



Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 5pm at Walton Academy.

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar (Interim Chair of	LC	Appointed Governor	
Governors)			
Mrs H Ind	HI	Appointed Governor	
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	Α
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	
Mr J Robertson	JP	Appointed Governor	
Mrs K Hardy	KH	Appointed Governor	
1 x Chair of governors vacancy			
1 x Vice chair of governors vacancy			
1 x parent governor vacancy			

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Senior Principal	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs K Dolby	KD	Assistant Principal - Behaviour & Attitudes	
Mrs L Owen	LO	Assistant Principal - Outcomes	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	4	Governor's present	6

Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/01/2324	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from James Horsfield and these were accepted by the committee.	
AC/02/2324	Declarations of interest All governors were reminded to complete the declaration of interests form for 23/24 if they have not already done so.	Governors
AC/03/2324	Appoint committee vice-chair/future chair for 2023/24 The governance professional explained to the committee that the current situation with the 'caretaker' chair and no vice chair needs to be resolved going forwards so that committee has a clear succession plan. The governance professional explained that there is support available for the potential new chair in the form of: ➤ Existing chair of governors (from within the trust) mentorship ➤ NGA chair of governors training course − paid for by the trust ➤ National College and NGA learning link training courses.	





	It was agreed that a separate meeting would be scheduled for all governors to discuss the roles of chair and vice chair. Review and assign link roles for 2023/24 Potential new link roles were discussed and it was decided that mental health and wellbeing and attendance are covered as part of the Safeguarding Link role which remains with Mrs Ind. Parental engagement was discussed as an area where a Link Governor could add value and Mrs Hardy volunteered to pick up this role and asked about the format of the link visits. The governance professional explained that she would share more information with governors with regards the format of link roles and the responsibilities. It was agreed that the governance professional would send a full list to governors with regards the current link governor roles and potential additional link roles.	NB NB/ Governors
	Code of Conduct and declaration of interests All governors were reminded to sign and return the code of conduct and complete the online declaration of interest MS form. All governors agreed the completed annual report to trustees.	Governors
	There were no comments from governors with regards the results of the governor self-evaluation and governor action plan for 2023/24. The chair asked all governors to review the action plan and consider whether there are any activities or quick wins that can be discussed at the next meeting.	Governors
AC/04/2324	Training Confirmation of training for governors to complete The governance professional will contact all governors individually to ensure all mandatory training is up to date and will communicate the full 2023/24 training programme when it is available.	NB
	Mrs Ind and Mrs Dolby agreed that they would meet to discuss the SCR outside of school time.	ні/ко
AC/05/2324	Minutes of the AC meeting dated 12 th July 2023. The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the vice chair.	
AC/06/2324	Matters arising AC/74/2223 To note, results of self-evaluation and skills audit have been circulated. Subsequent action plan has been shared. AC/75/2223 To note, Mrs Leonard will invite the SENCO into the next meeting in the Autumn term to give a presentation to governors. AC/75/2223 To note, Mr Horsfield has provided information with regards charities that may help to fund pupils to attend trips in the form of grants or sponsorships and this has been passed on to Mr Hoad AC/75/2223 Mrs Leonard to look into potential Rotary Club funding for special projects – carried forward. AC/76/2223 To note, information regarding link roles and responsibilities has been circulated, also see new AC/03/2324.	





AC/07/2324

Principals Report

Mrs Leonard asked governors for any questions on the ERM report circulated prior to the meeting. *The governors asked* when the forecasts are done for this academic year for target setting. Mrs Leonard explained that target setting is done in the autumn term, although some targets around attendance were set in the summer term in conjunction with Patrick Knight who leads on attendance across the trust. The remainder of the KPIs will be shared with the governing board at the next meeting. *The governors then asked* if there is a set of headline statements, are the P8 figures easy to sum up. Mrs Leonard explained that the P8 figures are yet to be validated but more detail will be given as part of the exam results analysis, to be presented by Mrs Owens later in the meeting.

