

HODGSON ACADEMY (02502)

Governors Meeting

ACTION

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held via zoom on Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 4.30pm.

Present:

Mrs N Galloway (Chair)
Mrs H Benwell
Mr C Feeney
Mrs J Harvey
Mr C McConnachie
Mr I Lindsay
Mrs A Preston
Mr T Rimmer
Mrs J Vila
Mr A Walker
Mr I Siddall (Headteacher)

Also Present:

Mrs E Wallace (Clerk to Governors)
Mr P Marsden (Observer – Deputy Headteacher)
Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)

Apologies:

Apologies received and accepted for Mr C Jackson.

The meeting was conducted via the Zoom platform. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and asked all to note the following guidance, which had been issued with the agenda

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.

b. Membership of the governing body

The vacancy for a parent governor is ongoing with Mr Pickles explaining this would be advertised after Easter.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February, having been circulated be approved and signed by the chair, with the following amendments:

- The clerk is emailing the weekly Hodgson updates to Governors.

- Mr C McConnachie to be added to Governors present.
- Clarification and further explanation required regarding the webinars attended by the Chair under “Any other business” Governors were asked to reduce workload and consider mental well-being by allowing The Chair to channel all communication to the headteacher through her. Unless it is regarding specific roles that governors hold.

ACTION

Clerk

Matters arising

Mr Pickles explained the lifespan of the new building for the use of the express diner is expected to be a minimum of 25/30 years upwards with maintenance.

4. Headteacher’s Verbal Update

Mr Siddall started discussions explaining building work had begun at pace and ahead of schedule. Four classrooms had been constructed and are in operation. Learning Support, Pastoral Support and Inclusion have all moved to their new premises.

Mr Siddall explained the return to school has been successful. The lateral flow testing has been smooth and well run with approximately 84% of students opting in. There were two positives during the course of the testing, with those students and close contacts asked to self isolate. Mr Siddall expressed gratitude and thanks to the Admin and Site Staff for their hard work and explained the largest portion of stress resulted from the upload of students and results to the DfE website. Mr Siddall continued to explain now that on site testing had finished, students had been issued tests to administer at home, with this option also available for staff. Attendance since returning is 96.5% Mr Siddall explained, after speaking with other Headteacher’s in the area, Hodgson’s attendance percentage was extremely good and considerably higher. He continued to explain there had been four fixed term exclusions since returning. Discussions are taking place regarding exclusions with the new guidance around student’s mental health. Mr Siddall explained the awareness of missed education for students, however lesson disruption and bad behaviour will not be tolerated at Hodgson and so steps are being made to improve re-integration.

Mr Siddall explained all teaching schools are to be de-designated from September. Mr Siddall explained Hodgson, Blackpool Sixth Form College and Hambleton have rebranded as Fylde Coast SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) which will continue post September. The Breck Primary school have withdrawn from the Teaching School due to their own personal reasons and therefore the Fylde Coast SCITT are recruiting a new Primary lead. The Government have nominated a series of hubs around the Country for Teaching School activity.

A governor congratulated Mr Siddall and the staff at the Academy for the successful return of students.

A governor queried the issues surrounding Hodgson not being the designated teaching school.

Mr Siddall stated the new hubs will not make a tremendous amount of difference to the Academy. They will take responsibility for the early careers framework, they will have the licence to deliver NPQSL and NPQML. They have responsibility for oversight of School centred teacher training, which Hodgson is already a designated SCITT, therefore that will continue. Mr Siddall explained Hodgson did not bid, due to not meeting certain criteria’s as a collective between the four schools.

