

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held on Monday 14th March 2022 at 4.30pm.

Present:

Mrs N Galloway (Chair)
Mrs H Benwell
Mrs J Vila
Mr M Jones
Mr C Feeney
Mr C McConnachie
Mrs J Harvey
Mr I Lindsay
Mrs A Preston
Mr C Jackson
Mr A Walker
Mrs M Collins
Mr I Siddall (Headteacher)

Also Present:

Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)
Mr S Stott (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs J Ellis (Head of Maths)
Mrs Khan (Deputy Headteacher)
Mr Malone (Deputy Headteacher)

Apologies:

Apologies received and accepted for Mrs Wallace and Mr Rimmer.

Please note the Department for Education ‘urges governing boards to be pragmatic in what they cover in meetings during this time, and to be proportionate in the decisions that they are planning to take’. They expect governors to focus on ‘urgent, time-bound decisions’ and understand boards will want to ‘defer non urgent decisions/agenda items until future meetings’.

In addition, the National Governance Association (NGA) has advised paperwork be scaled back and verbal updates be provided wherever possible during this time.

2a. Governors declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2b. Terms of Office/Membership.

It was resolved that there were no terms of office due to end until the summer term.

3. Subject Input - Mathematics

Mr Stott started discussions. He explained that the curriculum between KS3 and KS4 had become disjointed, resulting in the Academy looking for a different approach by using White Rose Maths to realign the curriculums together, improving education for students.

Mrs Ellis explained students in Year 7 and Year 8 are in mixed ability classes. KS4 classes are banded with two band one classes, a band three class and the remaining band two cohort in

mixed ability classes. The scheme of work is slightly adapted to the different bands, dependant on ability but accessible to allow students to aspire to a more challenging band. The scheme of work that band one classes follow, also includes a level 2 further mathematics award.

All students in band two classes will be sitting the higher paper and students in band three are prepared to sit the foundation paper. There are thirteen Maths teachers in the department with different staff responsible for the planning of lessons allocated to them at the beginning of the academic year. Homework across the school has incorporated Mode B homework, which has been well received by the students. Assessments in Maths are undertaken every 13 weeks which covers the content from the previous term.

Mr Stott continued discussions explaining the goal is for a common ideology maintaining a consistent approach in teaching.

A Mathematics literacy project is also being created to improve how Maths is delivered in other subjects.

A governor asked the class sizes worked in relation to bands.

Mr Stott explained there are 64 students in band one which results in two classes of 32 with smaller class numbers in the lowest sets to allow more concentrated teaching to those students.

A governor asked when the mode B homework approach was introduced.

Mr Stott explained this had been implemented since September 2021.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been circulated were approved and signed by the chair with the following amendments:

The clerk to add Mrs M Collins and Mr C McConnachie to governors present at the meeting.
The clerk to re-send The Key login information to a governor.

Mr Pickles confirmed the university visit that had been cancelled will be re-arranged in the future.

Mr Siddall explained the co-curricular offer often appears in newsletters to parents and attendance to these clubs is being monitored, with questions asked of those students who do not partake in any offering.

Governors had visited the school website and commented on the improvements made.

5. Chair's Action and Update

The Chair explained an agreement had been made to allow teaching staff at the top of their pay scale without having had any pay progression in the last 12 months a salary increase of £1 to avoid their pension not receiving indexation in the period to 1st April 2022. This pragmatic approach has been taken following advices from the DfE and our legal and HR advisers.

Mr Pickles explained support staff would be receiving a pay rise of 1.75% backdated to 1st April 2021. Those staff on scale point 1 would continue to receive increases in line with the real living wage.

The Chair had attending a course on wellbeing and pandemic pressures. She reminded governors that it is the board's responsibility for the well-being of staff.

The Chair stated at the next governors meeting the statutory guidance for school uniform and the consideration of environmental sustainability should be discussed.

Mr Pickles added that 7 years ago solar panels were added to the roof of the Sports Hall at an expense of £28,500, which has now been virtually recouped from the feed in tariff payments received.

A governor asked how long solar panels last.

Mr Pickles replied the life span is around 20 years.

