

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2017**

**Part 1 Business**

**Present:**

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mrs. C. Astill         | Mr. S. Lucas                  |
| Mr. K. Balfe           | Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher) |
| Mr. K. Down            | Mrs. M. McPhail               |
| Mrs. C. Emmings        | Dr. K. Middleton              |
| Mr. T. Fitzakerly      | Mr. S. Mills                  |
| Mr. C. Hall (Chairman) | Mr. C. Minton                 |
| Mrs. N. Job            | Mr. G. Montgomery             |
| Mr. A. Jones           | Mrs. S. Morrison              |
| Mrs. M. King           |                               |

**In attendance:** Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)  
Miss. Z. Burton (Items 1-5) (Head Girl)

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

Mr. Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. J. Marland, Mr. M. Seaman Hill and Mr. S. Sprawson.

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

Mr Hall – Governor fundraising activity.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any interest in the items for discussion. Mrs. Manning declared an interest in the Part 2 Business.

**4. Minutes of previous meeting.**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017.

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

4.2 Matters arising.

Multi Academy Trust and Governance structure (from item 6).

A governor referred to the discussion at the meeting and a comment made regarding whether or not the school had changed or improved over the preceding 10 years. For Governors that had been in office for less than 10 years, she wanted to affirm that the school had moved from Good to Outstanding in that time, has become more progressive and assertive in seeking bids for development of the school, evidence of which included the Sixth Form Centre, and is very well regarded by others in the local and wider education arena.

**5. Head Girls' report**

The Head Girl reported on events and activities that have been taking place in school. This included:

- The Classics play – A Greek Comedy ‘The Clouds’
- Year 12 UCAS conference
- Year 13 university offers
- Wellbeing week, with assemblies for all year groups on mental wellbeing
- The Consortium Cole-Swinburn Cup, where HGS won the netball competition
- Rugby coaching in PE
- Head Girl hustings for next year.

Governors discussed the wide range of activities taking place outside the classroom and were pleased to note the opportunities and support provided to students.

Miss Burton was thanked for her report. She then left the meeting.

## **6. Headteachers’ report**

Mrs. Manning gave a brief review of her report, circulated in advance of the meeting, and invited questions. Items mentioned and discussed included:

- Progress on the School Improvement Plan
- Investors in Careers reaccreditation
- ESafety workshops for parents
- The schedule of staff CPD. All staff have completed the mandatory PREVENT training and Safeguarding training is up to date
- Outcomes from the Teaching & Learning lesson observations and learning walks
- The breadth of after school clubs and activities taking place, including 85 Year 11 students attending a 1½ hour revision workshop on a Friday evening
- An update on allocated admission numbers for September 2017
- Teaching School Alliance activities, support for staff and plans for the future
- The Headteacher’s Objectives as set for the academic year 2017-18

Governors also asked questions relating to:

- Special Needs and Autism training. Mrs. Manning advised that support for Autism is an increasing area of priority and need in schools. The Local Authority has secured funding which will provide additional staff training over the next 3 years.
- The Memory Project. 55 portraits have been sent to children living in a refugee camp in Jordon.
- The increasing number of students requiring readers in examinations. It was confirmed that Invigilators are receiving training to allow them to provide this support, in addition to the support provided by Learning Support Assistants.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her detailed report.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Curriculum & Performance Committee**

Mrs. King reported on the meeting held on 7 February 2017. Matters discussed included student achievement, the unvalidated RAISE online data and feedback from the Key Stage 5 Student & Governor panel.

A presentation on the use of Pupil Premium funding had been received, and this covered the ways in which support is provided to eligible students including parental

bids, 1:1 tuition, revision workshops and support sessions. The committee had agreed that students are received good value from this funding and the presentation will be shared with all Governors so that they are aware of the strategy for use of the money.

The committee had also reviewed three updated policies which were recommended to the Governing Body for approval. The Governors **AGREED** the updated Sex and Relationship Education Policy, the Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy and the Publication of Equality Information and Objectives document.

