

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held on Monday 6th June 2022 at 4.30pm.

Present:

Mrs H Benwell (Vice-Chair)
Mrs J Vila
Mr C Feeney
Mr C McConnachie
Mrs J Harvey
Mrs A Preston
Mr A Walker
Mrs M Collins
Mr I Siddall (Headteacher)

Also Present:

Mrs E Wallace (Clerk to Governors)
Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)
Mr A Day (Observer - Senior Assistant Headteacher)
Miss F Bate (Observer - Deputy Headteacher)

Apologies:

Apologies received and accepted for Mrs N Galloway, Mr C Jackson and Mr I Lindsay.

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.

2b. Terms of Office/Membership.

The resignation of Mr Jones had been received and accepted. This creates a parent governor vacancy. Mr Walker’s term of office was due to end in the Summer term. This will be addressed by the members. A parent governor election will take place in the new academic year so as to incorporate the new year 7 parents in the process.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.

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

Mr Siddall explained information regarding the action on page 5 is included in the Headteacher’s report.

4. Chair's Action and Update

Due to the absence of the Chair this item will be updated at the next full governors meeting.

6. School Visit Feedback.

Mr Siddall advised that Mrs Galloway had visited the Academy to view some of the classroom changes and she will provide feedback at the next meeting.

Mrs Benwell explained she had visited Mr Jenkinson regarding SEN. She received an updated SEND policy and visited the new SEND location in school, which now houses a sensory area and is in close proximity to the pastoral office. Mr Jenkinson discussed using Lexoniks as a teaching strategy across the school. Mrs Benwell added she would send the clerk the document used for use by others.

Mrs Benwell

Mr McConnachie had visited the Academy regarding safeguarding. Discussions took place with Miss Bate regarding the anxieties experienced after the pandemic.

6. Finance Update and Questions.

The finance document had been issued to governors prior to the meeting.

Mr Pickles explained energy costs are now going up in line with revised contracts, with a supplementary grant of £180,000 to be received to assist with the energy cost crisis and other cost pressures.

Mr Pickles stated there is pressure for rises in pay awards for teaching staff and support staff. The 'real' living wage is rising and overtaking the lowest points on the support staff scale. There is a commitment from the government to raise the wage of new teachers by 8-9%.

A governor asked the starting wage for teaching staff.

Mr Pickles stated it is around £26,000.

A governor asked if figures had been looked at for next year regarding costs.

Mr Pickles explained budgets would be due at the next meeting which would incorporate a reflection on rising costs but it was difficult to accurately forecast as there were wide variations in what was happening in the market place.

A governor queried the length of the catering contract.

Mr Pickles stated it is 3 years with the opportunity to extend.

A governor asked if the pension upgrade is capped at 5%

Mr Pickles will check on this and report back to governors

7. Headteacher's Report.

The Headteacher's report was circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

Mr Siddall explained he had been invited to a meeting with the DfE to discuss the government white paper on the 14th June and would report back to governors at the next meeting

Mr Siddall invited questions.

A governor stated the new format of the report was much easier to understand.

A governor queried why 2019 was the last year used for comparison data.

Mr Siddall explained 2019 was the last year exams were physically sat, with 2020 and 2021 having used teacher assessed and centre assessed grades.

A governor questioned the numbers for managed moves.

Mr Day explained two managed moves have been taken by the Academy and one student sent on a managed moved which was unsuccessful. The Academy receives far more managed moves than is requested by the Academy. A number of schools are requesting managed moves when this should be an in-year admission. The Academy stands firm on not allowing this approach, as the qualifying criteria for a managed move is clear.

A governor congratulated SLT for the professional investigations that took place in relation to the permanent exclusions.

A governor queried the drop in grades for food and nutrition.

Mr Siddall explained this is a small cohort.

A governor questioned the drop in take up of German.

Mr Siddall explained the current year 8's are a French year group with next year being a German Year group.

A governor asked if there is a connection to primary schools in relation to languages.

Mr Siddall explained there is no connection and it would be difficult to match with primary schools, as often the language taught by primary schools is related to the interest of the teacher. There are few language specialists and Hodgson students have the opportunity to learn a language for three years with a language specialist.