<u>The governors wanted to know</u> if there had been any progress with regards additional exam space and Mrs Leonard explained that Mr Hoad and the business manager have a meeting on 28th September to discuss exam spaces with support from the estates team across the trust to consider the feasibility of the options put forward. The solution must be in place for the mock exams at the end January into February. Mr Hoad added that plans are beyond cost benefit analysis and within the conversation consideration is also being given for post 16 space to be future proofed with the potential to merge the 2 solutions into one.

<u>The governors asked</u> how many students the hall holds to sit exams, the answer being 137 and with a PAN of 180 plus A level exams we need capacity for 200 which requires the equivalent of 2 additional classrooms. One of the options is a mobile space but there are concerns about security and sound. <u>The governors also asked</u> if dining space is an issue and Mr Hoad confirmed that this is due to be discussed at the same meeting. <u>The governors queried</u> if exam space must be provided on site. Mrs Saxelby said it does have to meet JCQ requirements and the cost of hiring external spaces and ensuring that they meet statutory requirements is not feasible.

<u>The governors then questioned</u> whether there are any concerns about RAAC and Mr Hoad confirmed that the central estates team and site team at Walton Academy had been aware of the issue for some years. <u>The governors further questioned</u> if there was anything similar with regards the building and site that might be on the radar and Mr Hoad confirmed that there was not.

Mrs Leonard provided an overview with regards the start of term.

There has been a very positive return to site, around 20 new staff have been welcomed alongside over 200 new pupils. The INSET days were used to develop the sense of belonging with all staff as there are a lot of relatively new team members.

The new cohorts in Y7 and Y12 (with around 10 external students) have all settled well. Mid-year admissions are at 14 and this has taken work to bring them onboard and the school are in the process of managing mid-year requests and fair access requests. <u>The governors asked</u> how spaces are determined for mid-year requests and Mrs Leonard explained that each year





group has a PAN of 180 and so spaces are only available in a cohort if the number of students in that particular cohort is below 180.

As a leadership team the AIP (Academy Improvement Plan) and selfevaluation documents have been finalised and the next piece work is with extended leaders and middle leaders to feed into the team development and personal development plans. Mrs Leonard then stated that the academy is very pleased with summer results and meetings are currently being held with all heads of faculty to look at the data and to make plans for this year taking into account the current cohorts. A positive exams evening was held for Y11 students and their parents. This was a successful evening helping parents to understand how they can support their children and answering any questions they had. The Quality Assurance calendar is up and running and focuses on ongoing curriculum reviews and learning walks both in faculty areas and pastorally. The first set of learning walks is around core expectations to ensure a positive start and bringing the Walton Way to the forefront. The formative assessment project will continue, this being the 2nd year of a 2 year project as a big part of CPD for staff with a focus on challenge for all and in particular the lower attainers.

Mr Leonard told the committee that Walton Academy has now been a PiXL (https://www.pixl.org.uk/) member for 7 or 8 years and has been asked to be part of their next release of PiXL Insights focussing on how Walton Academy stretch and challenge the higher attainers. This will be shared on a national platform.

Mrs Leonard discussed behaviours and attitudes and explained that they are managed via reward and recognition, a slide was shared with governors demonstrating the ratio between achievement points and behaviour points. A conscious effort has been put in to ensuring that at the start of all key meetings, (tutor time meetings, leadership team meetings, extended leader meetings etc), as staff are coming in, they are completing the 'Feel Good Friday' postcards to recognise those students and staff that are doing well day in and day out. A greater profile is being given to celebration events and assemblies and also additional achievement evenings have been added to the calendar. The governors noted that the achievement/behaviour point ratio in year 9 was significantly lower than the other cohorts and asked if there was a reason for that. Mrs Leonard explained that there are a small number of young people currently responsible for this significant volume of behaviour points. The academy is aware of the issue and there are packages in place around those students. Mrs Leonard explained that the number of behaviour points accumulated are tracked and monitored and those students that accumulate a high number of behaviour points or consistently behaving in a particular way will quickly follow the behaviour pathway which leads to support, intervention, sanction and alternative learning pathways. Mr Hoad added that the ratio of 9:1 for year 9, although lower than other year groups, was still high when compared with other academies. The governors <u>acknowledged</u> that Mrs Leonard had said that Y8 and Y10 last year were causing some concern and that was in line with the national picture so it was not a surprise to see issues with Y9 at the start of this year. Mrs Leonard





