

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

Present:

Mrs N Galloway (Chair)
Mrs H Benwell
Mr C Feeney
Mr C McConnachie
Mr I Lindsay
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 Mrs A Preston and Miss J Harvey.

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 regarding the agenda items

b. Membership of the governing body

The parent governor vacancy had been acknowledged and agreed by the board this would be re-advertised in the new academic year.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 having been circulated be approved and signed by the Chair.

Mr Siddall explained he had looked into the statistics regarding bullying during lockdown. He explained Lancashire County Council had stated there had been less bullying exclusions recorded.

The Chair stated the Members had met and the requirements for independent membership of the trust was ongoing and being addressed.

Mr Pickles stated approval for the Geography visit was not required by governors with this not being a water based visit.

4. Chair's Update and Actions

The Chair explained interviews had taken place in relation to the Deputy Headteacher position with The Chair and Mrs Benwell part of the panel.

Mr Pickles explained the Educational Visits policy had been updated and that our arrangements with the LA remained the same.

He added an amendment was to be made to the admissions arrangements 2021/22 and 2022/23 from new legislation, in relation to looked after children, with the highest priority to be given to "looked after children and all previously looked after children including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted"

A governor asked if this would be added to the first criteria.

Mr Pickles replied stating it would.

5. Headteacher's Update (Verbal Report)

Mr Siddall started discussions explaining the appointments for the Deputy Headteacher roles were Fiona Bate responsible for Culture, Ethos, Community and Safeguarding, Shabnam Khan responsible for Quality of Teaching and Colin Malone responsible for Curriculum and Achievement. They are retaining large proportions of their current roles while adding additional responsibilities from September. Mr Siddall stated the Head of Transition interview had not yet taken place and it had been agreed to appoint an Assistant Head of Maths internally.

Mr Siddall explained the Y11 grades had been submitted. Samples had been requested for English Language and Chemistry. The BTEC submissions had been accepted and Pearson did not anticipate requiring further evidence.

Mr Siddall discussed attendance and explained it currently stood at 93.9%. There had been a permanent exclusion ratified by the pupil discipline committee. Mr Siddall discussed bubble arrangements explaining this will cease from 19th July as well some of the other restrictions.

Schools are being asked to do on site testing 3-5 days apart for all students as they return from the summer holidays with the management and early planning of this currently being addressed. The guidance allows staggered starts for students.

A governor asked for the percentage of students continuing with home testing.

Mr Pickles explained the uptake of home testing had decreased, however the academy was broadly in-line with uptake of home testing nationally. He added the amount of tests being recorded with the NHS is unknown, although parents have successfully informed the Academy of any positive lateral flow or PCR tests.

A governor queried whether the Academy currently had any Covid positive students out of school.

Mr Marsden explained currently there are no full groups out, however there was a small number of students out in Year 10 and Year 8. He added there were more children out due to cases in the community. Mr Marsden explained that two weeks prior to the governors meeting there had been 9 or 10 cases in a week.

A governor questioned whether there were any staff currently off due to Covid.

Mr Marsden stated there had been no staff recently affected, other than one member of staff currently awaiting a test result after being in contact with a student who tested positive.

A governor stated nationally Blackpool and the surrounding areas are higher with Covid cases and transmission.

Mr Siddall and governors agreed.

A governor asked when GCSE results day would be held.

Mr Marsden replied stating it would be held on Thursday 12th August with a start time to be confirmed. Mr Marsden added it would be a similar arrangement to last year with students having the opportunity to attend the Academy to collect their results or the option to have the results emailed to them. Last year parents were unable to attend with the hope this year parents will be welcome.

6. Budget for 2021/22

Mr Pickles started discussions, referring to the document circulated to governors prior to the meeting. He referred to the section on 'assumptions' for the next three years. He discussed pay awards for staff that had been projected forward and that ASCL recommendations had been followed.

A governor queried how many continuations of lead learning mentors there would be.

Mr Pickles stated the Academy had budgeted for five lead learning mentors to continue into 2021/22 (and beyond although at this stage the roles were temporary).

A governor questioned whether the catch up funding would continue.

Mr Pickles explained it would continue (the Recovery Premium), however it was unclear how much this would be at this stage. He added there may be restrictions on how this can be spent, in terms of flexibility and once fully informed governors would be informed.

Mr Pickles discussed the expenditure, referring to examination fees explaining it was expected for the Academy to receive rebates from exam boards. The Academy usually spends between £80,000-£85,000 on exam fees, with a reasonable rebate expected. In the last academic year, the Academy received a rebate of £20,000. WJEC had reported rebates to be 42% with AQA, EDEXCEL and Pearson expected to follow suit. Mr Pickles explained the tender process was still

ongoing and therefore difficult to finalise a budget. Mr Pickles discussed the staffing cost increase due to staff working through their pay scales and acknowledged this was slightly higher than last year's benchmarking from the ESFA.

