

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held on Monday 31st January 2022 at 4.30pm.

**Present:**

Mrs N Galloway (Chair)  
Mr C Feeney  
Mr C McConnachie  
Mrs J Harvey  
Mr I Lindsay  
Mrs A Preston  
Mr T Rimmer  
Mr C Jackson  
Mr A Walker  
Mrs M Collins  
Mr I Siddall (Headteacher)

**Also Present:**

Mrs E Wallace (Clerk to Governors)  
Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)

**Apologies:**

Apologies received and accepted for Mrs H Benwell, Mrs J Vila and Mr M Jones.

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 explained all declarations of interest were up to date

**2b. Membership of the Governing Body**

The Chair explained both Parent Governor vacancies had been filled at the recent election. The Chair welcomed Mrs Phillips to the meeting.

Mr Pickles explained Mr Walker and Mr Jackson’s term of office were due to end this academic year, with Mr Lindsay and Mr Feeney’s term of office due to end in September.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair.

**4. Matters arising.**

- The clerk circulated the required powerpoints to all governors.
- The clerk distributed logins for the The Key website as requested.

- Mr Siddall explained the rationale behind the KS3 curriculum would be discussed further on in the meeting.
- Mr Pickles explained further information had been released by the schools portal regarding Radon. He explained the guidance had stated if there is a basement property with people working in there for 50 hours or more per year this should be monitored. Mr Pickles contacted Lancashire Health & Safety to seek advice on the Academy's basement and it was their advice that Hodgson did not fall into this category and also that Radon was not present in the area.

#### **5. Headteacher's Verbal Update.**

Mr Siddall explained attendance is currently 91.2% the average as of 20<sup>th</sup> January for secondary schools is 85.9%. There is a lot of work continuing behind the scenes including pastoral support and parental support, with some graduating to enforcement. There are still to be some discussions with parents regarding deferred holidays due to Covid.

Mr Siddall explained planning for 2022/2023 is underway recruiting an MFL teacher and a temporary Geography teacher to cover maternity leave. There is also an internal vacancy for Assistant Head of English.

**A governor asked** if the school had any students classed as missing in education.

Mr Siddall explained there were two cases at the Academy, however this was not in relation to any issues with the Academy.

**A governor sought clarification** on what defines a child missing in education.

Mr Siddall explained this is a child who is not on school roll at any school and is not on the elected home school education register.

**A governor questioned** whether there had been a rise in elected home school education due to anxiety.

Mr Siddall replied explaining there had been a rise of anxiety in students but no rise in elected home school education. Mr Siddall added there had been a rise nationally in elected home school education students returning to mainstream education.

#### **6. Admissions Policy 2023/2024.**

Having been circulated prior to the meeting the admissions policy was approved and signed by the board.

Mr Pickles discussed the policy stating it contained the six oversubscription criteria which remain the same.

#### **7. Governors Meetings – Future Agendas.**

Mr Siddall discussed governors been given a greater overview of what happens at Hodgson. Without losing the statutory pillars of governance, there is an opportunity for governors and staff to have more exposure with each other. He explained there will be a finance element to every meeting as required, as well as discussions and approval of policies as necessary. There

will be senior leaders present for some meetings as they are in the specialist area to allow more detailed answers for governors. There will be subject and theme inputs throughout the year, resulting in when discussing attendance, the opportunity to discuss, understand and question this with the senior leader who strategically directs this. Mr Siddall added he would hope if agreed by governors to bring the senior leaders regarding the three year KS4 curriculum to the next meeting in March. Mr Siddall expressed a wish for governors to come into the academy a set number of times a year accompanied by Mr Siddall or a member of the senior leadership team, to experience the school day, observing break times and catering facilities or speak to students. Mr Siddall invited questions

**A governor stated** that governors should be monitoring that the Academy is complying with delivering a full and balanced curriculum and welcomed this approach.

