

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017**

**Part 1 Business**

**Present:** Mrs. C. Astill Mr. S. Lucas  
Mr. K. Balfe Dr. K. Middleton  
Mr. K. Down Mr. S. Mills  
Mr. G. Edwards Mr. C. Minton  
Mrs. C. Emmings Mrs. S. Morrison  
Mr. C. Hall (Chairman) Mr. T. Scott  
Mrs. N. Job Mr. M. Seaman Hill  
Mr. A. Jones  
Mrs. M. King

**In attendance:** Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)  
Mr. J. Crowther (Deputy Headteacher)

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. T. Fitzakerly. Mrs. D. Kaur, Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher) and Mr. S. Sprawson. Miss Swanton (Head Girl) also sent her apologies.

**2. Student Global Leadership Institute presentation**

The school sent 6 students to two SGLI conferences in the summer, one in Hawaii and one in India. Mr. Hankin explained that, due to University interviews, none of the students were able to be present at the meeting but they had prepared a film for Governors explaining the projects they had established on their return from the conferences. The Governors noted the work that these students are doing around school relating to Peer Mentoring and Buddying.

**3. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business**

None

**4. Declarations of Interest**

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any pecuniary or other interest in the items for discussion. There were none.

**5. Minutes of previous meeting.**

5.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.2 Matters arising.

Herts for Learning Standards Visit (from item 7). Mr. Crowther confirmed that the visit has taken place and the outcome will be shared with Governors at a future meeting of the Curriculum & Performance Committee.

Multi Academy Trust (from item 10). Mr. Hankin advised that a meeting has been held with an advisor from the DfE but that there has been no further progress since the last meeting. The DfE are still very reluctant to approve 'empty' MATs.

Governor/Student Panels & Learning Walks (from item 13). Mr. Crowther confirmed that the Key Stage 5 Panel has taken place and thanked Dr. Middleton and Mr. Mills for their involvement. He also thanked Mrs. Job and Mr. Lucas for taking part in the recent Learning Walks. Feedback from both events will be provided at the next Curriculum & Performance Committee.

## **6. Head Girls' Report**

The Head Girl provided a written report which was reviewed and noted. Governors were pleased to note the wide range of events that have taken place in school this term. The success of the careers fair was very pleasing, especially the large number of Russell Group Universities who were also involved. Governors were also delighted to note that the Year 7 students raised over £3,000 from a sponsored walk for the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

## **7. Headteacher's Report**

Governors noted and reviewed the report which had been provided in advance of the meeting. Mr. Crowther highlighted the impressive GCSE P8 score of 0.8 which places the school in the top 2% nationally and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Hertfordshire. He also referred to the very successful Careers Week and also the Induction Week for new Year 7 students. Lots of positive feedback has been received from students and parents regarding both these activities.

Governors expressed thanks to Mrs. Manning for sending them the report.

## **8. Committee reports**

### **8.1 Admissions Committee**

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 31 October 2017. Student numbers were noted. The feedback from a very busy Open Evening and Open Mornings was very positive. There were a number of Year 5 parents present, including some from London who indicated they were looking to move to Hitchin.

The committee had reviewed the admission arrangements for 2019/2020. The published admission number (PAN) will be 210. There are no changes proposed to the criteria and the committee recommended the current arrangements to the Governing Body.

Governors unanimously **APPROVED** the Determined Admission Arrangements for 2019/2020.

### **8.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee**

Mrs. King reported on the meeting held on 31 October 2017. A presentation on summer 2017 examination results was received and the outcomes discussed. The committee was delighted with the stunning GCSE results and very pleased with the

performance of English and Mathematics under the new curriculum and 9-1 grading scheme.

Mr. Crowther had presented a paper on the way ahead for the Key Stage 3 curriculum to meet the needs of curriculum changes, new courses and the growth of the school, whilst continuing to maintain the breadth of the current offering. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

An update on the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) was received.

The committee had also reviewed a number of policies.

The Child Protection policy and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy had been reviewed and were recommended to Governors for approval. These were unanimously **APPROVED**.

The Children Looked After policy, Homework policy, Marking and feedback policy and Non-examination Assessments policy had been reviewed and approved by the committee. This was **NOTED** by the Governors.

### **8.3 Finance & Resources Committee**

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 7 November 2017. The Auditor was present and gave a thorough overview of the Report and Accounts for 2016/17. The committee was very pleased to note that, despite the financial pressures faced by schools, the in-year deficit for 2016/17 was just £189 allowing the school to maintain its level of reserves. The auditor had indicated that many schools are facing financial difficulties and are having to reduce staff levels and increase teaching loads to help balance their budget.

There were no management issues or points of concern raised by the Auditor and the committee recommended to Governors that the Financial Statements were approved and signed.

