

## Minutes of Meeting of Full Governing Body Meeting held virtually via Zoom on Thursday 3 December 2020 at 5pm

**Present:** Jane Dixon (JLD); Derek Cross (DC); Keith Wilson (KW); Liz Currie (ESC); Tony Atherton (TA); Sue Doubell (SD); Jonathan Hodgson (JH); Shaista Ahmed (SA); Mohammed Hans (MH); David Hall (DH). Gareth Harris (GH) joined at 5.30.

**Non-voting:** Jody Dunn (JDN)(Clerk), Richard Tipler (RGT) (Deputy Head), Stuart Voyce (SVE) (Deputy Head).

**1. Apologies:** Stuart Eakin (SE)

**2. Declaration of Interests** – None.

JLD noted that two governors had not yet returned their signed register of interest forms and should do this ASAP. This has been raised in the audit report which is disappointing as this need not happen. JDN to follow up.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**4. Review of sub-committee meetings/minutes**

### C&R

KW gave a brief overview of what was discussed at the C&S meeting. He explained the meeting was largely focused on pay progression and informed the governors that the pay progression for both the staff and the Headteacher had been agreed, but needed formal approval of the full governing body. Governors voted and agreed to approve.

### F&R

JH apologised for the minutes being circulated later than usual, before giving an overview of the F&R meeting. He informed the board that the auditors attended the meeting to talk through the final accounts for 2019/20 and outlined the findings. He confirmed that the audit completion report was positive overall and thanked NJJ for all of her hard work surrounding this. A wash-up meeting will be arranged with the auditors so that we can look at ways of improving the process should the audit have to take place virtually next time.

JH confirmed the F&R committee were happy to endorse the approval of the final accounts and recommend to the full governing body. However, this would need to be in principle, as the final audit completion report and Financial Statements are awaited from the auditors. JH suggested that these are approved in principle and once we have final documents they will be circulated to all governors and JLD will sign them off on behalf of the governing body before Christmas. Governors were in agreement and the final accounts were approved in principle. JLD confirmed she was happy with the process.

JH then gave an update on the CIF project and catering contract both of which were discussed at length at the F&R meeting. PDR noted that school had concerns about the catering contract, particularly given that the financials were not as expected. School has organised a meeting on 4 December with the catering contractors to discuss the current situation.

JH welcomed any questions and noted all governors are welcome to attend the F&R committee should they wish.

## **5. The Sixth Form – Vision & Ethos**

There were some detailed and robust discussions about the Sixth Form, what that should look like in an academic, selective grammar school, whether the current focus was the right one and what could or should be done to recruit and retain the selective grammar school focus.

Discussions took place around the name, smart/business dress, formal lunches, work experience, enrichment activities, the size of the Sixth Form and timings.

JLD indicated that it was clear that there was a lot to discuss around the strategic direction of the Sixth Form and given the full agenda for this meeting, it was decided that this item should be the subject of a special governing body meeting on a future date with SLT to detail their ideas and thought, plans about the development of the Sixth Form to governors.

**Pursuant to Article 122 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Heckmondwike Grammar School Academy Trust, Governors are satisfied that further information and discussions relating to this item should remain confidential.**

## **6. School Self-Evaluation Form**

RGT told governors that he had trimmed the School Self-Evaluation Form down and the information was now more digestible. He added this was an honest and fair account of where school was.

## **7. The School Report for Governors**

PDR noted that he wouldn't talk through the document page by page, but highlighted areas of particular interest and welcomed any questions.

In relation to the Entrance Exam, DH noted it was disappointing to see that only 21 students from the catchment area had been successful in gaining a place and he felt school must try to persuade more local students to take the test.

PDR explained that school did not have much take up on outreach in primaries. This had been discussed with governors last year and the possibility of changing the catchment area reviewed but it was decided that this would not make much of a difference to the numbers applying locally.

A discussion was had around the number of students attending the school from the North Leeds area and school said those particular students appeared very aspirational with high work ethic.

SA asked why children in the area did not sit the test? PDR explained that he did not know why this was. DH added he felt people have the perception that they will not pass therefore are put off; we would have to change the policy if we wanted to change this.

PDR continued through the report and discussions were had around student progress and attendance. Recent attendance has been affected as a result of positive Covid-19 cases and close contact isolations.

SA – Asked about the intruder on site in the safeguarding section.

RGT explained that this was a person who came onto the school site with some sixth form students. He was identified as was not wearing a lanyard and was removed before getting into the building.

PDR moved on to the School Development Plan and asked if anyone had any questions.

Q - Are you worried about the amount of red on there given the current situation?

