIES**

Accepted apologies were noted as above.

Mr D Cross was recorded as absent.

**15.02 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that these would be discussed at the end of the pre-circulated agenda.

**15.03 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**15.04 TEACHING SCHOOL UPDATE**

Governors received an update from Mrs L Carter-Davies regarding the Teaching School; key points included:

- 8 trainees had been placed on the School Centered Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) program and a further 3 prospective trainees were undergoing the interview process;
- The target was to appoint 15 individuals to the SCITT for a September 2015 start. All the trainees would have one teaching placement within Hodgson **and governors noted the financial and**

**ACTION**

**human resource impact of this for the Academy.**

- **Following questions, it was confirmed that the quality of applicants had been excellent and the Teaching School Director explained that an increase in applicants would be expected from May 2015. The deadline for appointment was confirmed as 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015;**
- **Governors noted that the National Professional Qualification Senior Leadership (NPQSL) had been successfully completed by a member of the leadership team;**
- **National Professional Qualification Middle Leadership (NPQML) had also been successfully completed by individuals in school; governors congratulated the staff members.**
- **Within the 'Northern Star' group it was noted that some hubs had lost up to 40% of their cohort; it was confirmed that The Teaching School Hub had a 0% attrition rate;**
- **Succession Planning and Talent Management was ongoing; one member of the Science department had been seconded to Aspire until 31st August 2015 but had confirmed that she would be returning to Hodgson from September 2016.**
- **3 Senior Leaders in Education (SLE) had been deployed on school to school support ;**
- **Governors noted that the offer of a 15 week course in Subject Knowledge Enhancement had been well received by Hodgson staff; the aim of the project was to up-skill more teachers to be able to teach Maths. 15 staff from Hodgson had signed up and 1 teacher from another school.**

**Mr A Nicholson expressed disappointment that the course had not had better take up by neighbouring schools; a range of motivations for teaching staff signing up were discussed. Governors discussed that up-skilling Hodgson staff to support the Maths department as well as supporting intervention sessions etc would have a benefit to the school. Mrs K Harvey explained the importance of the trial being regularly reviewed and it was confirmed that this would be reported to governors going forward.**

Mr C McConnachie confirmed his attendance at the Teaching School away day on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and it was confirmed that Chairs and Principals of all strategic partners would be invited.

**Following questions from governors, the staffing of the SCITT was clarified and the importance of recruiting trainees in order to meet staffing costs was emphasised; advertising and recruitment was imminent.** It was confirmed that Mrs L Carter-Davies would continue as strategic leader of the Teaching School and the intention was to broaden the associate membership of the Teaching School to access the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offered at Hodgson and offer placements to trainees. The Principal invited The Teaching School Director to Fylde and Wyre Borough Headteacher meetings to assist in this process.

In subsequent discussions, Mr A Nicholson confirmed the structure of Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) meetings involving the school/academies directly involved in the Trust: Montgomery, Aspire and Unity.

*Mrs L Carter-Davies left the meeting.*

#### **15.05 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014, having been circulated, be APPROVED and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **15.06 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**14.97:** Mr M Pickles confirmed that this would be made available at the next meeting; governors agreed to DEFER this item.

**Clerk**

#### **15.07 FINANCE & BUDGET REPORT**

Finance Director, Mr M Pickles made reference to the pre-circulated budget report; key points highlighted included:

- An overview of unrestricted and restricted funds was provided;
- Governors noted that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had published their consolidated accounts; Mr M Pickles explained that where an Academy had a high cash balance of £1,000,000+ this had to be justified to the EFA.
- Governors noted that the Finance Director had submitted justification on behalf of the Academy as the school's reserves exceeded the limit. **Governors discussed that the Academy had a good level of financial accountability and recounted the Academy's plans to spend the reserves.**
- **Mr C Jackson questioned what the balance was for this year (£1.62 million reserves balance down to £1.41 million), and how the forecast indicated how this would get below £1,000,000.**
- **Mr C McConnachie confirmed that the reserves had been kept high to account for a low intake year (the present Year 9 year group which was under by 30 pupils).**
- Reserves that had previously been held by the LA would be distributed amongst the Academies and would equate to around a £40,000 one-off payout to all Academies. **Governors confirmed that this could not be relied on for subsequent year's budgets and that the Academy had been correct to retain an amount in reserves because overall the school's incoming finance had reduced.**
- Governors noted that the Academy would be subject to an increase in the Local Authority (LA) Pension contributions for all employees

paying into the LA Pension which would affect the Academy's budget for staffing costs;

- A further increase in National Insurance (NI) contributions for all eligible employees would affect the budget.

