

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees Held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 13 September 2022

Present:

Mr. K. Balfe	Mrs. N. Job (Chair)
Mr. J. Crowther (Headteacher)	Mrs. M. King
Mr. K. Down	Mr. S. Lucas
Mr. G. Edwards	Mr. S. Mills
Mr. T. Fitzakerly	Mr. D. Roberts
Mrs. S. Franklin	Mrs. K. Rowe
Mrs. S. Frost	Mr. T. Scott
Mr. C. Hall	Mrs. A. Thornber
Ms. A. Holden	Mr. M. Winter

In attendance: Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)
Mr. A. Jones (Deputy Headteacher)

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. C. Emmings.

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Hall informed Trustees that he has now completed eight years as Chair and this is the suggested maximum term in the guidance from the National Governance Association. He is therefore not standing again and proposed Mrs. Job as Chair for 2022/23. This was seconded by Mr. Mills and **APPROVED** by Trustees.

Mrs. Job thanked Trustees for appointing her to the role. She proposed Mr. Lucas as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Mr. Scott and **APPROVED** by Trustees.

Trustees were then invited to pause for a short reflection following the recent death of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

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

None.

4. Declarations of interest

Trustees 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 21 June 2022.

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

5.2 Matters arising.
None.

6. Examination results summary

Mr. Crowther gave a brief overview of the summer examination results. He reminded Trustees that a more detailed review and analysis will be given at the next Curriculum & Performance committee to which all Trustees are welcome to attend. The main headline is that both A level and GCSE results are the best they have ever been.

At Key Stage 5:

- 29.7% of our Year 13 students gained 3+ A* - A grades
- 9 students (6.2% of the cohort) achieved 3 A* grades, compared to the national figure for England of 1.1%
- 20.5% of our A level grades were A* compared to 9% in 2019 (the last date Public Examinations were held). This considerably exceeds the national figure of 14.5%
- 48% of our A level grades were A/A*(2019 - 32.6%) compared to 35.9% nationally
- 72% of grades were A*-B (2019 – 60.4%), compared to the national figure of 62.2%
- 90.3% of grades were A*-C (2019 – 87.6%), compared to 82.1% nationally
- 15 students were entered for Applied General courses with 10 entries achieving either Distinction* or Distinction
- 26 Year 12 students were entered for EPQ with 76.9% of those completing the qualification achieving A* - A grade

At Key Stage 4:

- At GCSE, we achieved our highest A8 scores across all elements
- 17.1% of results were grade 9, compared to the national figure of 6.6%
- 15.9% of grades were grade 8, compared to the national figure of 8.5%
- 52% of grades were grade 7 or higher (2019 – 37.5%), compared to the national figure of 26%
- 93.1% of grades were grade 4 or higher (2019 – 90.6%), compared to the national figure of 73%
- 76.5% of students achieved Grade 5+ in English & Mathematics (2019 – 64.9%)
- 91.65% of students achieved Grade 4+ in English & Mathematics (2019 – 90.69%)
- 3 students got straight 9s, and 5 got all 9s and 1 grade 8
- 15 students, 9% of the cohort, gained all grade 8 & 9s
- 39 students, 23.5% of the cohort, gained all grades 7+
- 72 students, 43.4% gained at least one grade 9
- One student got the highest score in the country for combined science.

The challenge is to look at what the school did well last year and to see how this can be applied to this year's cohort.

The Chair commented that these are outstanding results and the Trustees express their appreciation to all staff for their work in helping and supporting students to achieve these results.

7. Headteacher's presentation

Mr. Crowther shared with Trustees part of the presentation he gave to staff on the INSET day at the start of term. This focused on a new chapter for the school as he begins his headship, and referred to ways in which this will be assessed after 100 days, and then in 3-5 years time.

He spoke about the importance of relationships, happy students and staff, good communication and great teaching. He also thanked Trustees for their support and reiterated the importance of their role in support of him and the school.

Trustees thanked Mr. Crowther for his presentation and wished him well in his new role.

8. Headteacher's update

Mr. Crowther provided an update on the start of term.