A - PDR said he was not unduly concerned as at present difficult the focus was very much on providing a good quality education and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff in the current pandemic. The SD Plan is a year-long plan, therefore PDR not concerned at this stage.

Governors agreed they completely understood and the fact that school had made progress on this was testament to the efforts of the SLT. SD added it would be a good idea to document everything SLT are doing so they have a timeline.

SVE spoke through the training section of the report, advising governors this had focused largely on remote teaching. He felt that school had come so far on this over recent weeks and the efforts of the staff have been incredible. He said school are pleased with the provision, but there will always be issues.

JLD noted that she was hugely appreciative of the incredible hard work of the staff and wanted to pass on her thanks.

ESC said she appreciated the thanks but wanted to emphasise how difficult and stressful it is at the moment; the priority has to be teaching and some things should be put on back burner. PDR echoed this highlighting the risk of staff becoming ill for the Christmas period - which we really don't want to happen.

A discussion was then had around the reverse advent organised by ESC and what a great thing this was to do. ESC added school were also taking donations of gifts to pass to the Salvation Army.

Governors were reminded about the Ofsted training on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

KW asked about the disciplinary within the staff section of the report. PDR confirmed that it had now been dealt with.

## **8. Risk Review**

PDR confirmed the risk register had been revaluated and re-formatted following governors' recommendations. He confirmed that SLT had spent some time looking at this and that it was a good exercise.

Governors noted this was much better, but the owner column was not complete. PDR confirmed he would do this.

DH noted that the biggest risk right now is COVID but pointed out that he felt that so far, every step had been very well managed by the school and that sufficient plans are place. SLT have been very forward thinking and the school offering is as near to normal as can be.

A discussion was had around the current situation in school in that SLT are planning what will be done in coming weeks in terms of potentially having to send another year group home for the final week of term. PDR confirmed that if the staffing situation is the same as it is today he would have no choice but to have some students out that final week of term, which he was hoping not to do.

A discussion was then had around the number of staff we have off and the reasons for this; Covid positive, close contacts, track and trace etc.

So far school has had 68 students test positive.

KW noted that he had written to the local MP to ask for teachers to get the vaccine sooner.

## **9. Review of Memorandum & Articles of Association**

JLD reminded governors that there had previously been some discussions that School's Memorandum and Articles of Association are now over 10 years and that it was appropriate to consider whether a review was appropriate. She confirmed that herself and Member TA had looked into this over recent weeks and had consulted with the Trust's lawyers. JLD thanked TA for his help with this, and informed governors of the proposed plans. The Members have agreed it would be a good idea for the whole governing body to undertake some refresher training on governance and compliance which will be provided by the Trust's Solicitors, Schofield Sweeney.

JDN will organise the training and will be in touch with the arrangements. Once this training and review has taken place, we will look again at the composition of the governing body.

## **10. Policies**

JLD noted that having reviewed the proposed amended complaints policy and the other policies prior to the meeting, there are further things that she would like to school to review so she volunteered to review them and liaise with school and asked governors if they would be happy for her to do so. Governors agreed they were happy for JLD to review and approve. JLD said if anyone had any comments on either of the policies to let her know via email.

## **11. Wellbeing Governor**

JLD confirmed that the Members had discussed this prior to the meeting and there was an agreement that whilst we should always have wellbeing on our agenda as a governing body, we needed to take care to approach wellbeing strategically and not operationally, to understand what good wellbeing means for the school and to support and challenge SLT to make sure appropriate measures are in place. In normal times governors would be in school more to informally check in with people and have a chat etc.

A discussion was had around this, with some governors thinking that having a wellbeing governor might demonstrate that the board considers wellbeing as important, whereas others felt that staff might not be comfortable with it, that there are appropriate policies in school and channels for discussions and a specific link governor was probably not needed as much now as it might have been previously. It was agreed wellbeing is key focus of school's vision and ethos and is at the forefront of everything school does.

Governors then discussed the possibility of going into school more frequently when/if things return to normal and agreed there would need to be a specific purpose.

The discussion then moved to IT and that the IT team are currently very stretched with the issues that come with the remote teaching and learning. School has had issues with bandwidth over recent days due to Kirklees and the volume of schools all using it at the same time. School has invested further in some kit in the hope of rectifying the issue.

## **12. AOB**

None.

## **13. Meeting Review**

JDN ran through the review and asked governors for comments. It was noted that there was robust debate and discussion throughout the meeting. Screen sharing is useful where documents are to be reviewed and we should do this where we can.

PDR thanked governors for their continued support.

Meeting closed at 7.25pm.