A Pupil Premium (PP) report had also been circulated containing the results for the PP cohort of pupils; governors noted that the school had been successful in 'narrowing the gap' further.

A budget monitoring report was also produced but governors noted that a more thorough report would be presented at the next meeting following the half-yearly budget review.

A Service Level Agreements (SLA) update was provided:

- SLA renewed with Capita SIMS for ICT licenses;
- Broadband Connectivity contracts were likely to be renewed;
- HR and Payroll services would continue with Strictly Education; governors noted that FCAT and Hodgson were considering managing this internally;
- Catering Services were also be under review as above.

## **15.08 BUILDINGS UPDATE**

Mr M Pickles explained that the majority of the premises projects were expected to be a focus during the Summer term and completed during the Summer break. It was noted that payment of all 2014 summer projects had been finalised; this had included:

- Science Lab had been completed;
- Roofing refurbishment in the final stages and had come in on budget;
- The All Weather Pitch had been completed apart from the painted lines which would be redone in Easter; this had been delayed largely due to the weather.

**Governors questioned whether the pitch would be available to hire out to the local community; it was confirmed that there were no flood lights so this was unlikely.** Mr M Pickles confirmed that the pitches were being used by the students during lesson and extra-curricular activities. It was also noted that in the first 12 months following installation the All Weather Pitch was covered by a snag-list type insurance although it was confirmed that the pitch could not be used during icy/frosty conditions.

Expected premises projects included:

- The drainage of the school field opposite the main school building (across Moorland Rd) was expected to be completed during Summer 2015; it was confirmed that this was the first time the field had been drained in around 20 years. Staff members confirmed that the field in its current state was unusable.

The main school field that was in use had a drainage system in place and was working well; **in answer to questions from governors, it was confirmed that in comparison to other schools Hodgson did not have a wealth of sports field space.**

**Mr A Nicholson suggested that the regular upkeep of the school field across Moorland Rd was of utmost importance once the drainage issues had been resolved; governors acknowledged the need to purchase a suitable high-needs SLA to ensure the field was nurtured correctly, making it fit for purpose for many years to come.**

The Principal raised concerns regarding the access to the sports field across Moorland Rd and explored the potential to erect a footbridge to secure the safety of the pupils. **Governors discussed the 20mph limit on Moorland Rd and other traffic measures in place near the school and speculated that a footbridge would be highly expensive and would only be used during school time when the sports field was in use, meaning alternative funding streams to pay for its erection were unlikely.**

**Governors suggested installing further traffic measures including a 'children crossing' sign with flashing light with which could be turned on by PE staff when the sports field was in use. Mr M Pickles agreed to review this.**

**Mr M  
Pickles**

- Learning Centre refurbishment including a mezzanine floor and a 4D cinema.

**Governors were appraised of the progress of the planning stages for this refurbishment. Governors noted that discussions were ongoing for how this space would be utilised for teaching and learning.**

**The potential for a 4D learning space was discussed at length; governors clarified that the demonstration experienced in the Autumn term was unimpressive and had not lived up to expectations. Mr A Nicholson described 4D cinemas as an idea which was in their infancy and which did not have adequate resources and infrastructure in place. Governors noted that other companies offered a similar service and retained the option to review other competitors. Governors requested a report for how both spaces would be utilised, what the educational outcomes would be, the financial impact to the Academy and also the finished appearance of the Learning Centre refurbishment. Mr M Pickles agreed to co-ordinate this report to be submitted at the next meeting.**

**Mr M  
Pickles**

**Mr C Jackson suggested that the finance implications of the**

**objectives for this project be linked with the Academy Plan to assist the Business & Resources committee in making this decision for the Academy.** The Principal confirmed that this was in place for refurbishments such as the Learning Centre as linked to the Reading School.

- Lower changing rooms refurbishment; removing the shower space etc;
- Upper changing rooms alteration into teaching space and office space; a bid had been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and submitted plans were reviewed by governors. Each of the classrooms to be created would be 60m<sup>2</sup>; governors noted that some of the classroom space in the RE and Modern Foreign Language (MFL) departments were between 45-55m<sup>2</sup>. Additional boys and girls toilets would also be created in this space.