assured the governors that the academy is working with those young people in year 9. <u>The governors asked</u> if the academy look at the boy / girl breakdown in terms of AP:BP ratios. Mrs Leonard confirmed that they do look at this, however there is no major divide between the two and added that as an academy Walton are still performing extremely well both within the trust and beyond the trust in terms of behaviours and attitudes. Mr Hoad added that whilst data around subgroups is looked at, all interventions and actions are considered on an individual student basis. <u>The governors wondered</u> if there appeared to have been a change in attitudes and behaviours due to covid and Mrs Leonard acknowledged that there appears to have been a significant societal change in terms of attitudes, not just within education but that all schools are feeling the same challenges and issues. Walton is facing those new challenges head on and are seeing positive results.

The Academy has a new careers lead, Sophie Emerald in place who has hit the ground running. She is leading on Next Steps days with the first one due in October, she is also taking the lead on 1 to 1 careers advice and guidance to Y11 and Y13 as well as delivering advice and guidance across the whole academy through the tutor programme. The governors asked what the acronym CIEAG means and Mr Hoad confirmed that it stands for Careers Information Education Advice and Guidance. The governors were interested <u>to know</u> more about what this entailed <u>and asked</u> if it includes activities such as mock interviews and work experience. Mrs Leonard confirmed that work experience is part of the Y13 curriculum and in earlier years the Next Steps days are used to bring in suitable employers to the academy which is 'experience work' within academy rather than work experience. Interview and CV skills are all covered through Next Steps days and as part of the Personal Development and enrichment curriculum. The careers lead does the impartial interviews and meetings with Y11 and Y13, however any other student who would like help can access it.

The academy is very keen on having employers, both local and national, come into the academy, not just on Next Steps days but any time and suggested that if any of the governors have contacts they think could help, to pass their details on. Mrs Leonard went on to explain that the upcoming Next Steps day for P16 has happened as result of staff begging, borrowing and stealing friends, neighbours and relatives to come in and talk to the students.

<u>The governors asked</u> if they could see a list of the organisations that the academy already bring in so that they can review it and can potentially identify gaps or areas where they might be able to add value. [ACTION] Mrs Leonard agreed that this information would be shared with the governance professional for onward distribution. Mrs Hardy explained that she has previously spent time interviewing with students across a number of schools and is more than willing to offer help and support in this area. Mrs Leonard confirmed that writing a CV and communicating with potential employers is definitely an area that students need help with and any hep would be most welcome.

<u>The governors asked</u> if teaching is pushed as a career and Mr Hoad acknowledged that there seems to be a steady number of students that say

JL





that they would like to go into teaching, in fact there are previous students now on the teaching staff at Walton, but sometimes the challenge is to get students to understand the other career options available to them.

As per AC/75/2223, Mrs Leonard confirmed that the SENCO, Tiff Bassan will attend the next meeting to give a complete overview of SEND. The number of students with SEND is increasing at the academy and across the board and Walton now has 34 students with EHCPs (educational health care plan) this year. This has increased vastly over the last 2 or 3 years. The governors asked what is driving the increase in numbers, is it because there is a greater awareness of SEND needs. Mrs Leonard said that as Walton has grown in numbers so too have the number of students with SEND, so there has been a natural increase and moving to co-ed has also affected the number. The *governors then asked* why the change to co-ed has impacted on the number. Mrs Leonard confirmed that nationally there is a higher percentage of boys with EHCPs and a higher proportion of boys with SEND. The number is also increasing nationally, with more knowledge and awareness for parents as well. Mrs Leonard made it clear that all students at Walton receive the support that they need irrespective of whether they have a diagnosis and that she is very proud of the support that SEND children receive. Mrs Leonard went on to express that the academy is developing stronger relationships with the SEND team at the Local Authority with the SENCO sitting on the SEND partnership board for the Local Authority. From a school perspective this allows the academy to get our opinions across and have a better understanding of the Local Authorities next steps with regards their send pathway. *The governors wanted to understand* if there is an upper limit on the numbers on SEND register. It is currently looking at around 20%, how much more band width does the academy think they have. Mrs Leonard explained that EHCPs come with funding which enables the academy to staff accordingly, however the academy will work with the young people on roll and will continue to work for all the young people in the community and focus on an individual student basis. *The governors asked* if the increase in numbers is as expected or if it is proportionately higher. Mrs Leonard explained that the numbers are about average, but this has felt steep because of the challenges identified. Mrs Saxelby also explained that within the trust, Walton appears to have a higher number of students on EHCPs but this is down to being within a different local authority where EHCPs are funded differently.

