

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2019

Present:	Mr. K. Balfe	Mr. S. Lucas
	Mr. K. Down	Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)
	Mr. G. Edwards	Dr. K. Middleton
	Mrs. C. Emmings	Mr. S. Mills
	Mr. T. Fitzakerly	Mr. C. Minton
	Mr. C. Hall (Chairman)	Mrs. K. Rowe
	Mrs. N. Job	Mr. T. Scott
	Mrs. M. King	Mr. M. Seaman Hill
		Mr. M. Winter
In attendance:	Mr. T. Hankin	(Clerk)
	Mr. J Crowther	(Deputy Headteacher)
	Miss K. Knight	(Head Girl)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone. Mr. Winter was welcomed to his first Governing Body meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Ms. J. Briggs and Mrs. S. Morrison. Mr. S. Sprawson was absent.

2. Student Global Leadership Institute presentation

The 6 Year 13 students who attended the SGLI conferences in Hawaii and India gave presentations on their trips and the projects they are undertaking.

SGLI India – the theme of the conference was Moral Courage and the three students are promoting this through assemblies and by encouraging students to undertake acts of courage. Linked to this they are also supporting the Period Poverty Drive campaign which will be linked to the Food Drive event this month.

SGLI Hawaii – the theme was tackling social exclusion and encouraging people to stand up against what they think is wrong. Their project aims to increase social participation in school and reduce social exclusion. As well as assemblies, they are also planning an open mic event to promote this.

Governors asked questions relating to the trips and the experiences that the students gained. They all agreed that it has changed how they see the world and made them realise how fortunate most people are in this country. It also helped them to develop individually and give them confidence to stand up for what is right. Mrs. Manning reminded Governors that these trips are expensive and students and staff pay a considerable amount to attend. The school does not contribute to the cost. However, the impact it has on the individuals and the school as a whole make it very worthwhile

They were thanked for their reports and wished well with their projects.

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. Mr. Balfe, Mrs. Emmings, Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Rowe declared an interest in item 8.4.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

5.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019.

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

5.2 Matters arising.

GCSE results. Mrs. Manning reported that the provisional P8 figure has risen to 0.6 **Ofsted Inspection Framework**. Mrs. Manning confirmed that the exemption for Outstanding schools from future inspections is removed from September 2020.

6. Head Girls' report

Miss Knight gave a report to Governors. It has been a busy term and items to note include:

- the involvement of the SGLI students in running workshops for the Year 7 induction programme.
- ongoing peer mentoring programme
- School Council meetings
- choir autumn concert and forthcoming visit to perform at the V&A Museum.
- the Consortium Cole-Swinburn cup
- Classics play rehearsals
- the week long exercise as part of the application for World Class School status and the subsequent assessment day.

Governors thanked her for her report.

7. Headteacher's report

The report had been circulated in advance and Mrs. Manning asked for questions and highlighted some key areas. She also presented a review of progress on actions in the School Improvement Plan. Items discussed included:

- Admissions update for September 2020 – Almost 600 applications have been received, in line with previous years
- Tutor time programme – tutor time is now being used more effectively although there are still some inconsistencies
- The Headstrong programme is going well and good feedback has been received from staff and students
- CMG – a focus this term has been working together on curriculum mapping
- Data collection points – these have been reviewed and the number has been reduced across the year
- Self-evaluation framework has been updated
- Go4schools is being used for behaviour and attendance monitoring and reporting
- IT – the upgrade over the summer went well with no downtime

- The Headteacher's objectives for 2019/20

Governors noted that the SIP referred to the school 'being brave' and asked if there were examples of this. Mrs. Manning stated that one example is by not immediately following what others are doing. Although there is a push to get students to complete the EBacc, this is not something that HGS follow and being brave is having the belief that what the school is doing is right for the students.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her update and report.

8. Committee reports

8.1 Admissions committee

Mrs. Job referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November. There had been an update on admission numbers and feedback from the open evening and mornings. There was also a discussion of Year 11 and 13 student destinations which highlighted the breadth of choices and options made by students. .

8.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mrs. King reported on the meeting held on 5 November 2019. The main item had been a presentation and discussion on the summer 2019 examination results which had again been very good. For GCSE results, the school is ranked 12th out of 152 secondary schools in Hertfordshire and in the top 350 (5.4%) in England. P8 is 0.6. At A level, the APS grade has improved from B- to B.