Mr. Hankin informed Governors that Hertfordshire County Council had advised earlier that day of some incorrect data relating to asset returns in the accounting report they provided on behalf of the Hertfordshire Pension Fund. This will require an amendment to the pension valuation figures in the Financial Statements, but not the figures relating to the schools own financial performance. These changes should be received within the next week.

Noting the above, the Governing Body unanimously **APPROVED** the Financial Statements of Hitchin Girls' School for the period ending 31 August 2017. The Management Letter from UHY Hacker Young was **NOTED**.

The committee had also reviewed and approved the Minibus Safety and Use policy and the Schedule of Financial Delegation and this was **NOTED** by Governors.

### **8.4 Personnel Committee**

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 10 October 2017. The committee had received information on staff absence for the previous year and were pleased to note that there had been little long term absence. Absence for CPD was lower than in previous years, but this reflected the success of the school credit based training scheme which used internal resource for many aspects of training and CPD. Staff were thanked for their support and involvement in this.

The committee had reviewed the outcomes of the performance appraisal and pay recommendations process and supported all the recommendations made. The committee had also agreed the 2% increase in the pay scale points for the Main Pay Scale with 1% on Upper Pay Scale, Leadership Scale and Allowances, as discussed at the previous Governing Body meeting. This was in line with the decision of other local secondary schools.

The Pay and Appraisal policy for 2017/18 was reviewed and recommended to the Governing Body for approval. The policy is very similar to the existing policy, with an update to reflect the new pay scales plus the inclusion of an option for the school to make a payment to staff who prepare material and deliver sessions for North Herts. Teaching Alliance.

The Pay and Appraisal policy for 2017/18 was unanimously **APPROVED**.

A new staff benefits booklet was reviewed and welcomed by the committee and they also received an update on GDPR.

The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Family & Carers guide, Safer Recruitment policy, Alcohol Drugs and Gambling at Work policy, Flexible Working policy, LGPS Discretions policy and Appointment of Support Staff – Hourly paid variable hours contract document. This was **NOTED** by Governors.

Mr. Balfe raised a question regarding item 5.2 in the minutes of the committee meeting which referred to the Staffing Structure & TLR review and stated that there had been several responses from staff thanking Governors for considering the feedback received during the consultation and for retaining the existing structure. He reminded Governors that, following the previous review, a staff working group was established which made several recommendations but none were taken on board and this was not referred to in these minutes.

Mrs. Job advised that all the recommendations made by the working group had been considered in full by the Senior Leadership Team and by the Personnel Committee and noted in minutes of previous meetings. Minute 5.2 refers to an item under the heading Matters Arising from previous minutes and was a response to a question that had been asked. She re-iterated that all the responses from the working group had been considered.

It was agreed to note the concern raised by Mr. Balfe regarding the recommendations from the working group.

## **9. Link Governors**

Mr. Hall reported on time spent with the Mathematics Department. He advised that he had a very positive conversation regarding Mathematics and there is a good team of staff in the department. They had discussed the loss of AS level Mathematics and the impact this might have on students wanting to study A level Mathematics.

Mr. Mills gave feedback on a productive visit to the PE department. There is some concern from staff regarding the lack of guidance from the examination boards particularly

for GCSE Dance, which is a strong subject at the school. The Sports Leader scheme is very successful and the work that Year 10, 11 & 12 students undertake with junior schools is very impressive.

Mrs. Morrison reported on a visit to the English department. Staff are all very positive and happy following the summer results. She saw a Year 9 lesson, a Year 7 library lesson, and a Year 13 A level lesson and was very impressed with student engagement. The library is a fantastic resource for students.

Mrs. Job reported on the Learning Walks she has participated in. She had enjoyed seeing how things are going around the school generally and had visited 5 different subject areas. Behaviour in lessons was first class.

Mr, Fitzakerly had submitted a report on a visit to the Modern Foreign Languages department. He was particularly impressed with the way that teaching is differentiated within each lesson to suit students with very different levels of language ability. The department is well run with committed and enthusiastic teachers. A concern for the future is the recruitment and retention of high quality staff as the demand for MFL expertise increases.

The schedule of link departments was reviewed. Dr. Middleton agreed to become link Governor for High Achieving Students, Mr. Mills for Music, Mr. Edwards for Art & Design and Mr. Scott for Philosophy & Ethics.

#### **10. Committee Membership**

Mr. Balfe was re-appointed to the Finance & Resources Committee. Mr. Edwards and Mr. Scott were appointed to the Curriculum & Performance Committee.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

Mr. Hankin reported that work on the new Sports Hall is progressing well and the school will be able to start using the new facility in January.

#### **12. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 13 March 2018

The meeting closed at 8.15pm