

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held on Monday 6th December 2021 at 4.30pm.

**Present:**

Mrs H Benwell  
Mr C Feeney  
Mrs J Harvey  
Mr C McConnachie  
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)  
Miss F Bate (Observer – Deputy Headteacher)  
Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)  
Mr J Bellamy (Accountant)

**Apologies:**

Apologies received and accepted for Mrs N Galloway.

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 Governors acknowledged two parent governor vacancies and it was agreed this would be advertised in January after the Christmas break.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting, having been circulated be approved and signed by the Vice-Chair.

**4. Matters Arising**

A governor requested retrospective apologies to be added for their absence. This was agreed by governors

In reference to the minutes, a governor queried how many of the 14 exam appeals went to the exam board.

Mr Siddall explained some appeals had gone to the exam boards and an email containing more detail would be circulated to governors.

A governor queried whether a learning mentor for looked after children had been appointed.

Mr Siddall explained this was a temporary appointment due to a limited amount of funding with Miss Wade filling the position.

**A governor requested** power points from the previous meeting be circulated to governors for reference.

Clerk

Mr Siddall agreed.

In reference to page 6 - teaching staff using language to de-escalate situations – a governor asked if this applied to teaching assistants.

Miss Bate explained teaching assistants would receive CPD in January regarding this.

**A governor sought clarification** when the PASS test would be completed and which member of SLT would be responsible for dealing with the outcomes.

Mr Siddall explained the PASS tests were to be completed by year 7 later in the week and staff responsible for actioning a plan would depend upon the outcome of results.

## **5. Auditors Report re 2020/2021 & Finance Update**

Prior to the meeting, the Auditors Report and Accounts for 2020/21 had been circulated to governors.

The Chair introduced Jeff Bellamy from CWR to the meeting.

Mr Bellamy discussed the document and brought governors attention to pages 31 and 32 containing the balance sheet figures for the year-end, with previous year's figures alongside for comparison. Mr Bellamy went through the individual items on the Balance Sheet.

Mr Pickles added that included in the debtors is the Conditions Improvement Fund grant for next year, for further heating and boiler works within the Academy.

Mr Bellamy discussed the various funds in which the assets are distributed. He stated the Academy is solvent and financially stable.

**A governor queried** whether the difference in liabilities from the last financial year to the current financial year was due to the building work.

Mr Pickles stated this was correct.

Mr Bellamy discussed the defined pension scheme liability, he explained this had increased for all schools and Academies with similar figures showing on all accounts. Mr Bellamy explained

this was ongoing and is a government requirement for academies to declare. He stressed that it was not a concern despite the amounts involved.

**A governor questioned** whether money is paid towards the pension deficit to decrease the figure.

Mr Pickles explained a valuation is completed every year, with a three yearly evaluation to determine re-payments. There is an employer contribution of 19.9%, which is paid on support staff salaries, as well as an annual lump sum of around £50,000 added to the employer contribution. These monies contribute towards the pension scheme balance every year and in theory should pay it off over an agreed number of years.

**A governor asked** if this is paid as a percentage on the proportion of support staff the Academy employs

Mr Pickles re-iterated there is an employer contribution paid on the salaries of the actual staff at 19.9% (as well as staff contributions) with a lump sum payment on top of the contribution. This is designed to repay the liability in around 15/16 years however this is based on forecast returns on investments the pension scheme makes.

**A governor discussed** the concern with all Academies contributions increasing over the last 15 years and the liability not decreasing.

**A governor agreed** and stated as an Academy we are complying with the required repayments.

Mr Bellamy agreed.

**A governor queried** the decrease in donations and capital grants figure.

Mr Pickles explained the majority of the capital grants are in relation to the Conditions Improvement Funds.

Governors were happy with the Annual Report and Accounts and had no further questions. The Accounts would be finalised and signed off by the Chair and the Head teacher at the Annual General Meeting of the Trust.

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

Prior to the meeting the Headteacher's report had been circulated to governors.

Mr Siddall started discussions explaining the carol service was to remain on the calendar, with the Church happy for this to continue.

Mr Siddall referred to the report and stated Hodgson is currently undersubscribed particularly in Year 11, due to students moving out of area, the current number on roll is 1117.

Mr Siddall discussed a small number of staff leaving for promoted posts, retirement and illness.