The committee also received an update on activities that are part of the self-evaluation programme and a Pupil Premium update. A SEND report from the Head of Learning Support was received and reviewed.

Ms. Stojko had reported on the activity of the North Herts Teaching Alliance and the work that is taking place to support schools and individual staff.

The committee had reviewed the updated Child Protection and SEND policies and recommended these to the Governing Body. Governors **APPROVED** these updated policies.

The committee had also reviewed and approved the updated Assessment and Feedback policy, ESTMA policy, Substance Use and Misuse policy and Non-examination Assessment policy. This was **NOTED** by the Governors.

8.3 Finance, Resources & Audit Committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 12 November 2019. The first part of the meeting reviewed the draft financial accounts for 2018/19, presented by the Auditor. Mr Kariya had confirmed that the school has excellent financial processes and procedures in place. No issues or concerns were raised and the report from the Auditors is unqualified. He had informed the committee that the financial controls in place are very good and the school has a strong and experienced finance team. He summarised the content of the financial statements and said that the school had finished the year with a small in-year surplus with unrestricted reserves increasing by £24,276. Reserves are

just above the level set by Governors. Cost control remains key to good financial performance and the school should continue to monitor costs and especially staff costs.

The meeting had discussed the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) valuation and how the change in valuation affects the accounts and that this is outside the control of the school.

Mr. Kariya also reviewed the Management Letter which is a report on the audit findings. There were no issues of concern noted and no adjustments required to the financial statements. The Management Letter from the auditor was reviewed and **NOTED**.

The Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2019 were recommended for approval by Mr. Down, seconded by Mr. Hall, and unanimously **APPROVED** by the Governing Body.

The committee had reviewed and discussed the new DfE School Resource Management Self-Assessment return which compares financial measures for HGS with other schools. It had highlighted that staff costs as a percentage of income remain high, and that this has an impact on the budget available for non-staff costs. The budget for premises maintenance work has been cut over the past few years, but this needs to increase again to ensure the school facilities are maintained in good order. It was noted that a water leak repair will use over 50% of the available budget this year. Budget projections for future years continue to show a very tight position with a small surplus.

The premises maintenance report had been received and reviewed. Two funding bids will be submitted this month to the DfE Condition Improvement Fund. The outcome will not be known until next April.

The committee also discussed the programme of internal scrutiny for 2019/20 and agreed the schedule of work. The latest report from the Responsible Officer was received.

The committee had reviewed and approved the Fixed Assets and Depreciation 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 15 October 2019. She had conducted exit interviews with all staff who had left in the summer and was able to report to the committee that they all confirmed they enjoyed their time at HGS and were sad to leave, but were moving on for valid reasons. They had praised the students and thanked the Head and leadership team for the support received.

The performance & appraisal process had been reviewed and the committee confirmed that it had been a robust process and were happy to give approval to all the recommendations.

It was agreed to commence the three yearly staffing structure review process but the committee was mindful of the budget constraints and the high proportion of income

required to cover staff costs and agreed that any proposed changes should not cause an increase in the staffing budget.

The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Safer Recruitment policy and this was **NOTED** by Governors

The committee had also reviewed the Pay and Appraisal policies which have been updated in line with changes to the pay scales and recommended these for approval. Governors **AGREED** the updated Pay and Appraisal policies. Staff Governors and the Headteacher declared an interest and did not vote.

9. Multi Academy Trust update

Mrs. Manning gave an update to Governors. The Steering Group met twice in October. An application has been submitted to the DfE for consideration by the Headteacher Board. She reminded them that this doesn't mean the creation of a MAT is going ahead, but that it is part of the process required prior to a final decision. Due to the General Election, the earliest the application will be considered is the end of January. The application form includes details of the prospective Members and Trustees along with the CEO and CFO and Mrs. Manning shared these names with Governors but reminded them that they must remain confidential until the Headteacher Board has considered the application.

The consultation process is open until 10 December and 4 drop-ins have been held for parents and staff. The FAQ document has also been updated. The due diligence process is also continuing.

As the date for the application to be considered by the Headteacher Board is unknown, no date has been set for a meeting of the Governing Body to review the outcome of the consultation and due diligence process and make a final decision as to whether or not to proceed.

10. Link Governors

The list of Governor link departments was reviewed. Mr. Winter agreed to become the Link Governor for History. Ms. Briggs has spent time with the English department but a report has not yet been received.

11. Any Other Business

None

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 24 March 2020