

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
HELD AT 7.10PM ON TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2018**

**Part 1 Business**

**Present:** Mrs. C. Astill (Items 1-7) Mrs. M. King  
Mr. K. Balfe Mr. S. Lucas  
Mr. K. Down Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)  
Mr. G. Edwards Mr. S. Mills  
Mrs. C. Emmings Mr. C. Minton  
Mr. T. Fitzakerly Mrs. S. Morrison  
Mrs. N. Job (Vice-Chair) Mr. T. Scott  
Mrs. D. Kaur. Mr. M. Seaman Hill

**In attendance:** Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

The Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. A Jones, Mr. C. Hall (Chairman), Dr. K. Middleton and Mr. S. Sprawson. Mr. Crowther (Deputy Headteacher) and Miss Swanton (Head Girl) also sent apologies. Mrs. Job referred to the recent opening of the new Sports Hall and thanked Mrs. Manning & Mr. Hankin for all they have done to secure and deliver this fantastic new facility.

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

GovernorHub.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

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

**4. Minutes of previous meeting.**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2017.

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

4.2 Matters arising.

Link Governor visit - MFL (from item 5). Mrs. Manning advised Governors that the school recently advertised for a new Modern Foreign Languages teacher and was delighted to have 18 applicants. Four high quality candidates were shortlisted and an appointment made.

Interviews have also been held for Science & English staff and when candidates have been asked why they want to work at HGS, all have spoken about different aspects of the school which they have identified from the recently updated website.

**5. Head Girls' Report**

No report was available.

## 6. Headteacher's Report

Governors reviewed and discussed the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mrs. Manning highlighted a number of items including:

- Key Stage 4 option choice process, with 98% of choices likely to be met.
- International work – The Memory Project and the SGLI conferences this year.
- Careers guidance and support, and the range of activities and opportunities available to students.
- Admission information for September – All on time Hitchin applicants have been offered a place. All on time priority parish applications have been satisfied and additional places above the cap of 20 have been offered to Letchworth students.
- Sixth Form applications – information on which schools and areas applicants to join the Sixth Form in September 2018 have come from.
- CPD, and in particular the work on Mental Health First Aid. A copy of a wellbeing support document for staff was circulated, with similar documents being prepared for students and parents.
- Safeguarding – all training is up to date.

In connection with Mental Health, Mrs. Manning was asked whether the pressure on students is primarily due to exams. She advised that while exam pressure is real, the school uses the mock examination process along with revision support and guidance to help alleviate this. A lot of pressure now comes via social media, which can give students a false idea of expectations and ideal lifestyles. Pressure from some parents can also be very demanding and some students do put unnecessary pressure on themselves.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her thorough report.

## 7. Committee reports

### 7.1 Admissions Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 6 February 2018. The committee had received a report on admission numbers, in year movement and the Sixth Form open morning.

### 7.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mrs. King reported on the meeting held on 6 February 2017. Information on student achievement as shown in the Inspection Data Summary Report was reviewed and discussed. It was pleasing to note that much of the data is significantly above national levels. The various activities supporting the Self Evaluation Review process had been discussed and feedback from lesson observations and learning walks was very positive. Governor/Student panels are continuing and any issues raised are being discussed by the school and relevant actions identified.

The new SENCO attended the meeting to explain her role and the changes being implemented in the Learning Support Department and this had been very useful.

The updated Literacy Policy had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by the Governing Body.

### **7.3 Finance & Resources Committee**

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 20 February 2018. Financial benchmarking data was received and reviewed which showed the school in line with other similar sized schools. Staff costs are being controlled.

Initial budget information for 2018 had been discussed and the funding and costs relating to expansion were also reviewed. Mr. Hankin updated Governors with information on the budget allocation figures which have now been received. There is a slight rise in Sixth Form funding due to increased numbers, but only a minimal increase in the General Annual Grant. The total increase is insufficient to cover the pay award amounts likely to be proposed by Government, and further savings in costs will need to be identified.

A tender process has been completed for appointment of auditors and the Committee recommended that MHA MacIntyre Hudson is appointed for a 3 year term. This was unanimously **AGREED**.

Information on the Sports Hall budget was noted, along with details of the two applications made to this year's Condition Improvement Fund scheme.

The committee had reviewed and approved 5 policies; Debt Recovery Policy, Gifts & Hospitality Policy, Investment Policy, Statement of Accounting Policies and Staff Travel Policy. This was **NOTED** by the Governing Body.

Mr. Seaman Hill noted that, at the recent Health & Safety Committee meeting which he attended, he had been pleased to hear of the well-being initiatives that are in place. He asked whether pressure on staff is due to a high level of bureaucracy.

Mrs. Manning responded that she felt the pressure on staff is the greatest it has been for a long time. Staff are having to deal with new courses, changes to assessments and life without levels, changes to A levels, with some staff still having to teaching old and new courses in parallel. Some new courses still have no texts books available due to the haste with which they were introduced. Workload remains a big issue, and the school continues to look at how it can support staff with planning, preparation and marking. However, despite the pressure, many staff still feel that working at HGS is good, especially when compared to many others schools..

On behalf of the Governors, Mrs. Job thanked staff for all that they do for students and the school.

### **7.4 Personnel Committee**

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 20 February 2018 which had reviewed and discussed Statutory Paternity Pay. It was agreed to amend this from 1 September so that eligible staff receive full pay for up to 2 weeks of paternity leave. A staffing update and teacher recruitment plans were also discussed. The school will be advertising for an ICT Apprentice Technician.

## **8. Link Governors**

Mrs. King reported on a meeting with Mrs. Ferguson to discuss Healthy School Initiatives. There are lots of lunchtime clubs and places for students to go, both sports related and non-sporting. A weekly challenge for Tutor Groups also takes place.

Mr. Minton reported on time spend in the History department where he saw Year 7 and Year 11 lessons. He echoed earlier comments regarding workload, with staff having difficulty finding enough time to cope with the changing syllabus. However, he felt that the way in which students are taught is brilliant and he is not surprised that students achieve the great results they do.

Mr. Mills referred to the recent GCSE evening of dance and also the dancer's performance at the Royal Albert Hall, both of which were exceptional.

Mrs. Job reported on time spent in the Learning Support Department and with the new SENCO, and was very impressed with their plans and the changes being introduced to better support students and staff.

#### **9. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

Mr. Hankin reviewed a document circulated to Governors which provided an update on GDPR and spoke of the actions being undertaken in school towards compliance with the new regulation. There is still some uncertainty over the final requirements of the new legislation which will not be approved until next month.

Guidance and training for staff on current and new requirements is taking place and will continue over the next few months. It has been agreed that Mr. Crowther will become the school's Data Protection Officer.

The Governors were reminded that they, as Trustees of the Academy Trust, are responsible for ensuring that the school is compliant with the regulation.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

GovernorHub. Governors discussed the new online application introduced by Herts for Learning which will allow secure sharing of documents as well as the retention of Governor training records and other information. It was agreed to trial the new system for a year.

#### **11. Dates of next meetings**

Tuesday 5 June 2018 (to approve the School improvement plan)  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018

The meeting closed at 8.45pm