Mr Siddall discussed the reduction of fixed term exclusions (suspension) there had been 1 permanent exclusion, with another permanent exclusion due to be heard by the Pupil Discipline committee. Use of inclusion had been reduced, keeping more students in lessons, although this had not been reduced to the same degree of the number of fixed term exclusions.

**A governor asked** if this was something Miss Bate had been working on.

Mr Siddall replied, explaining it was Miss Bate and the pastoral teams, however all staff are included. The Pastoral team work tirelessly to de-escalate and improve management of situations that arise.

**A governor asked** whether staff training had had an impact on this improvement.

Miss Bate explained the training had helped improvements, with Mr Day continuing to support staff with a more empathetic approach to students where this was necessary. Miss Bate added staff are actively utilizing this knowledge and training.

**A governor asked** if the revamp of the inclusion room had made a difference to the students.

Mr Siddall explained the location is an improvement, with less distractions and disturbance and numbers have lessened with a small number of repeat offenders.

**Governors showed** thanks and admiration to Mrs Khan and Mr Jenkinson for their professional commitment in dealing with a difficult situation with regards to an exclusion that had occurred.

**A governor queried** whether there had been a spike in exclusions since covid.

Mr Siddall stated figures are broadly in line with previous years. He added going forward he would add previous years data on the document to allow for a broader view.

Mr Siddall distributed an attendance document to governors. He discussed the overall attendance of the Academy was currently at 91.3%. The national figure for state funded secondary schools as of 25<sup>th</sup> November was at 87.5%. Mr Siddall explained, since the return from covid, there have been an increased number of difficult attendance cases.

**A governor stated** the unauthorised absence figure seemed high.

Mr Siddall discussed the main reasons for an unauthorised absence are an unauthorised holiday during term time and a long term absence where parents quote medical reasons but where medical evidence is not provided; with this contributing to the largest percentage.

Miss Bate added there had been a number of re-scheduled holidays due to covid.

**A governor referring** to the document, questioned the persistent absentee figure in relation to covid.

Miss Bate replied, explaining the persistent absentee figure was 32.6%. This figure is condensed into a term and should be viewed as an overall figure over the academic year. Out of the 370

persistent absentees, 229 of them were linked to covid and isolation. Currently, there is no government code to cater for students with covid, although the academy is using an internal code, this cannot be counted into data submitted nationally. Previously, a code was to be entered when students were absent due to covid, which resulted in the student showing as neither present nor absent.

## 7. Educational Visits

At the meeting the Clerk circulated all upcoming Educational Visit documents.

Mr Siddall discussed a New York trip in 2023, which will be brought to Governors shortly for their approval.

**Governors approved** all upcoming educational visits.

**ACTION**

**Governors queried** the likelihood of the Austria ski trip in February taking place.

Mr Siddall stated a decision on this visit will be imminent, as currently Austria have vaccination requirements for anyone over 12 years of age.

## 8. Governor Training and development

It was agreed for governors to receive information to access “The Key” governance website, offering training, guidance and support.

## 9. Risk Register

Prior to the meeting the Risk Register had been circulated to governors.

**A governor queried** if staff absence had been an issue.

Mr Siddall explained staff absence is seasonal with this currently slightly worse than usual, however manageable.

**A governor asked** if anything had changed in terms of ranking and colours.

Mr Siddall stated nothing had changed.

**A governor suggested** further information regarding the rationale behind the key stage 3 curriculum.

Mr Siddall agreed.

Mr Siddall

**A governor requested** login details for “The Key” for all Governors to access support and Information.

Clerk

## 10. Confidentiality

It was agreed that certain items contained in Agenda item 9 were deemed to be of a confidential nature and minuted as such.

## 11. Any Other Business

A governor discussed Health and Safety, querying whether the Academy had received Carbon Dioxide monitors.

Mr Pickles explained the Academy had received the monitors with these being rolled out into classrooms.

**A governor questioned** whether Governor liability insurance was in place.

Mr Pickles explained this was covered through the DfE RPA scheme.

**A Governor asked** whether testing occurs for Radon.

Mr Pickles explained this gas was not prevalent in the area and was not a requirement, however he stated he would look into this further.

**ACTION**

Mr Pickles

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

The next full governors meeting to be held on Monday 31st January 2022 at 4.30pm.