**Mr A Nicholson affirmed a comment by Mrs S Molloy that the school was in need of extra classroom space; governors noted the Executive Principal's comments that this was a high priority for the Academy. In recent years, governors noted the Executive Principal's comments that the school had created creative facilities (i.e. ICT suite, additional meeting rooms, dance studio etc) but the building priority of the school going forward was the creation of 'regular' teaching classrooms.**

- B block refurbishment due to flooding;
- Canopy installation to cover around 50% of the yard (£55-60,000 covering 180m<sup>2</sup>); **governors supported the progression to tender on this installation;**
- Solar panel installation on flat roof as part of B block; quotes were awaited which would be available at the next meeting including a long-term cost/investment evaluation;
- Boiler room refurbishment; quotes were awaited;
- Another DfE bid had been submitted to replace the dining room windows and gymnasium 'curtain wall' windows which were single glazed; the funding outcome was awaited and was expected to cost in the region £40,000.
- Resurfacing of the car park behind I Block; **governors discussed historic requirements for offering car parking to staff in this area. The Executive Principal confirmed that the school was not obliged to provide parking to staff. Following further challenge from governors, Mr M Pickles confirmed that drainage problems were not anticipated should the hard core car park be resurfaced in a permanent material;** quotes were awaited.
- B Block ladies staff toilets refurbishments;
- Erection of boundary fencing between the school field and Cricket Club was ongoing;
- Mr M Pickles suggested that the chain link fencing was due for replacement in order to further secure the school site. The Principal

recounted an injury that had been incurred on the chain link fencing in previous years and fully supported this replacement. **The Chair commented that the pupils had feedback to school staff that the new fencing in other areas around school had made them feel much safer in school; governors supported this suggestion.**

- **Mrs S Molloy asked whether the wooden fencing near the yard would be replaced, which Mr M Pickles confirmed;**
- Food Technology classroom refurbishment;
- Floor surface replacement; quotes were awaited;
- Science laboratories wooden benching refurbishment/replacement with CLIC Technologies benching (installed in the other Science laboratories); the Principal confirmed that the CLIC benching was very hardy and would withstand attempts at graffiti and contact with chemicals etc;
- A report was expected for the ICT infrastructure updates which was likely to include installing WIFI across the school. **Following questions it was confirmed that some rooms had wireless connection and that the laptop trolleys also had wireless capabilities for use in various areas.**

*Mr C Jackson left the meeting.*

#### **15.09 STAFFING UPDATE**

A staffing review was provided to governors, which included;

- Alterations to temporary/permanent contracts;
- Appointment of additional teachers in Maths and Textiles department;
- Support staff appointments;
- Recruitment for permanent teachers was also appraised; including recruiting additional Science teachers;
- Lead Teacher of English recruitment had been unsuccessful and would be advertised as a temporary Head of Department internally;
- Assistant Special Educational Needs & Disability Co-ordinator (SENDSCO) had resigned his position as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015; **governors discussed the impact of this which had been reviewed internally.**
- It was confirmed that an appointment had been made as Lead for Safeguarding starting in the Summer term. The alteration had prompted a Head of House position to become available and had been advertised internally.
- A vacancy had arisen for a Cover Supervisor;
- Maternity leave cover would need to be arranged in Science, MFL and English during the Summer term.
- All pay awards for staff had been processed e.g. The Living Wage, Pay increases linked with Appraisal etc.

Alterations to staffing related policies were provided, including:

- Pay Policy had been updated to reflect the national standards of excellence for Headteachers;

- Changes to Shared Parental leave which would need to be finalised logistically; a policy would follow;
- Parental leave Policy would be altered to reflect changes to unpaid parental leave;
- Governors also noted the likelihood of a free Occupational Health service being offered by central government which would be an option for the school as a referral centre.

## 15.10 POLICY UPDATE

Mr M Pickles confirmed the details of Hodgson's Flexible Retirement Policy. This Policy allowed for a staff member to carry on working at the school after retirement (dropping 50% hours) but access their pension funds.

