

**HODGSON ACADEMY (02502)**

**Governors Meeting**

**ACTION**

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held via zoom on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 at 4.30pm.

**Present:**

**Mrs N Galloway (Chair)**  
**Mrs H Benwell**  
**Mr C Feeney**  
**Mrs J Harvey**  
**Mr C Jackson**  
**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:**

No apologies of absence received.

**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**

Mr Pickles confirmed the annual declaration of interest form had been sent to governors for all to return as soon as convenient.

**b. Membership of the governing body**

The Chair acknowledged the vacancy for a parent governor.

Mr Pickles explained the Academy had not been successful on both attempts of recruiting and explained the options available to governors in accordance with the Articles of Association. It was agreed that this would be re-visited in January following the Christmas break.

The Chair asked if the skills audit had been completed.

The clerk replied explaining there were still some outstanding. Governors were asked to complete this as soon as they could.

Mr Pickles discussed the extension of Mrs Harvey's term of office as a staff governor. Governors ratified this.

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated be approved and signed by the chair.

### **4. Matters arising**

The Chair discussed the skills audit requested at the last meeting and urged governors who had not completed this, to do so.

The Chair proposed updated committee memberships. All governors agreed.

The appraisal committee had convened since the last governors meeting. The pay committee were to meet after this governors meeting.

It was agreed that the audit committee would convene in January 2021.

Mr Marsden had emailed governors with confirmation of the data from the summary document as per the last governors meeting.

Proposed meeting date for the next half term to change from 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. All governors agreed.

### **5. Auditors Report re 2019/2020 Audited Accounts (Jeff Bellamy from CWR Accountants will present the report) Finance and Governance Update November 2020**

Mr Pickles introduced Jeff Bellamy from CWR Accountants and explained that he would provide governors with a summary of the audited accounts for the year-end 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Mr Bellamy outlined the contents of the audited accounts (which had been previously submitted to governors). He brought governors attention to pages 31 and 32 of the audited accounts containing the up to date balance sheet figures along with 2019 comparison figures alongside.

Mr Pickles explained the majority of the debtors owed to the Academy is the capital grant for the heating replacement project, currently being undertaken by the academy. He explained the balance sheet shows this grant as being money owed to the Academy, however it did not reflect the money to be paid out to contractors for the works to be completed. This would take approximately £500,000 off the net current assets and our overall reserves position.

Mr Bellamy discussed the various funds in which the assets are distributed and confirmed that the Academy is solvent, financially stable and in good financial health. He confirmed that the auditor's management letter showed no material weaknesses.

Governors thanked Mr Bellamy and CWR for their support during the year and for the production of the audited accounts and accompanying reports.

Mr Pickles discussed the Finance and Governance document that had been sent to governors prior to the meeting. He requested approval and ratification of the Charging and Remissions policy, Whistleblowing policy and Financial Regulation policy. All governors agreed to this.

#### **6a. Headteacher's Report**

Mr Siddall started discussions explaining that the Academy had a successful return after the National Lockdown. He explained the Academy had lost over 2000 days of learning due to self-isolation and to be aware of this when looking at the attendance figures.

#### **A governor queried the Academy's position on exams in the summer.**

Mr Siddall explained there had been some modifications in some subjects. He continued to explain the Academy is preparing the students for examinations this summer, following guidance and that exams are scheduled to start slightly later than usual.

#### **A governor asked how staff are feeling in relation to students being prepared for exams.**

Mr Siddall stated all students all over the country are in the same position. He continued by explaining that for a large school we are doing well and the students will be in the best position possible to complete their assessments at the end of the year.

#### **A governor questioned how students are being assessed, in relation to engaging with online learning.**

Mr Siddall explained teachers are able to see which students are logged into online lessons. Mr Siddall continued to explain engagement had been varied, but where students are not visibly online, the Academy has contacted those students to eliminate any safeguarding concerns.

#### **A governor asked about plans for students who do not have a high activity rate with online learning.**

Mr Siddall explained the Academy is currently dealing with a specific situation where the Academy has supplied a dongle to a student who has had a change in circumstances at home. He continued to explain how the Academy solves issues regarding IT equipment where families are struggling. He stated the main issue is participation, which is being addressed on a day to day basis.

#### **A governor queried access to Government funded equipment.**

Mr Pickles stated the Academy received 16 laptops in the summer term with an addition of a further 64 laptops in the autumn term all of which have been or are being distributed to students in need. He continued to explain that the Academy has received to date the maximum number of laptops available from the Government.

**A governor expressed concern with the high number of additional vulnerable students.**

Mr Siddall explained this figure includes students where there may be any safeguarding concerns or issues no matter how small. He explained the figure for example includes parents where contact is difficult, students whose parents may have recently separated, situations where trauma or upset may have occurred in a student's home-life and students who are persistently absent as well as the more obvious and higher profile safeguarding / child protection issues. Mr Siddall explained the Academy decided on this wide definition to incorporate a realistic figure to report to governors. He stated the majority of these students require very low level safeguarding attention.

