

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2022

Present:

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

In attendance:

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| Mr. T. Hankin | (Clerk) |
| Mr. J. Crowther | (Deputy Headteacher) |
| Miss D. Lehrfreund (Items 1-5) | (Head Girl) |

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. T. Fitzakerly and Mr. M. Seaman-Hill.

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

Diversity of the Trust Board

3. Declarations of interest

Trustees 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 19 January 2022.

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

4.2 Matters arising.

None.

5. Head Girls' report

Miss Lehrfreund gave a report highlighting some of the recent activities in school including:

- The carol service, held again after a two year gap.
- The recent Classics play, which was organised by students and raised funds for the DEC Ukraine appeal.
- Student involvement in the recent appointment process for a new Assistant Headteacher.
- Students involved in completing the World Class Schools Assessment process.
- International Women's Day activities.
- SGLI initiatives including 'Feeling Good Week'.

- A drop in session for the Head Girl team to meet Year 7 students and gather their thoughts on the school and tell them about HGS traditions.
- Charity week activities.
- A talk to Year 13 students by the daughter of a Holocaust survivor.

Miss Lehrfreund was asked what she enjoyed most about being Head Girl. She told Trustees that it is the chance to bring students together, listen to their ideas and what they say about the school and to help to organize and support events.

She was thanked for her report.

6. Headteachers' report

Mrs. Manning highlighted some aspects of her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- School Improvement Plan – Information on progress from the mid-year review has been added and was discussed at Curriculum & Performance. A copy is available for all Trustees. Staff will meet next week to review their departmental plan and actions. Work on the plan for next year has begun and will be discussed with staff at the April INSET day.
- Headteacher objectives – an update on progress.
- LGBTQ+ - Mrs. Cole is now leading on this and a diversity group has been established.
- Staffing - an update on recruitment. Although there are a number of vacancies, some are new posts as a result of expansion. The number of staff leaving is similar to last year.
- Attendance – this is a core focus, looking to build attendance back up to the level seen prior to Covid. A small number of students are struggling to fully engage.

Trustees asked if there are any difficulties recruiting staff. Mrs. Manning replied that the number of applicants is generally much lower for each vacancy than last year, and this is a trend noticed by other local schools. There is no obvious reason why this is.

Trustees asked if the public examination process has been confirmed for the summer. Mrs. Manning advised that the government has stated that the plan is for Public Examinations to take place and the school is preparing students for this. There are more access arrangements requested for students, mainly rest breaks and small rooms, due to mental health and wellbeing concerns.

7. Committee reports

7.1 Admissions Committee

Mrs. King reported on the meeting held on 1 March. Details of the Year 7 allocation, in-year movement and Sixth Form external applications were discussed. The Year 7 intake of 211 for September 2022 comes from 41 Primary schools.

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

7.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mr. Lucas reported on the meeting held on 1 March. Ms. Stojko, Assistant Headteacher and Head of the Sixth Form, explained the support available to students considering Oxbridge applications. Self –evaluation was discussed and Mr. Crowther had reported on

plans by the Senior Leadership Group to increase the number of learning walks taking place. Trustees asked how this was going and he confirmed that there has been an increase and that a lot of good practice has been seen.

A presentation on the approach to SEND at HGS was made by the SENCo and this was very informative. The committee also heard how the Pupil Passport programme is used to provide detailed individual information and support.

The committee were updated on plans to review uniform requirements to reduce cost whilst maintaining the look and standards that are in place. All schools are doing this as part of updated DfE guidance on the cost of school uniform. The school will also look for ways to increase the availability of second hand uniform and equipment.

The Equality Policy was reviewed and recommended for approval. Trustees **APPROVED** the updated policy.

The Collective Worship Policy had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by Trustees.

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

7.3 Finance & Resources Committee

Mr. Edwards reported on the meeting held on 8 March. The current financial position is healthy. The grant funding allocation for 2021/22 was reviewed. Work on preparing the budget for next year has begun. There will be additional cost pressures as a result of inflation, energy cost rises and National Insurance increases. The Government is also pursuing the aim of a £30,000 starting salary for teachers which will require increases across all the pay scales.

Ways of increasing teaching space, particularly for the Sixth Form were discussed and possible options evaluated.

The Accessibility Policy and Charges, Refunds and Remissions Policy were reviewed and recommended for approval. Trustees **APPROVED** the updated policies.

The Records Management and Retention Policy had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by Trustees.

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

7.4 Audit and Risk Committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 8 March. A report from the Internal Scrutineer was received and reviewed. No issues were raised. The committee also considered the Risk Register and agreed to add an item relating to cyber risk. Mr. Hankin informed Trustees that he will be providing training to Trustees on ways to protect against and mitigate the risk of cyber fraud.

A new Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by Trustees.

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

7.5 Personnel Committee

Mr. Lucas reported on the meeting held on 8 March. A staffing report was received and reviewed.

Updated versions of the Staff Time-Off Work Policy, Shared Parental Leave Policy and Online Safety Policy had been reviewed and approved and this was **NOTED** by Trustees.

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

8. Governance

The following committee membership appointments were made:

- Mrs. Samantha Franklin - Finance & Resources, Audit and Risk
- Ms. Alex Holden - Finance & Resources, Audit and Risk
- Mr. Dominic Roberts – Personnel, Finance & Resources, Audit and Risk
- Mrs. Amy Thornber – Curriculum & Performance

9. Link Governors

9.1 Department links

Mrs. Samantha Frost agreed to become the link Trustee for wellbeing.

9.2 Trustee visits

- Mr. Mills reported on a visit to the PE department where he attended a department briefing, saw Year 7 students in lessons and had a chat with the Head of Department. He heard about changes to their assessment process and the work being done to reestablish links with Primary Schools. With four classes often timetabled at the same time, managing activities within the space available can be an issue.
- Mr. Mills also reported on time spent with the Classics department where he visited Year 9, 10, 11 and 13 Latin and Ancient Civilization lessons. The use of technology in these lessons was first class. Students have also just completed two performances of the Classics Play – Medusa.
- Mr. Winter visited the Mathematics department in January. He saw Year 7, 9 and 12 lessons and found the students very focused. He felt that it is a strong department, partly due to little staff turnover.
- Mrs. King reported that she has spent time with the Head of Year 8 discussing how Pupil Premium can be best used to support students.
- Student/Trustee Panels, with a focus on Blended Learning. Mr. Mills attended the recent Year 8 panel. He found the students open and honest. They spoke with confidence and positivity about the use of Chromebooks. Mr. Lucas attended the Year 10 panel. Students agreed that their use has now bedded down and they are finding them very helpful. The use of Chromebooks is a big shift in Teaching and Learning at HGS. Mrs. Frost attended the Year 7 panel. Students were using the devices to help with real-time research. There are still some inconsistencies relating to the posting of learning resources.

10. Any Other Business

Diversity of Trust Board. A Trustee asked about plans to increase the diversity of the Trust Board. Mr. Hall confirmed that this is still the aim and will be considered, alongside any skill or experience requirement, as and when vacancies arise for appointed Trustees.

Mufti days – A Trustee asked the school to consider whether these should be known as Non-uniform days in future as there is a colonial background to this expression. The matter will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Group.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7 June 2022 (To approve the School Improvement Plan)

Tuesday 21 June 2022

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.