**A governor questioned** whether this would commence from September.

Mr Siddall explained if this was approved he would like to structure the next governors meeting around this approach, without losing the core principles of governance.

Governors agreed.

**A governor stated** this should be monitored as to not allow this approach to become managerial.

**A governor queried** whether a finance update was necessary at every meeting.

Mr Siddall explained financial discussions must take place at least six times a year.

**A governor asked** if themes regarding departments could be prioritised in terms of relevance and issues.

Mr Siddall agreed.

**A governor queried** whether student wellbeing and pastoral would be included in the themes.

Mr Siddall stated this would come under safeguarding and culture and ethos.

## **8. Finance Update.**

Mr Pickles started discussions explaining the figures for admissions dictates finances and Hodgson are again oversubscribed with 258 first choices, 291 second choices and 210 third choices.

**A governor asked** if these numbers are higher than last year.

Mr Pickles explained the figures were slightly lower than the previous year.

**A governor queried** whether there will be enough school places due to the number of new housing developments in the area.

Mr Pickles explained students using the bus service provided had decreased suggesting that more students live locally. He added there would be about 30 appeals in May for places at the Academy.

**A governor queried** if intake numbers change after acceptance.

Mr Pickles explained there is always slight movement, due to students moving out of area or accepting scholarships.

**A governor asked** if digital prospectus' would disadvantage some families.

Mr Pickles explained hard copies are always available.

Mr Pickles explained the standard general budget was to increase by approximately 2% with a supplementary grant from government to cover national insurance rises in April and other cost pressures, the grant is expected to be around £180,000. Other cost pressures will be from energy costs with an estimated rise of £40,000 from April. The energy provider currently used purchases energy in advance. The new heating project went live after the half term and to date the academy has used less gas. Phase 1 of the project has been completed with contractors finishing snagging. Phase 2 and 3 will be completed by a different company due to issues with the current contractor, one of which has matched the price of the original winning bid.

**A governor queried** the benchmarking data.

Mr Pickles explained the Academy is reasonably in line with other schools. He stated the academy spends slightly more on teaching staff, however this provide the best education to the students. There has been no teaching staff movement in the last two years other than Mr Marsden who left for a promoted position.

## **9. Educational Visits.**

The Educational Visits document had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

**A governor asked** if the cancelled university visit would be rearranged.

Mr Pickles stated this would be looked into.

**A governor queried** if the Austria trip would be rearranged.

Mr Siddall explained the Austria ski trip will run again next year with students from this year given priority. He added there were logistical issues with rearranging the visit for later in the year due to limitations of the country regarding Covid.

An Educational Visits audit had taken place prior to the end of the Autumn term, which had been successful.

## **10. Confidentiality**

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

Mr Pickles

## 11. Any Other Business

The Chair explained there had been continued meetings with Mr Siddall with discussions of the Covid risk assessment, curriculum and the website. The Chair had attended a webinar on monitoring the curriculum.

Mr Siddall explained there had been a website audit to ensure the Academy is compliant with legalities, the audit will be distributed to governors. The website is also being assessed for ease of use.

**The Chair encouraged** governors to explore the website for their feedback.

Mr Siddall distributed a document to governors relating to co-curricular activities. Mr Siddall discussed the document and addressing the cohorts with lower take up, with plans to have 100% of students attending a minimum of one co-curricular activity weekly.

**A governor queried** if wider promotion of activities would improve numbers.

Mr Siddall explained this would be looked into.

Mr Siddall explained there is a government document to be released shortly, setting out their direction of travel. The pillars of the upcoming document are expected to be around attendance, SEND provision and the school system.

**A governor had met** with Miss Bate regarding Safeguarding and wished to express gratitude to Miss Bate and her team for their knowledge and expertise in Safeguarding.

## 12. Date and time of next Meeting

The next full governors meeting to be held on Monday 14th March 2022 at 4.30pm.

**ACTION**

Governors

Mr Siddall