*Conversations held at this point in the meeting were deemed confidential.*

The following policies had been updated and governors noted the changes;

- Whistle Blowing Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Freedom of Information Policy;
- Gifts, Hospitality and Bribery Policy;
- Educational Business Policy;
- Admissions Policy;

Governors noted the new flexibility to amend the schools Admissions Policy to allow PP students to be ranked higher on the schools admission criteria should the governors decide. Governors acknowledged the school's existing admission arrangements and priorities for admission; Mr M Pickles confirmed that clarification was required in the policy (including evidence of medical evidence required); governors agreed to DEFER this to the forthcoming Spring term FGB.

- Flexible Working Policy;
- Timetabling Staff Policy;

The Principal confirmed that the school was reaching capacity on the number of part-time teachers employed in school and explained the problem this had historically caused in certain curriculum areas. Following discussions it was confirmed that other impacts included issues when timetabling double periods/split classes/joint working/recruiting additional staff for limited hours only etc. The risks of job-share arrangements were also discussed.

Governors supported the Principal's approach and affirmed that the likelihood of part-time requests being granted was now limited, as it was becoming unreasonable in respect of timetabling. **Governors**

**Clerk**

**clarified the process should a member of staff seek to appeal a decision denying part-time work and following further challenge concerning how staff would be made aware of this, the Finance Director confirmed that the policy would be disseminated across all staff.**

**Mr M  
Pickles**

- Probationary Policy was in place;

Mr A Nicholson asked governors to consider the length of time imbedded in this policy. Governors acknowledged the current 6 month probationary period (with an option to terminate or extend the probationary period) and considered altering this to a standard 12 month period; which was the case in some of the Academy's partners.

Governors noted the Executive Principal's opinion that this would safeguard the interests of the Academy allowing a longer time period for a rigorous evaluation with built in 3, 6 and 9 month reviews. **Governors questioned the impact on recruitment which was confirmed as minimal.**

Governors AGREED to introduce this new probationary period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and governors requested that this be made clear to all applicants at the interview stage by including a terminal question ensuring they were aware of the probationary period. Staff appointed on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015 would be appointed with a 6 month probationary period as in the existing policy.

## **15.11 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACADEMY PLAN 2014/15**

- a) Bespoke Pathways of leadership development for all staff (Mrs S Molloy);**

Mrs S Molloy updated governors that all elements of the Academy Plan had been completed and that the two outstanding points for this month relating to this Academy Plan objective would be completed before the end of half-term.

- b) Leadership review and adaptation (VACANT);**

The Principal reported that all elements of the Academy Plan had been completed on target; a leadership structure review had been undertaken and was in the process of being reviewed.

- c) Ensuring the impact of new leadership roles (VACANT);**

The Principal explained that there had been a delay in the progression of these points due to the resignation of the Assistant SENDCO; the newly appointed member of staff had already begun addressing these areas. The Principal gave details as to how the new leadership team had bedded in and explained that how this

would develop was in process of being planned.

**d) Enhance Joint Practice Development (JPD) to ensure outstanding pedagogy (VACANT);**

It was confirmed that SLT had reported on IRIS software and its use in school particularly how it was being used as a coaching tool in the classroom; it was reported that around 50% of teachers were using IRIS.

**e) Bespoke Pathways of professional development for all staff (Mrs K Harvey);**

The Principal confirmed that the training offered in-school and with partners offered professional development to every member of staff and each member had a bespoke training pathway in place; its impact on teaching was also being recorded.

**f) SCITT development (Mr C McConnachie);**

Mr C McConnachie confirmed elements of the report from the Teaching School report and commended the work of the Teaching School Director and the wider team.

It was noted that at the next full governing body, governors would address the vacant posts in the nominated governor listings.

**Clerk**

**15.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr C McConnachie asked governors to note that at the end of every committee and full governing body meeting 3 additional agenda items would be included:

**Clerk**

- **Pupil Premium;**
- **Safeguarding Issues;** none reported;
- **Key Indicators:** Governors noted that the discussion regarding the schools financial reserves of over £1 million were a key point.

**15.13 CONFIDENTIALITY**

It was RESOLVED that items discussed at 15.09 be regarded as confidential.

**15.14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Governors confirmed that the next meeting of the Business & Resources committee was scheduled for Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 from 4.30pm.

The Chair thanked all governors for their attendance and closed the meeting at 6.40pm.