6. School Visit Feedback.

It was discussed that a school visit will take place by the Chair after the Easter break.

Mr Siddall explained that a visit from governors is always welcomed and encouraged.

Mrs Benwell explained she had visited Mr Jenkinson to discuss safeguarding with further details to follow at the next governors meeting.

7. Finance Update and Questions.

Mr Pickles referred to the finance update that had been issued explaining the Academy is half way through the academic and financial year.

He added the academy is on broadly on track with regards to budgeted income and expenditure.

The business rates have changed as the government are going to directly pay the Local Authority from 1st April rather than reimburse the academy for payments made.

Further information is expected in relation to energy costs; current annual expenditure is approx. £50,000 on electric and £25,000 on gas, with the expectation for this to rise collectively to approx. £120,000 due anticipated cost increase.

The government are providing a supplementary grant to cover the cost of the increase in national insurance contributions and to meet other added cost pressures; this is expected to be around £180,000 in the first year before it is absorbed into the national funding formula.

A governor asked the basis the grant is calculated on.

Mr Pickles stated this is a calculation based on the number of KS3 and KS4 students and the number of pupil premium students. It is not based on premises size.

Mr Pickles explained the programme of building improvements is continuing, with the conversion of the Express Diner into two new Maths classrooms and the conversion of a Music room into two new MFL classrooms.

The original heating project is in the process of being finalised on budget. Following on from this two further heating replacement projects will shortly begin with grant funding received of approx. £500,000.

A governor queried whether Asbestos removal was included in this grant.

Mr Pickles stated asbestos management is the schools responsibility with a minimal amount remaining in the Academy. An asbestos survey must be completed every time building works are undertaken which will disturb the fabric of the premises or see the removal of for example ceilings / floorings / equipment such as boilers / heaters. Asbestos identified in such surveys is either removed in accordance with regulations, encapsulated or left undisturbed if it is safe and sensible to do so where the risk of fibre release is minimal. The costs of building projects such as the heating replacement projects provide a contingency fund for asbestos surveys and removal.

A governor queried the Salix loan

Mr Pickles explained this is an interest free loan linked to energy efficiency. The loan is over 8 years and in the case of the new projects mentioned above are repaid at approximately £6500 per year. The government have preferred to provide an element of their grant funding through Salix loans.

A governor asked about use of catch-up funding and tutoring.

Mr Pickles explained that catch up funding has been partly used to meet the schools contributions to the cost of tutors funded through the school led tutoring programme in Maths, English & Science.

8. Headteacher's Verbal Update.

Mr Siddall explained attendance is improving and is currently at 91.5% which under normal circumstances would be lower than expected, however this is 2.5% above the national average of secondary schools at the current time.

Elective home education is increasing nationally and as more pressure is applied to parents in regards to their child's attendance, the more likely the risk they will choose to electively home educate. This is not the route the Academy wants parents to action.

There have been no permanent exclusions since the last meeting, with a current total of two for the year.

A temporary Geography teacher has been recruited to cover maternity leave and a Modern Foreign Languages teacher has been recruited, due to the curriculum offer now in place.

A new external advisor has been contracted to provide school improvement advice.

ACTION

Mr Siddall explained a new format regarding the Headteacher's report will be circulated to governors for their feedback.

A governor asked for the attendance on Pupil Premium students.

Mr Siddall stated he would come back to governors with the figure.

Mr Siddall

A governor asked when the COVID attendance mark became logged as illness.

Mr Siddall explained this changed in September 2021.

A governor questioned if the Academy is planning to hold an event to support the children of Ukraine.

Mr Malone replied explaining this was currently being considered.

A governor queried where Ukrainian children would attend school if all local Secondary schools were full.

Mr Pickles explained the allocation of students to school and academies is the responsibility of the local authority. If there was an available place in the corresponding year group the child would receive a place at the nearest available school.

9. Theme Input – Quality of Teaching

Mrs Khan distributed an explanatory document to governors.

Mrs Khan discussed the success of the Teaching and Learning Strands. A CPD session has taken place each term in relation to the Teaching and Learning Strands. Following on from the delivery of the sessions, staff have been sharing good practice across different departments.

