

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2016**

**Present:**

Mrs. C. Astill	Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)
Mr. K. Balfe	Mrs. J. Marland
Mr. K. Down	Mrs. M. McPhail
Mrs. C. Emmings	Mr. S. Mills
Mr. C. Hall (Chairman)	Mr. C. Minton
Mrs. N. Job	Mr. G. Montgomery
Mr A. Jones	Mrs. S. Morrison
Mrs. M. King	Mr. S. Sprawson.
Mr. S. Lucas	

**In attendance:** Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)  
Ms. T. Stojko (Assistant Headteacher) Items 1-5

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. T. Fitzakerly, Mr. M. Seaman Hill and Mr. J. Crowther (Deputy Headteacher).

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

None

**3. Declarations of Interest**

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

**4. Minutes of previous meeting.**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2016.

Mr. Balfe queried the minute relating to approval of the minutes of 15 March, and the post meeting note. The clerk read the notes from both meetings, and Governors agreed that the minute reflected the discussion.

The Chairman noted Mr. Balfe's comments.

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

4.2 Matters arising.

There were none.

**5. Teaching alliance update**

Ms. Stojko, Assistant Headteacher, gave a presentation on plans for the new North Herts. Teaching Alliance. She provided background information on the creation of the Alliance and details of current activity.

Focus at present is on the creation and running of 3 CPD courses entitled NQT+1, Aspiring Middle Leaders and Aspiring Senior Leaders; the identification, training and support for new SLE's (Specialist Leaders in Education); and the running of Cluster Groups to allow departments from Secondary Schools across the area to share resources and ideas and support each other.

A new NHTA website will be live for September, and a part time Administrator has been appointed to provide support for the Alliance.

Governors asked how the Alliance will monitor the quality of the courses being delivered and how the school will monitor the impact on Teaching and Learning where staff are involved in Alliance work. Mrs. Manning advised that feedback from those attending courses will help with evaluation, and that all the Headteachers involved with the Alliance will be closely monitoring the time spent by staff and the impact this has on their own school.

Governors also asked about the partnership with Universities. Ms. Stojko confirmed that this related to the School Direct and Initial Teacher Training programmes.

Ms. Stojko was thanked for her presentation.

## **6. Headteachers' report**

Mrs. Manning referred to the report circulated prior to the meeting.

She highlighted some key areas which were discussed by Governors, including;

- The ongoing work relating to curriculum and course changes.
- The successful reaccreditation of the International School's Award.
- An update on admission numbers for September.
- The high number of students presenting with mental and emotional health issues in school, which is a problem both across the county and nationally.
- Progress on the Headteacher's Objectives.
- The secondment of 3 staff to the Senior Leadership Group, and Governors wished them all well.
- Staffing changes for September and current vacancies.

Governors asked about staff absence statistics and Mrs. Manning agreed to provide a summary of absence by reason to the Personnel Committee.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her report.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Admissions Committee**

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 11 May 2016. Matters discussed included an update on admissions for September, discussion of the Local Authority expansion proposals and the timescale and options for any admission criteria consultation that will be required if the proposal to expand the school is agreed by Governors.

### **7.2 Asset Management**

Mr. Hall reported on the meeting held on 4 May 2016. The committee had received a premises update and discussed progress on the projects being funded by the Education Funding Agency Condition Improvement Fund.

Mr. Hankin confirmed that tenders are currently being sought for the Sports Hall building, and that an additional Governing Body meeting will be required to agree the award of a contract once the tenders have been received and evaluated. Governors agreed to meet on 18 July 2016 for this purpose.

The Committee had also discussed the latest information on the Local Authority expansion proposals.

The committee had agreed that the Asset Management Committee should merge with the Finance Committee next year, as there is a lot of overlap between these two committees.

### 7.3 Curriculum and Performance Committee

Mrs. Marland reported on the meeting held on 4 May 2016. The committee had reviewed data relating to student achievement and progress, along with predicted grades against targets, which was all good. Self evaluation review and the new format for lesson observations are going well.