The committee had approved the Administration of Medicines Policy and this was **NOTED** by the Governors.

## 7.2 Finance & Resources Committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 21 February 2017. The current financial performance is in line with the budget with no concerns. A long discussion had taken place regarding the budget for 2017/18 and beyond. Reductions in funding and increases in costs outside the control of the school are posing a severe strain on the school budget and considerable savings need to be found for September. The proposed introduction of the National Funding Formula will also have a negative impact on the schools grant funding.

Governors asked whether the budget pressure and difficulties are being felt by other schools. Mrs. Manning confirmed that this is a national issue and concerns are being raised in the media by schools and local authorities. Hertfordshire Headteachers are considering how best to make parents aware of the budget issues faced by schools.

Mr. Hankin provided an update on the expansion project. A planning application has been submitted and the decision should be received by June. If approved, work will need to begin as soon as possible to allow completion of the new building for September 2018. There are a number of practical issues regarding undertaking the construction alongside the completion of the new Sports Hall and there are also financial and other benefits that can be achieved through utilisation of the contractor already on site. Legal guidance has been obtained on the most appropriate procurement process to follow for the expansion project and a negotiated contract with the on-site contractor has been identified and agreed as the solution that provides best value.

Governors unanimously **AGREED** that T J Evers be appointed as the Contractor for the expansion project, subject to planning approval and agreement of the contract value and terms.

## 7.3 Personnel Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the Part 1 Business of the meeting held on 7 February 2017. A staffing update had been received, and it was noted that Mrs. Allum had just retired as PA to the Headteacher after 23 years' service.

## 8. Multi Academy Trust update

Mrs. Manning & Mr. Hall referred to the paper circulated in advance of the meeting which gave an update on the application process to become an Academy Sponsor and amend the Governance structure to that of a Multi Academy Trust.

Mr. Hall advised that he has asked the Chairs of the Committees to join him as the Steering Committee for this work, and they will monitor and support the application process and keep Governors informed.

A Governor commented that he had been surprised at the decision taken at the previous meeting as he hadn't understood that Governors would be asked to vote on becoming a Multi Academy Trust. Other governors responded that the information provided and the discussions that had taken place had explained the reasons behind the proposal, the application process to be undertaken and the decision that was required, and the Governing Body had voted to proceed.

Governors were reminded that the decision to become an Academy in 2011 had required a full consultation as staff terms of employment were transferring to a new employer. There is no change of employer in this instance. The change is to the Governance structure and even if the Governors had decided not to become a MAT a change to the structure would have been advised to meet the latest recommendations from the Department for Education. The required Governance changes were discussed and the proposed new structure will be reviewed by the Steering Committee for inclusion in the updated Articles of Association.

Staff will be given an update on the application process at the next staff meeting, and a letter sent to parents and the local community after the Easter holiday informing them of the application to become an Academy Sponsor and asking for any written response.

## **9. Link Governors**

Mrs. Job reported on her involvement with the Investor in Careers reaccreditation process. She was very impressed with all that work that has been and continues to be done, in providing support and guidance to students. The Year 8 Take Your Daughter to Work day is very well received, and there is good support from local businesses for the annual careers fair and careers days. The school deserves great credit for all its careers guidance and support.

Mr. Mills reported that he had attended the Classics play which was very impressive. He had also spent time with the Head of PE and the department. Life without Levels (LWOL) has been positively received but the changes to the curriculum at both GCSE and A level are placing increased pressures on staff. He saw two very good lessons where staff were naturally assessing student progress as part of their teaching.

He also informed Governors that he is pleased that some students from Whitehall School are able to join HGS students on a Learning Bus activity and also attend the WE Day at Wembley. Collaboration between the two schools is working very well.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Mr. Hall informed Governors that Mr. Mills is running the London Marathon in April in aid of two charities, and Governors wished him well.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 6 June 2017

The meeting closed at 8.40pm