Lesson observation vouchers are available, to enable staff to embed learning by observing others teaching their groups. This has not taken place as often as we would have liked, due to cover issues with staff isolating re COVID etc. however this is being developed for next year.

Teaching assistants have also had access to the strands, which has worked well. This has resulted in the lead staff of each strand performing learning walks to observe staff delivering their strand. Lesson observations have returned this year with the two strands that staff member has picked being a focus.

Lexonik intervention has shown an improvement of 29 months in the reading age of the 154 students that took part.

A CPD audit was organised at the beginning of the academic year overseen by Mrs Bristow. Online CPD is also being promoted throughout the staff body.

Quality of teaching meetings have taken place giving staff the opportunity to talk about more than just curriculum matters. Each department has been issued an action plan which will be addressed at their next meeting.

The change in approach to homework has worked well, with detentions no longer applicable as a sanction. It has given a positive mentality for students completing homework.

A governor queried the percentages previous to the strands in relation to the EHCP students.

Mrs Khan explained that information was not currently to hand, however she will bring this data to the next meeting.

Mrs Khan

A governor questioned the PSHE curriculum.

Mr Malone stated there is specific content that has to be delivered at KS3 and KS4. There were some changes to the content which Hodgson have adopted. Some of the content is very different in terms of sex and relationships and if necessary, Mrs Foley who is the subject specialist, will step in to deliver the lesson or assist in delivering.

A governor asked about extra workload for those staff members who are a mentor to an ECT.

Mrs Khan explained there are some webinars to complete which can be lengthy, however Hodgson have offered support and allowed more capacity in the mentor's timetable to accommodate this.

A governor queried if students receive feedback for their Mode B homework

Mrs Khan explained all students receive feedback, which the students enjoy as they find out what they have done well.

10. Theme Input – Curriculum.

Mr Malone referred to the explanatory document distributed to governors regarding the curriculum offer.

Mr Malone discussed the basis behind a two year KS3, explaining that this allows the national curriculum to be delivered in this time, it covers a depth of necessary foundation of knowledge to enable the step up into KS4 and allows students to opt into their own choices broadening their education.

From September all students will have the opportunity to achieve the EBacc qualification; this includes English, Maths, Science, a language and a humanities qualification. The government has issued a target of 75% of students achieving this currently and 90% of students achieving this by 2025.

Students are also able to choose two of their own subjects at KS4, with no limitations.

The structure of the school day has been altered with a longer school day to incorporate twenty minutes a day dedicated to reading, led by the form tutor. PSHE and RE are delivered for one

hour a week in all year groups to help deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. Technology is run on a carousel allowing students in KS3 to experience a wide variety of subjects under the technology umbrella. KS3 students also participate in an hour a week of Communication Studies, it is based on a communication focused curriculum, improving student's skills in oracy, communication, confidence and public speaking.

The co-curricular offers are varied and vast allowing students to further become well rounded individuals.

A governor queried the capabilities of some students and whether all students would want to take a language.

Mr Malone replied, explaining the MFL department is strong and Hodgson believe this is the best way for students to achieve a well-balanced, rounded education, opening more paths in further education. Some students will be allowed to withdraw from the subject at GCSE and they will receive a bespoke curriculum allowing them to achieve a language qualification that is not a GCSE.

A governor asked if one of the two hours from technology could be sacrificed for extra sessions in English or Maths for those students who are not secondary ready and is it necessary to offer four subjects in Technology

Mr Malone replied this would not fall under withdrawing time from other creative subjects but offering intervention classes and quality first teaching. The four offerings in Technology are required to give a well-rounded curriculum in Technology.

11. Educational Visits

Governors received the Educational visits document prior to the meeting.
Governors agreed to all visits planned.

12. Governor Training.

The Chair invited governors to email Mrs Vila regarding training questions.

Governors

13. Any Other Business.

Mr Siddall explained there is a government white paper being issued soon regarding reading and writing and the theme of a supporting family of schools. This document will be circulated to governors when received.

14. Confidentiality.

Items discussed during point 8 and point 13 were deemed to be of a confidential nature and minuted as such.

15. Date and time of Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 6th June 2022 at 4.30pm