**A governor asked how the pastoral team are managing to support those students.**

Mr Siddall explained the pastoral team are busier than usual, but are not overwhelmed and continue to maintain the high standards of care and support expected at Hodgson.

**A governor asked if the number of additional vulnerable students had increased from last year due to Covid-19.**

Mr Siddall explained that it had increased due to Covid and matters would continue to be monitored closely throughout the pandemic and beyond. .

**6b. Standards Report – Year 11**

Mr Marsden explained that in January 2021 Year 11 will sit their Mock exams in the normal way, with results from this reported back to governors at the appropriate meeting.

**A governor asked how the Academy has learnt from last year's assessments and how the Academy might do things differently if the same approach was needed this year.**

Mr Marsden replied stating that if the Academy is required to plan for anything other than GCSE's, we will follow guidance and instructions as closely as possible, as the Academy did last year. If we are required to provide figures in a more complicated manner, the Academy will of course comply.

**A governor asked how Hodgson achieved in 2020 in relation to other Schools.**

Mr Marsden explained Hodgson sent results to the Fischer Family Trust (FFT), who produce statistical analysis, allowing the Academy to self-evaluate. Other schools also used FFT, which allows the Academy to see where they sit across a wide number of schools including similar schools. Hodgson were broadly similar and in line with those Schools and Academies that it would be measured against.

A governor thanked the Academy for the online lessons that had been undertaken.

**A governor queried if there would be a dip in exam results for the 2021 GCSEs, as the 2020 centre assessed grades were higher than usual.**

Mr Marsden stated there will be no negative comeback from last year's results, as comparison to last year's results is impossible.

Mr Siddall thanked governors who gave their sympathies to the Academy for the very sad loss of a Year 9 pupil Louie Jones.

#### **7. Academy Plan Overview 2020/2021**

Mr Siddall referred to the document sent to governors prior to the meeting. He stated the plan is a statement of what the Academy wants to achieve and the plan has developed as the circumstances and climate have changed.

Mr Siddall stated the quality of deep learning has not been as impactful as planned, as the Academy has not returned to a normal layout. CPD has been successful but has relied more on online resources than envisaged. Mr Siddall discussed a change in priorities with the Academy Plan document.

#### **8. Admissions Policy 2022/2023**

After being circulated prior to the meeting, this was approved in principle by the governing board. The policy would now go to consultation in line with statutory requirements.

#### **9. Governor training and development**

The chair discussed the safeguarding training recently issued to governors from the safeguarding lead at the Academy. She asked those who have not completed this, to do so as soon as possible.

#### **10. Risk Register**

Mr Pickles explained he had sent out the Risk Register to Governors prior to the meeting with changes and updates highlighted in red, including risks relating to Covid-19.

##### **A governor queried how Covid-19 had impacted on Hodgson's budget.**

Mr Pickles discussed extra costs incurred for installations of outside hand washing facilities, hand sanitizer, large numbers of face masks, but other projects around the Academy had been delayed and savings had been made with things like exam fees, energy costs etc.

The catch up premium from the government is starting to come through. Mr Pickles confirmed that this funding will equate to around £90,000 for the financial year. Governors will be kept fully informed as to how these funds are being used to help support all students catch up academically, particularly Year 11 students facing examinations but also recognising the pastoral support necessary to get students back on track.

##### **A governor discussed risks of supply staff moving between schools.**

Mr Pickles stated this is covered within the risk assessment for schools and DfE guidance and explained they are able to work across schools, following each schools rules and regulations, including social distancing and sanitising.

**A governor queried whether this should be included in the risk register.**

Mr Pickles explained the Academy has a full risk assessment incorporating this and other similar scenarios. This is published on the academy website.

**A governor asked whether there is a well-being governor.**

The Chair stated well-being is high priority on the Academy plan under culture, ethos & climate.

Mr Siddall stated he would give an overview of this plan at future governor meetings.

The Chair stated the governor responsible for well-being is Mrs Preston.

Mrs Preston briefly discussed plans for re-designing the staff room and improving staff mental well being, however due to the national lockdown implemented in March, no further action has been taken.

**A governor asked who was responsible for risks identified in the Risk Register**

Mr Pickles explained that ultimately this includes all of the governing body and the Senior Leadership Team.

It was confirmed that the audit committee is responsible for overseeing the Risk Register

**11. Confidential**

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

**12. Any Other Business**

The Chair and governing board expressed their deepest condolences for the loss of Louie Jones.

The Chair asked the pay committee to stay on the zoom call.

**13. Date and time of next meeting**

The next full governors meeting will be held on the amended date of Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 4.30pm

