

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2015

Present:

Mr. K. Balfe		Mrs. J. Marland
Mr. S. Burgoyne		Mrs. M. McPhail
Mr. T. Fitzakerly		Mr. S. Mills
Mr. K. Down		Mr. C. Minton
Mr. C. Hall	(Chairman)	Mrs. S. Morrison
Mrs. N. Job		Mrs. K. Rowe
Mrs. M. King		Mr. M. Seaman Hill
Mrs. F. Manning	(Headteacher)	

In attendance: Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. G. Montgomery, Mrs. K. Smith and Mr. J. Crowther (Deputy Headteacher). Mr. S. Sprawson was absent.

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 meetings.

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2015.

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

4.2 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2015.

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

4.3 Matters arising.

Staff recruitment (from item 4.2 on 10 March). Mrs Manning advised that the school is fully staffed for September.

5. Reports

5.1 Headteacher's report

Mrs. Manning presented her report to Governors and highlighted a number of items:

- Progress on the School Improvement Plan. The new plan was agreed earlier in the month and progress will be reported at every full Governing Body meeting by

adding comments and actions to the plan document, rather than being written separately as part of the Headteachers report.

- Curriculum. Curriculum changes are still being announced, often with little notice. Staff are working very hard to keep abreast of changes and be ready to start delivery the new curriculum from September. The latest Government announcement is that students joining the school in September will be expected to study for GCSE's that meet the requirement of the EBacc. This includes a compulsory Modern Foreign Language. Governors discussed the impact this will have on some students as the school doesn't currently insist on this.
- Admissions. There were 3 successful appeals for September.
- The new Progress 8 score which is a new measure for performance tables (Mrs. Mills, Assistant Headteacher joined for this discussion). This measure will be compulsory for 2015/16 but schools are able to opt in, if they wish, for 2014/15 data. Mrs. Mills gave a summary of how the measure works. It is linked to progress from Key Stage 2 which will give a fairer measure than the current performance tables. However, due to uncertainty regarding the data for this cohort of students, it was felt by the school that there is no benefit in doing this. Mrs. Manning advised that no school in North Herts had taken the decision to opt in. Mr. Hall, proposed and Mr. Minton seconded that the school should not opt in to the measure for 2014/15. 14 Governors voted in favour, with none against. Mrs. Manning abstained.
- Changes to the Ofsted framework for September 2015. All schools judged to be outstanding in the previous Section 5 inspection are exempt from inspection under section 5. However, exempt schools may be inspected if a risk assessment or subject inspection shows the need to do so.
- Staffing – Mrs. Eckersall has won the Comet teacher of the Year Award, the school's second success in 3 years.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her report.

5.2 Admissions Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 13 May. It was noted that, as a result of the address checking process for September admissions, one place has been withdrawn.

Mrs. Job reminded the Governors of the briefing session for Governors of all 3 secondary schools, which will be led by the Local Authority, regarding the need for additional secondary school places in Hitchin.

5.3 Asset Management Committee

Mr. Seaman Hill reported on the meeting held on 6 May. As previously discussed, the school has secured two grants from the Education Funding Agency Condition Improvement Fund which will allow refurbishment of all staff and student toilets this summer, as well as the replacement of all external window and doors in the main building. This latter project will start in the summer holiday and run into the autumn term.

Budget constraints have resulted in a reduction in the funds allocated for building maintenance work for next year. It is important to maintain the buildings and environment in a good condition as this helps make the school an attractive place to learn and study.

The planning application for solar panels has been submitted to the Local Authority and an outcome is awaited.

5.4 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mrs Marland reported on the meeting held on 6 May. A report on student progress and predicted outcomes in the summer exams was received. A lot of intervention work has been undertaken to support students and a revision support information evening for parents was well received.

The results of the Kirkland Rowell questionnaires were reviewed. A number of areas have been identified for future action, including making students and parents more aware of the careers guidance and support that is available. A summary of the questionnaire reports will be shared with staff and also made available to parents.

The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Attendance Policy and Young Carers Policy and this was **NOTED**. The committee had also reviewed the Behaviour for Learning Policy and Home School Agreement and recommended these for approval. This was proposed by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mrs. Job and unanimously **APPROVED**.