The committee also discussed Post 16 teaching and the move to two year A2 courses. Governors discussed the outcome and recommendations from a recent complaint hearing. To allow greater links between Governors and students a focus group will be established to allow students to share with governors their views and experiences on teaching and learning.

The updated Attendance Policy and Home School Agreement had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by the Governing Body.

The updated Complaints Policy had also been reviewed and was recommended to the Governing Body for approval. Governors **APPROVED** the Complaints Policy.

### 7.4 Finance Committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 11 May. The current financial position was reviewed and a draft budget for 2016/17 discussed. Mr. Hankin updated Governors on the proposed budget for 2016/17 and reviewed key aspects relating to income, staffing and premises costs. It was noted that pressure from items outside of the schools control, including pay awards, the apprenticeship levy and future pension contribution changes all place a strain on the ability to balance the budget. Staff changes for September have helped to reduce costs. Mrs. Manning reminded Governors that, when appointing staff, the best person for the role is appointed regardless of their pay grade.

The proposed budget for 2016/17 was considered and **APPROVED**.

Mr. Down advised that the committee had considered the Risk Register and no changes were proposed. It was recommended to the Governing Body and **APPROVED**.

The committee had discussed minor changes to the Schedule of Financial Delegation and Charges, Refunds and Remissions Policy and recommended both. The Governing Body **APPROVED** these updated documents.

### 7.5 Personnel Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 11 May 2016. It had received a report from the staff TLR Working Group and discussed their recommendations. Mr. Hall noted that the Group had done a lot of in-depth work considering schemes used in other schools and thanked them for their input.

The recommendations will be considered when the scheme review takes place in the Autumn Term.

As part of the budget process, the committee had agreed an overall budget headcount of 99 for 2016/17.

The Committee had reviewed and approved the updated Continuing Professional Development Policy and the eSafety & Data Security Policy and this was **NOTED** by the Governing Body.

Mrs. Manning advised that proposed changes to safeguarding guidelines will require a further change to the eSafety policy.

## **8. Secondary Expansion proposal update**

Mr. Hankin provided an update to Governors following the decision by the County Council to request an expansion at Hitchin Boys' School and Hitchin Girls' School from September 2018 to accommodate the additional demand for places in Hitchin. He explained the initial actions required and a possible timescale if the expansion proposal is agreed. The first stage in the process is a four week consultation on the proposal to expand and Governors agreed the letter to be sent jointly with Hitchin Boys' School on this proposal. The consultation will run from 27 June to 22 July and Governors agreed to review feedback and make a decision on the proposal at their meeting on 13 September. They agreed that, in making a decision, key questions that will be considered are:

- Is it right for the school?
- Is it right for the students?
- Is it right for the community?

Governors also discussed the other actions that will need to be considered if the decision is made to proceed with the expansion, including the proposed Funding Agreement between the Council and School, admission criteria consultation and appointment of professionals to assist with the project.

## **9. Link Governor visits**

Mrs Astill reported on time spent with Mr. Crowther and Mrs. Maydom to discuss Pupil Premium. The focus next year is to really engage with parents and carers on the use of pupil premium funds, building on the correct successful process for using this money.

Mr. Minton reported on time spent with the History department where he saw Year 7 and Year 8 lessons. He was very impressed with the students' engagement and knowledge. He also commented positively on the work of our new History teacher.

Mrs. Job reported on time spent with the Student Development department and also looking at CPD plans. This had been very informative and there are some exciting plans for CPD in the future.

Mr. Lucas reported on a visit to the Social Sciences department where he met with department staff. Despite the problems they have experienced this year, they are very optimistic about the year ahead.

Mrs. McPhail reported on a visit to Geography where she had also been impressed with the level of student engagement.

**10. Meeting dates 2016/17**

The proposal to merge the Finance and Asset Management committees was agreed. The dates for meetings in 2016/17 was **AGREED**.

**11. Any Other Business**

None.

**12. Date of next meeting**

Monday 18 July – to consider the tenders for the Sports Hall

Tuesday 13 September

The meeting closed at 9.20pm