5. Year 11 GCSE Grades Process Update

Mr Marsden explained Schools will be asked to submit Teacher Assessed Grades and by 18th June 2021 these will need to be submitted to the exam boards. He continued, explaining there are some nuances around Vocational courses, where marks had been submitted for assessments. Mr Marsden described the challenges from this academic year, students out of school from March 2020 to September losing 6 months of school with Y11 also losing 2 weeks in October due to isolating. He added it has been more difficult, especially for evidence base. In addition to the data on performance and assessments with teachers, Hodgson will also run 2 weeks of "Assessment Weeks" to give students the opportunity to show their potential in a formal exam environment and to allow teaching staff and departments to gather enough evidence on the performance of students. Mr Marsden added, this approach allows the students with access arrangements to be catered for. Teaching staff and departments will be asked to use the information and gathered data to produce grades, consistent with previous data. Mr Marsden explained, last year no evidence was required and there was no appeals process, however this year an appeals process will be available and evidence will need to be submitted to exam boards to determine how the Teacher Assessed Grade was finalised. He added, OFQUAL and exam boards will look at whether our grades are consistent with grades expected. Schools and academies this year are not required to rank order students.

A governor questioned the protocol for students unhappy with a grade.

Mr Marsden replied, explaining students will receive their results on 12th August 2021, slightly earlier than previous years. In the first instance if a student is unhappy with a grade, they can ask the Academy if there has been a technical error, i.e. wrong grade input in the system. If this is not the case, it would then go to the exam board. The exam board, may, ask for evidence from the Academy to support the grade they have submitted. Mr Marsden added there is no algorithm, however the guidance states that schools should consider the historic achievement of the centre and the subjects in their centre when arriving at these grades. Overall, nationally, students will probably achieve higher than they would have done had GCSEs gone ahead, partly under teacher assessment there is more opportunity for students to show what they are capable of and the system will have to have some degree of benefit of doubt.

A governor asked whether percentage of a mark would derive from the assessment weeks.

Mr Marsden replied explaining there was not a percentage of the assessment weeks which would contribute to the grades, as this would be difficult to keep consistent across different subjects, as departments will assess students differently. Mr Marsden added it is important to give departments the freedom and flexibility to use these assessment weeks to gather the evidence they need, as they see fit. It is a holistic judgement that departments will arrive at and they will consider on a subject-by-subject basis how much weight the results in the assessment weeks will have, compared to work and evidence assessed outside of the assessment weeks.

A governor asked how this holistic approach would be managed.

Mr Marsden replied stating, firstly good management of department leaders, as the approach is rolled out with rigorous moderation within departments, to ensure standards are equal across papers and students, whilst also ensuring scrutiny from senior leaders is robust.

A governor queried the official leaving date for Year 11.

Mr Marsden stated this had not yet been confirmed, however this would not be any later than 18th June, as this is when all information must be submitted to exam boards. He continued explaining all assessed work and work students produce to contribute to this process must be completed by the May half term, allowing only 2 school weeks for moderation and analysis and the administrative task of inputting the grades. Mr Marsden explained discussions with Year 11 had taken place regarding assemblies and shirt signing and Year 11 would still like to do this, restrictions permitting. Mr Marsden stated the date for Year 11 to leave would be sometime between the last Friday before May half term and the 18th June 2021.

A governor discussed exam guidance released, stating students would be given insights into their exam and asked whether this approach would be incorporated into the assessment weeks.

Mr Marsden replied, stating the academy have explained students should be given very specific advice as to what is going to be covered in each subject. Mr Marsden added the Academy is very mindful of the short time of the assessments.

A governor acknowledged the large task of inputting grades and questioned who would be responsible for this.

Mr Marsden replied explaining initially it will be tasked to the admin team, followed by many checking points in between, however ultimately Mr Siddall will be the last person to have sight of the grades and to sign them off as head of centre. This has been incorporated into the time-line, as this simply cannot be completed in a day.

A governor queried whether Year 11 students would receive a progress report.

Mr Marsden explained Year 11 will not receive another progress report. The Academy did intent to send home a spring report that would have reflected their online learning and participation, however parents had been kept up to date via class charts and the focus was trying to get students back into classrooms.

6. Finance and Buildings Update

Governors had received the Finance and Buildings Update with the Agenda prior to the meeting.

Mr Pickles started discussions by congratulating the Admin, Site Team, Teaching Assistants and Science technicians for the smooth running of the Covid testing programme.