Mrs Leonard went on to explain that the academy work very hard to ensure that all students are accessing the right educational provision for them. There are alternative learning packages for students that need something different and this is for the benefit of all students within the academy.

60 students have been welcomed into year 12 - P16 which is really pleasing, 10 of the students are external students. The core offer in place for post 16 students is getting stronger and now includes core maths, further maths, the extended project qualification, PE and Arts Award which sits alongside the personal development curriculum and the enrichment curriculum etc.





Recognition and reward in the form P16 scratch cards and 'I heard a whisper' cards for staff to recognise students is in place and a new P16 pastoral mentor has started really well.

Mr Hoad summarised the 2023/24 Trip calendar / Cat C trips

Mr Hoad explained that all residential and overseas trips are Cat C along with anything classed as adventurous and these trips need to be authorised. Already this year 2 students attended and stayed in the Maudlin Halls at the Oxford taster session. Unfortunately, Oxford tend to offer such experiences quite last minute and because it requires an overnight stay, it is difficult to get sign off for a Cat C trip at short notice.

The Dearne Valley fully immersive France trip was unfortunately cancelled as the company running the experience were unable to fill it and make it viable.

Unfortunately, the take up for the ski trip to Italy was not high enough so this has had to be put on hold. The academy is in the early stages of planning for a trip to Borneo with World Challenge where students raise their own funding for the trip. *The governors asked* if all trips are personally funded and Mr Hoad confirmed that they are, apart from the geography one which is funded, he added that there is a discount for pupil premium students. There is a balancing act between offering valuable experiences to all students and poorer families feeling left out. Mr Horsfield has provided the academy with details of charities that might be able to support students to access some of these trips and Mr Hoad is currently looking into this. *The governors asked* how the cost of supply staff to cover teachers on trips is paid for and Mr Hoad explained that the school have to pay for this, it cannot be charged for as part of the price for the trip.

Mrs Owen presented results data to governors.



2023 Analysis for governors.pdf

<u>The governors asked</u> what GCSE grades the academy would be looking for to access Post 16 and Mrs Leonard confirmed that ideally students will have achieved 5's in English and maths. In terms of resits, a student who achieves a grade 4 in maths or English wouldn't be allowed to resit them as a 4 is considered a pass, below 4's in maths and English can resit and this is looked at on an individual basis.

Mrs Owen explained that English and maths have a double weighting. A P8 score is determined by progress, and the academy is compared to cohorts of similar students. This has to be validated and the results of that are expected at the end of October. A P8 score of 0 is 'expected'. The attainment 8 score is a mean average of every student. In context, the academy generally has a lower prior attainment in comparison to other schools because Walton is a fully comprehensive school within a grammar town so generally will have a lower prior attainment than local neighbours and other schools within the MAT. Whilst Attainment 8 is important, the progress 8 figures give a more





useful picture. Progress 8 scores have been positive since 2017 and are expected to be +0.39 this year but data has not yet been delivered by DoE.

<u>The governors asked</u> for clarification on the change to grade boundaries following the move back to bring results in line with 2019 and wanted to know how many subjects were affected. Mrs Owen confirmed that all subjects were affected. <u>The governors noted</u> that the boundaries for some subjects looked to have been reset closely to 2019 boundaries but that maths appeared to be significantly higher for a grade 5. Mrs Owen acknowledged that but stated that the boundaries were the same across the board for all students nationwide and the change affected all academies in terms of grade predictions.

Mrs Owen shared slides with details of results and picked out the highlights, Science results were very positive and the Head of Science achieved amazing results in particular in combined science. RE, French and vocational subjects were also particular areas of strength.