He has attended assemblies with all students and shared the summer examination successes. A lot of work has taken place across the site over the summer and Mr. Hankin and the site team were thanked for this. The INSET days at the start of term were very positive with a good feeling amongst staff. Students have returned with a positive attitude and uniform is generally good. He led a special assembly last Friday to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

Arrangements have been made with an ASCL consultant who is also an Ofsted Inspector to come into school and provide support and guidance for the Senior Leadership Team and Trustees. Future sessions will also include support for departments.

Mr. Crowther was asked about attendance levels, especially for those who struggled last year. He replied that attendance is good, a new attendance policy and process is in place and Mrs. Cole is working with parents to arrange formalized plans to get students back to school where they were not attending last year. Unfortunately, support on attendance matters from County is still insufficient.

9. School Improvement Plan 2021/22 review

The SIP for 2021/22 has been updated with the outcome at the end of the academic year and Trustees were invited to review this. A Trustee asked about extra-curricular activities. Mr. Jones explained that a Freshers Fayre showcasing many of these was held at the end of the first week of term to encourage attendance. This was well attended. There are over 40 different clubs or activities and students are encouraged to attend at least one.

10. Governance & Financial Oversight

10.1 NGA Trust Board Effectiveness review

Mrs. Job reported on a discussion with the adviser from the National Governance Association (NGA). She had asked a number of questions relating to the size and membership of the Trust Board and the number of committees and the rationale for this had been explained. The difficulty in ensuring a diverse membership was acknowledged and there may be a benefit in seeking people who may only be willing to serve for just two or three years. An updated job description for the Clerk has been completed. The effectiveness review also identified the need to ensure a regular evaluation of the role of trustees and Chair.

10.2 Committee structure and terms of reference

The structure was agreed for 2022/23. The terms of reference have been updated using templates from the NGA. These have been reviewed by committee chairs. The terms of reference were **APPROVED**.

10.3 Committee membership and appointment of chairs

The committee membership for 2022/23 was agreed.

The following were nominated and appointed as committee chairs:

- Admissions – M. King
- Audit & Risk – K. Down
- Curriculum & Performance – S. Frost
- Finance & Resources – G. Edwards
- Personnel – S. Lucas

10.4 Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to the current version. The scheme for 2022/23 was **APPROVED**.

10.5 Trustee Link departments

A number of changes were made to the links for 2022/23. These will be shared with the relevant Head of Department. Trustees should visit school at least once a year. Arrangements for visits are made via the Headteachers' PA.

10.6 Trustee training

Mrs. King reminded Trustees of training requirements and expectations and the importance of regularly updating training. She is able to see who has completed training or is booked on a future course. Online training options are also available from Herts for Learning and via Modern Governor.

11. Audit Arrangements

11.1 Risk Register

The register was reviewed. Trustees asked how the impact and likelihood weightings were assessed and Mr. Hankin explained that these had been considered by the Finance committee. The Risk Register was **APPROVED**.

11.2 Audit documentation

The Business Risk and Fraud Assessments were reviewed and **APPROVED**.

The checklist for the ESFA Schedule of Requirements was also reviewed. This had been considered by Mrs. Manning as outgoing Accounting Officer at the end of July. The schedule was **APPROVED**.

12. Admission Arrangements 2024/25

Trustees were asked whether they wish to consider any changes for September 2024 as a consultation process would need to start this term. As the admission arrangements for 2023/24 are the first year of the recent change for students living in the priority area, it was agreed that no amendments are required.

The current admission arrangements for 2023/24 were **APPROVED** as the Determined Admission Arrangements for 2024/25.

13. Safeguarding update for Trustees

Mr. Crowther provided Trustees with a summary of changes in the 2022 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and in particular the responsibilities of Trustees. All staff and Trustees will be invited to join a Safeguarding Network App which will be used to help ensure understanding.

14. Policies

14.1 Child Protection Policy

This has been updated using the latest model policy from Herts for Learning. The policy was **APPROVED**.

14.2 Attendance Policy

The updated policy has been reviewed and approved by the Curriculum and Performance Committee. This was **NOTED** by Trustees.

15. Any other Business

None

16. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 7 December 2022