A governor queried that spending for ICT infrastructure was £10,000 less in the third year. Mr Pickles explained this figure was merely a projection at this stage and it was important that the school could balance its budget. This adjustment allowed for this to happen but would be something that would be looked at closely in future budget projections.

Mr Pickles reminded governors that the Academy had successfully secured funding for the heating replacement project where the Academy will receive approx. £500,000 (including a small SALIX loan) to supplement an academy contribution of approx. £50,000 which will come from reserves in addition to the monies being utilised upon building improvements over the summer.

A governor questioned how NQT progression had affected salary budgets.

Mr Pickles stated that he had allowed for all possible salary progression within the budgets. Currently the difference between a UPS3 Teacher and an NQT is approx. £22,000 a year. There is expected to be a shake-up of the teacher salary scales with a higher starting point for NQT's but as yet the details of this and the progression towards it are not yet known. Mr Pickles explained that no staff movement is not sustainable over time and this last year had been quiet in this respect, however this has not been a normal period of time.

A governor asked whether the Academy would see a year of high retirements amongst staff.

Mr Pickles replied explaining that such a year of particularly was not projected in the near future, with a varied age range of the staff body.

Mr Pickles stated detailed reports would come to governors in the new academic year with regards to catch up and pupil premium funding. He added the majority of these monies are spent on staffing with monies focusing on well-being of students, attendance and pastoral as well as academic intervention.

A governor questioned whether the Academy had experienced shortfalls in regards to funding for SEND students in relation to the £5 million overspend from Lancashire County Council,

Mr Pickles stated the Academy receives funding from the ESFA based on Lancashire's budget with high needs funding received direct from the local authority. Mr Pickles added this budget is under pressure nationally and it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to obtain an EHCP (Educational, Health Care Plan) The Academy is responsible for funding the first £6,000 of the student's education and needs with monies added from the EHCP as a top up to those students applicable and depending upon the level of EHCP.

A governor enquired about a full spending review in November from the Government.

Mr Pickles replied stating this was expected and would provide indications of education spending for the future.

A governor asked whether the monies shown in income were set.

Mr Pickles replied that with regards to grant funding, other than a few possible alterations to catch up funding, the monies were broadly set and would be received. Smaller income projections re lettings etc. were dependent upon activity within the academy.

A governor queried if monies were based on an academic or financial year.

Mr Pickles explained the budget continues to be based on the academic year from September to September.

7. Policy Approval:

- a) Accessibility Plan**
- b) Admission Arrangements 2022/23**
- c) Behaviour Policy**
- d) Bullying, Harassment and Grievance Policy**
- e) CEIAG Policy**
- f) Charging and Remissions Policy**
- g) Complaints Policy**
- h) Data Protection Policy**
- i) Health and Safety Policy**
- j) LAC and PLAC Policy**
- k) NQT Policy**
- l) Students with Additional Needs Attendance Policy**
- m) Supporting Students with Medical Conditions**
- n) Whistleblowing Policy**

Mr Pickles started discussions explaining the above policies were statutory and must be approved so that they can be published on the academy website. He added a change would be required to the NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) policy as this has become ECT (Early Career Teachers). Mr Pickles explained the Students with Additional Needs Attendance Policy was a new policy. The Safeguarding and SEND policies would be brought to governors as normal during the next academic year.

Mr Siddall stated the policies would have normally been presented to governors at various meetings over the last 15 months, however with guidance suggesting all meetings should be business critical, it has delayed the approval.

A governor advised a name was required in the Students with Additional Needs Policy in point 4.1.

Mr Siddall stated this would be Mr L Jenkinson.

A governor queried the terminology in regards to the board of trustees approval in the Admission Arrangements Policy.

Mr Pickles explained the board of trustees in this instance is in reference to the governing body, with this policy being altered due to the aforementioned new legislation in relation to admissions.

It was resolved the above policies having been circulated prior to the meeting be approved by the governing board.

8. Confidentiality

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

The Chair added thanks to governors for their continued engagement and ability to adjust to online meetings in a very difficult year.

Governors thanked Mr Marsden for all his hard work during his time at Hodgson and wished him well for the future.

9. Meeting Dates for 2021/22

It was agreed the governors meeting dates to change to Mondays for the next academic year with the 2021/22 dates to be as follows: Monday 13th September 2021

Monday 6th December 2021

Monday 31st January 2022

Monday 14th March 2022

Monday 6th June 2022

Monday 11th July 2022