5.5 Finance Committee

Mrs. McPhail reported on the meeting held on 13 May. As well as the current year review, the meeting had also considered the draft budget and five year projections. For 2015/16, there is a fall in income as a result of the ending of the transitional funding protection put in place when the funding for Sixth Form students was reduced 4 years ago and an increase in costs primarily as a result of National Insurance and pension contribution increases and the nationally approved 1% pay award increase. On a like for like basis, the school initially had an in year budget deficit of £270,000. Savings and economies have been found that has reduced this to £100,000 for 2015/16. This in year shortfall is covered by reserves, which have been in place partly in anticipation of the ending of the transitional funding protection. However, for 2016/17, a further pay award and full year pension and national insurance contributions lead to a further in year deficit which will eliminate all reserves. The school is continuing to look at ways in which costs can be further reduced.

Mrs. Manning advised that the impact of the additional staff related costs and the lack of news regarding any likely increasing in funding is causing concern for most schools with many facing a deficit situation within the next 2 years. The Hertfordshire Secondary Headteachers group are lobbying Members of Parliament about the situation.

The committee had agreed that the proposed budget, which used £100,000 of reserves, is prudent and Mrs. McPhail recommended this for approval. This was seconded by Mr. Hall and unanimously **APPROVED**.

5.6 Personnel Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 13 May. The committee had discussed and agreed plans for Long Service awards for staff. Mr. Hall reported on an event in the town aimed at attracting new Governors. He advised that one person has come forward and, following an initial discussion with him, a meeting with a panel of Governors will now be arranged to discuss the role and make a recommendation regarding an appointment as a Community Governor.

The Governance committee structure has been reviewed and it was agreed to leave the same for 2015/16.

The committee reviewed the staffing establishment for the school, and mindful of the budget issues recommended that the maximum FTE figure for 2015/16 is no greater than 99.16. This was **AGREED**.

The committee had reviewed and approved the Shared Parental leave Policy, Appointment of support Staff – terms & Conditions and staff leave of absence Policy and this was **NOTED**.

6. Teaching Schools Alliance

Mrs. Manning reported on the work underway to establish the alliance. A draft action plan has been prepared and submitted to the Education Funding Agency, and a summary was distributed to Governors. The first year will focus on formalising arrangements for the alliance and getting the right structure in place.

She proposed that monitoring of the impact of the alliance on the school should be done at the Curriculum and Performance Committee and this was agreed. Details of any staff deployments and backfill requirements will be shared at the Personnel Committee.

Governors were invited to pass questions or comments on the alliance to her at any time.

7. Risk Register

The current risk register has been reviewed and updated, reflecting concerns about future funding levels and increasing costs outside of the schools control. With these amendments, the risk register was **APPROVED**.

8. Link Governors

A number of Governors reported on time spent with their link departments.

PE – Mr. Mills spent time with the department as they reviewed their department development plan. They are constantly looking at ways of encouraging students to compete in sport at higher levels. The quality of performance is very high. Mr. Mills also commented on the high quality of work seen in Art displays and Music concerts.

History – Mr. Minton spent a morning with the History department and felt he is now much better informed about the curriculum content and different styles of teaching used to deliver this.

CPD – Mrs. Job advised that she had met with the CPD coordinator and had a useful discussion on current and future plans.

SEN – Mrs. Job also spent time with the student development coordinator to discuss current work and plans for the future.

Science – Mr. Down had attended a department planning meeting and then discussed future ideas and plans with the new Head of Department.

Social Sciences – Mr. Hall had discussed the ways in which the departments supported students in preparation for their exams. The popularity of Psychology was a slight concern as this meant ever increasing class sizes.

Support outside of school – Mr. Mills thanked the PE and Modern Foreign Language department staff and students for their support with tuition for clubs and activities at Whitehill Junior School.

9. Meeting dates 2015/16

The schedule of meeting dates for 2015/16 was **AGREED**.

10. Any Other Business

Mrs. Manning advised Governors that Mrs. Hendy will have completed 50 years service at the school this year. This will be recognised by staff at the end of term, and the Governing Body asked that their thanks should also be passed on, in recognition of this outstanding service.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15 September 6pm.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm