

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2014

Present:

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

In attendance: Mr. T. Hankin Clerk

PART 1 BUSINESS

1. Presentation by the Student Learning Leaders

Mrs. Cooper, Assistant Headteacher, and 5 Learning Leaders were welcomed to the meeting. Mrs. Cooper explained that the Learning Leaders were established a year ago and are getting involved in aspects of Teaching and Learning across the school. The group comprise approximately 45 students from across the year groups.

The Learning Leaders then gave an overview of some of the activities they have been involved in. This included:

- The Memory Project – over 80 portraits were produced for orphaned or vulnerable children in Nepal. Five other Hertfordshire schools are now participating following contact by the Learning Leaders.
- WE Day – Attended the inaugural event at Wembley Arena and following this have established local and international projects for change, including recycling and adopting a village in Ecuador.
- Food Drive – supporting the SGLI through the food drives, providing foodstuffs for the local Foodbank.
- Charity support – making proposals for future charity events and fundraising in school.
- Learning Bus visits – Learning Leaders have visited The Da Vinci Studio Schools, Sandringham School and will this week visit St. Albans Girls' School to look at teaching and learning.

The group have called themselves 'Team Coffee Bean' as through their actions they want to support others in changing the world around us, with local changes helping to make a global impact.

Mr. Minton thanked the students and informed them that he could not think of a better thing for them to be involved in.

2. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Mr. Minton welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. K. Smith. Miss F. Barnard was absent.

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

Mrs. McPhail asked for an update on projected Sixth Form numbers for September.

4. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any interest in the items for discussion. Mr. Balfe, Mr. Burgoyne, Mr. Down, Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Rowe declared an interest in the Part II business of the meeting.

5. Minutes of previous meetings.

5.1 Approval – 11 March 2014.

Following clarification that the Unions referred to in the Curriculum & Performance report (item 5.4) were the NUT and NASUWT, the minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.2 Approval – 3 June 2014

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

5.3 Matters arising from minutes off 11 March 2014.

NUT Strike action (from item 5.11). Mrs. Manning advised that the school had been able to remain open and run a fairly normal timetable for students in Year 9 and above.

Guidance for Governors on the new Pay and Performance process (from item 5.6).

Mrs. Manning advised that a briefing by the Local Authority Governance Service is due to be held in July.

'Emily – The Making of a Militant Suffragette' play (from item 8). This had been an exceptional and inspiring play.

There were no matters arising from the meeting of 3 June.

6. Reports

6.1 Headteacher's report

Mrs. Manning referred to her report, previously circulated, and highlighted a number of key points, including:

Progress on the School Improvement Plan (SIP)

- Review of the homework and marking policies.
- Review and restructure of the Year 7 Induction programme.
- Work on a new rewards policy.

Teaching & Learning

- An update on the Learning Leaders activities.
- The SGLI programme for 2014.

School Self Evaluation

- Review of departmental plans and preparation of new plans for next year. Link Governors will be sent a copy of the relevant plans.
- Mid year department reviews.
- Learning walks. These have been really uplifting and many lively and engaging lessons have been seen. Feedback is given to staff. Mr. Balfe expressed the opinion that a significant number of staff found these stressful.

Secondary Transfer and Admissions

- There is still some movement but it is expected that Year 7 numbers will settle at around 172 this year.
- Three appeals have been successful.

Progress on the Headteacher's Objectives

- The report includes an update on progress on each objective.

Collaboration

- The increasing collaboration between the three secondary schools in Hitchin.
- Opportunities for sharing good practice with other schools in the local area.
- Changes to the Hitchin Partnership with the formation of a Trust structure.

Staffing

- The forthcoming retirement of Mr. P. Jackson, Head of Science, and Mrs. D. Warren (Biology) after many years service to the school.
- The retirement of Mrs. Devereaux, Catering Manager.

Attendance

- The very high attendance levels in the summer term. There has been a particular focus on improving attendance for SEN and Free School Meal (FSM) students.

Mrs. Manning was asked about the biggest challenge at the current time. She advised that keeping up with all the changes coming from Government was very time demanding. An update on how this was being managed and the impact on the school will be included in her next report.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her report.

6.2 Admissions Committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 1 April and Mrs. Job reported on the meeting of 14 May. The main focus of both meetings had been to review some of the information received during the address checking process. As a result of this review, one place allocated for September 2014 had been withdrawn, although this has now been overturned on appeal. It was noted that one parent had thanked the school for carrying out the checks, as a way of ensuring places were allocated correctly.

Mrs. Job also advised that the school had agreed to take an additional 6 students into Year 7, above the published admission number of 165 as a result of an error in the Local Authority admissions process.

The report was received.

6.3 Asset Management Committee

Mr. Seaman-Hill reported on the meeting held on 7 May 2014. He advised that the school had been successful with both bids to the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund and this would allow the conversion of the existing Sixth Form area to Art and IT/technology rooms, the refurbishment of the Pottery Room, and replacement of electrical distribution boards to take place in the summer.

Work on the new Sixth Form Centre is progressing well. Mr. Hankin confirmed that handover of the building to the school is due on the 31 July. However, permission is still awaited from Anglian Water and Hertfordshire Highways with regard to the connection of the foul drain to the drainage system in Highbury Road.

Mr. Seaman-Hill also reported that the meeting had discussed concerns regarding car parking and safety in and around the school grounds. Reminders have again been issued to parents regarding the need to be vigilant especially when picking up or setting down.

The committee reviewed and approved the updated CCTV Policy and this was **NOTED**.

The report was received.

6.4 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mr. Hall reported on the meeting held on 7 May 2014. The meeting reviewed the latest analysis on student achievement and progress against targets, the Ofsted data dashboard, and the report from Herts. for Learning on the Hitchin Consortium.

The results of the annual Kirkland Rowell Parent Questionnaire were reviewed. These were very encouraging, and of especial note was that 33% of parents of new Year 7 students stated that the school was better than expected, with only 1% saying that it had not lived up to expectations.

There is still uncertainty about how the new Education Health Care Plans will operate in practice.

Governors discussed the introduction of Regional Schools Commissioners and Headteachers Boards.

The report was received.

6.5 Finance Committee

Mrs. McPhail reported on the meeting held on 14 May 2014.

The current year budget position was reviewed and it was noted that everything was in line with expectations. The draft budget for 2014/2015 was also discussed along with the projections through to 2018. The budget includes an allocation towards the costs associated with the curriculum changes, but it was noted that the school receives no additional funding to assist with these imposed changes, nor the costs of an increase in 2015 in the contribution rate for pensions.

The budget includes an allocation for the ongoing maintenance of the building as it is important that the programme of repair and refurbishment is maintained.

The meeting also reviewed details of the proposed changes to Insurance funding which will affect the school from 2015.

A balanced budget has been set for 2014/15 and the committee recommended it for approval. Mrs. McPhail therefore proposed that the budget for 2014/15 is adopted and this was unanimously **AGREED**.

The report was received.

6.6 Personnel Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 14 May 2014.

The meeting discussed the provision of Long Service Awards for staff and also the timetable and arrangements required next term for the review of recommendations regarding performance and pay progression.

The report was received.

7. Risk Register

Governors reviewed the risk register which had been previously circulated.

It was noted that changes to this can be made at any time. It was felt appropriate to add a risk relating to maintaining the existing buildings, and the impact and cost of not carrying out an ongoing programme of maintenance. Subject to this addition, the Risk Register was unanimously **APPROVED**.

8. Governors

8.1 Governor visits to departments.

Mrs. McPhail reported that she had met with Mrs. Cooper and discussed support for Gifted & Talented students. The school is promoting 'Futurelearn' which is an online community to support and encourage independent learning.

Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Down advised that they had joined the Classics and Science departments respectively on the Review and Development INSET day.

Mrs. McPhail thanked all staff for the support that is provided to students throughout the year, and especially at examination time. Mr. Minton will send a message of thanks to staff on behalf of the Governors.

8.2 Community Governor vacancy

Mr. Minton advised that Mrs. Morrison's term as a Parent Governor ends in September and that she will not be eligible to stand again. Her knowledge and experience as a Governor has been invaluable and he proposed that she be appointed as a Community Governor from next term. Governors unanimously supported this proposal which will need to be considered and voted on at the next Members meeting of the Academy Trust.

A Parent Governor election will be held in September.

9. Proposed meeting dates 2015/2015

The proposed schedule of meeting dates for next year was approved.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Projected Sixth Form numbers for September

Mrs. McPhail asked whether the school knew how many Year 11 students will return in September. Mrs. Manning advised that the number will not be known until term starts as it is dependent on exam results and offers of places at Sixth Form colleges. The school is not told when a college makes an offer of a place, or whether the student is likely to accept. Offers are always conditional on results.

10.2 Chairman of Governing Body

Mr. Minton advised the Governors that, after 14 years as Chairman, he will not stand again next year. He will remain as a Community Governor to help with the transition process. He referred to the successes of the school during his time as Chairman, including the successful bid to become a Specialist Science College, Academy Status, two major capital building developments, and the Outstanding status awarded by Ofsted.

He believed the current composition of the Governing Body provided the school with the best collection of skill and experience in his time as a Governor and also reflected on the way in which the management of the school is now stronger when compared to the past.

The appointment of a new Chairman will take place at the meeting in September.

11. Date of next meetings

Tuesday 8 July 2014. Governor Exclusion training.

Tuesday 16 September 2014. Full Governing Body meeting.