A governor asked if the number of students in the subject cohort could be added for reference.

Mr Siddall agreed.

A governor queried the drop in students opting to take Music.

ACTION

Mr Siddall

Mr Siddall explained this is slightly lower than previous years and the students who have chosen this subject are musicians.

A governor asked if the Peripatetic department had been decreased.

Mr Pickles explained the Academy currently has more peripatetic teachers than it ever has had before. Parents contribute towards the cost of these lessons. Works are currently taking place to improve the peripatetic facility.

A governor queried the number of safeguarding incidents.

Miss Bate explained this figure is collective, including e-safety and mental health etc. Covid has had a huge impact nationally. The pastoral and safeguarding teams work on these figures.

A governor queried whether a trending graph would assist governors.

Mr Siddall stated he would look into this.

Mr Siddall

A governor suggested that staff development feedback be added to the report.

A governor sought clarification on the impact for teachers whose subjects are dropped due to lack of demand.

Mr Siddall explained in those situations the impact to the teacher's timetable is minimal.

A governor queried the ever-growing cohorts of students and the decreasing number of teachers nationally.

Mr Siddall explained the Academy is not expanding, the academy is full and we are currently overstaffed by 1.5-2 teachers, meaning there is not going to be a sudden need to employ teaching staff. The increase in housing developments in the area, will ultimately result in students from further afield not being eligible for a place.

8. Theme Input – Behaviour and Conduct

Mr Day explained there has been a focus on reducing fixed term exclusions. The criteria for exclusion have been too formulaic and rigid, with a one approach fits all. Increased use of alternative provision, with particular keenness to identify students who are at risk of multiple fixed term exclusions. The change in approach has reduced the number of fixed term exclusions by 11.25%, the number of students excluded has reduced by 30% and the number of days lost to exclusion has reduced by 37%. All fixed term exclusions have been quality controlled by the Headteacher to ensure consistency.

Last year there were 301 inclusions and so far this year with 6 weeks left there have been 269, the number of days last year lost to inclusion was 366 and so far the number of days lost this year is 302. Last year there was also three months lost to school due to the COVID pandemic.

A governor questioned if the new criteria was used on last years excluded students, how many of those students would not have been excluded.

Mr Day explained this is dependent on the cohort as well. Last year there was a number of students who received multiple fixed term exclusions for unacceptable behaviour, some students who actively sought out to be excluded.

A governor questioned whether Hodgson can say it is not the curriculum gap causing students to behave this way.

Mr Day stated we are achieving this, with many students taking a more academic route.

A governor asked for more clarity on the early intervention strategy.

Mr Day stated there is more work with the pastoral support officers and building relationships with them. It is also important to identify the students who are receiving low level classroom logs where in years to come this could progress into higher level logs.

A governor asked who was responsible for overseeing exclusions previously.

Mr Siddall explained it was the Deputy Headteacher, however all are in agreement that the figures were too high. The question asked is, is this exclusion necessary as opposed to is this exclusion justifiable.

Mr Day invited Governors to visit the Academy on any teaching day where teacher's doors are always 'open' and you will see teaching taking place in a calm ordered atmosphere with students sat attentively. Unstructured time is when we see the higher levels of incidents. There is a high staff presence during unstructured time to prevent these type of incidents.

A governor asked if there is evidence to show this approach is working.

Mr Day explained there has been a decrease in exclusions without an increase in inclusions. He added he would like to close the gap of male and female behaviour, with anger management and other services offered.

A governor questioned an item in the document relating to parental engagement.

Mr Day explained this is re-engaging parents and building relationships with parents.

9. Theme Input – Attendance.

This item was re-arranged for the following meeting.

10. Educational Visits

Having been circulated to governors prior to the meeting the educational visits were approved by the board.

11. Governor Training.

Mrs Vila distributed a document to governors in relation to courses and invited governors to report back with any courses of interest.

12. Any Other Business.

A governor discussed using the exam hall for exams for younger year groups whilst it is set up for the GCSEs to allow students the opportunity to become accustomed to exam conditions.

13. Confidentiality.

There were items discussed in points 6 and 7 and that were deemed to be of a confidential nature and minuted as such.

14. Date and time of Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11th July 2022 at 4.30pm