Mr Pickles discussed the income of the Academy, explaining the income summary appears lower, however this will not be the case by April. The Teachers Pay grant and The Teachers Pension where the second tranch of money would not be received until April. The devolt formula capital received would be April and the business rates rebate would also be received around April or May. Mr Pickles continued explaining the Academy had received a DfE grant of over £12,000 to assist with the increased numbers of free school meal students. The school

support student teacher section, will have received all of their budget allocation by the summer through the SCITT and teaching school. Mr Pickles discussed the lack of income from lettings due to the Covid restrictions and the Academy would seek to receive money from this during the Summer term. He added, most of the music tuition money had stopped due to Covid, however, Mr Mitchell had tried to maintain where possible, lessons over zoom. Mr Pickles explained at this point in the academic year we would normally expect to have received around 50% of the funding, which is currently where the academy is.

Mr Pickles discussed the increased payments in the staffing section of the update, explaining there have been increased payments to staff, due to the Covid testing and site staff had been increased to assist with the extra cleaning required due to Covid, although only temporary until the end of the academic year. The catch-up funding of around £29,000 had been received and will be transferred to the appropriate staffing departments, which will be shown in the expenditure budget, with the remaining tranche in the summer term taking the academy upto £90,000. Mr Pickles explained there was also a small number of staff on maternity, resulting in the temporary use of cover teachers. The ICT infrastructure and maintenance had not currently received any investment, as this is something that is upgraded during the summer holidays. The examination fees for GCSEs will be paid by April and exam boards have stated, refunds may be applicable depending on the level of work required from them, last year the academy received some refunded fees. Mr Pickles added, the ongoing heating replacement project is going well and the conditions improvement fund grant received with the finishing date planned as 9th April and is running within budget. Mr Pickles explained there is a return due to the DfE by the middle of April called the school resource management self assessment, which links into the financial benchmarking. Mr Pickles concluded discussions by explaining the healthy position the Academy is in, with building works being undertaken on time and within budget.

A governor queried if money for the pupil premium students is being spent in a different way, due to students not being in school due to Covid.

Mr Pickles explained the pupil premium money is allocated at the start of the year and meets the cost of teaching assistant staff and is therefore built into the budget. Mr Pickles continued to explain where the academy may have looked to run intervention classes, this has not been possible, however the academy is in the fortunate position where the money can be carried over into the new academic year. Typically the academy would run an Easter school, revision classes and other intervention classes, where staff would be paid additionally for extra time.

A governor asked if the money could have been spent on laptops during the pandemic.

Mr Pickles explained the Academy received over 80 laptops from the government and that had been supplemented with existing equipment in the school. He stated the pupil premium money did not need to be spent on laptops and there were no students who did not receive required equipment.

A governor queried how money for Year 11 pupil premium students will be spent on them specifically.

Mr Pickles replied explaining the Academy will support those Y11 students in anyway possible and have been fully supported by Hodgson over the lockdown period. He added the money has

been spent this year, however in a different way - The pastoral team have had a lot of contact with students of the lockdown period and provided huge amounts of support.

A governor asked whether Hodgson had been affected by the change in census from October to January in regards to pupil premium students.

Mr Pickles stated Hodgson had not been affected as badly as perhaps some other schools may have been.

7. Any Other Business

A governor asked how transition would operate for Year 6 students transitioning to Year 7.

Mr Siddall replied explaining Hodgson are already liaising with local primary schools. He continued to discuss transition would operate as close to 'normal' as possible. Mr Siddall expressed his optimism that some form of visit could take place from 21st June, offering students a quality transition.

Mr Marsden added, dates had been arranged for the Intake and Mini Intake days. He added the parent intake evening may operate remotely, due to numbers and multiple remote parents evenings have run well and smoothly this year.

The Chair discussed the full intake of Year 7's for the new academic year and acknowledged the long waiting list.

The Chair discussed she had visited Hodgson to observe the building works currently being undertaken. She added the Covid testing process was explained and congratulated all involved on the successful running of the testing programme.

8. Confidentiality

There were no items discussed or on the agenda deemed to be of a confidential nature.

9. Date and time of next meeting

The next full governors meeting to be held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 at 4.30pm.