In terms of areas for improvement, Mrs Owen noted that alternative provision had an impact on results. A few students out on alternative provision, (5 students out of 124) does have a significant impact on the statistics. There were staffing issues in year 10 for drama students which impacted their learning but plans are in place going forwards. *The governors asked* what had impacted on the history results and Mrs Owen explained that there had been a shortage of teachers in history which has now been addressed with a new Head of History and additional staff members. *The governors suggested that perhaps* the key attributes and characteristics of the head of science could be shared to support and encourage other newer staff members. *The governors noted* that RE scores were very positive and wondered why it had been identified as an issue by Ofsted at the recent visit. Mr Hoad explained that there is a difference between RE taken as a GCSE and the mandatory learning required at KS3.

Mrs Owen went on to explain that there has been a larger gap in pupil premium this year than in previous years and said that this could be as a result of lost learning during covid years. The pupil premium students were not in school throughout the lockdowns but the SEND students were and the data does reflect this. The governors were interested to know how long it is expected to take for pupil premium students to catch up and the senior leadership members in attendance all agreed that those particular students will never catch up. The governors further clarified their question asking which future cohort of pupil premium students will be back in line with pre covid results and Mrs Owen confirmed that nationally they think that pupil premium have been pushed back by 10 to 15 years as a result of covid. If Walton can get back to pre-covid results within 5 years, they will be doing extremely well. Last years' results cannot be accurately measured but in 2019 the gap between pupil premium and non pupil premium was 0.28 and this year the gap is 0.82 (this is unvalidated data). The governors asked for <u>clarification</u> on the predicted numbers, and it was confirmed that these were for this year. Mr Hoad and Mrs Owen added that the pupil premium figures





when they have been validated and confirmed will be above the national average.

To summarise, Mrs Owen explained that with the figures that are currently available, against national average Walton is performing extremely well. The governors asked how Walton compares with Priory Ruskin. Mrs Leonard said that it will be published after validation in the school performance tables but currently it is not clear. Mrs Owen added that what is really important for the students is their destination. The outgoing year 11 need to achieve certain results to move on to their next steps and that is what is most important. Mrs Owen acknowledged that an area to focus on going forward should be ensuring that the higher attainers in year 11 remain at the academy into Post 16. Of the top 10 achievers, there are 5 staying into P16, this is a historical pattern and often it is those middle attainers who have come to Walton having failed the 11+ but then have performed well at GCSE then go to a grammar school for 6th form. The governors were interested to know what subjects those students that are leaving are going on to study. Mrs Owen said that sometimes it's the same as what is offered at Walton, sometimes the students want a change of environment, some want to go to a grammar if they achieve the GCSE grades and others look for courses that Walton don't offer. Mrs Saxelby explained that perceptions of having obtained A levels at grammar schools has an impact and governors also noted that there may be parental pressure given those perceptions. *The governors suggested* that it may be worthwhile encouraging the careers lead have this in mind when working with the students and went on to ask if previous students come back to talk young people within the academy and Mrs Leonard confirmed that they do.

Mrs Owen explained the Y13 headline figures. Areas of strength were identified as chemistry and performing arts. *The governors noticed* that performing arts had performed well at 6th form but drama at GCSE had not *and asked why* there was a difference. It was confirmed that this was a staffing issue at GCSE and staffing at Post 16 for these subjects was not related. Geography was particularly impacted by predictions at A levels. *The governors acknowledged* that the grade boundaries were vastly different to 2019 and this may have affected the predicted grades. Mrs Owen said that a piece of work was done last year with heads of faculty to look at the predicted grades and use previously proportions of students achieving specific grades as a benchmark rather than relying on grade boundaries and even that exercise returned similar result to using the grade boundaries.

<u>The governors asked</u> about the number of students that were accepted into Russel Group Universities and it was confirmed that 9 students went to Russel Group universities out of 28 students that went to university out of 45 students sitting A level exams. <u>The governors acknowledged</u> that some of the A Level results strengths such as performing arts and business, don't necessarily transfer into Russel Group universities and <u>suggested</u> it would be interesting to see where these students moved onto. <u>The governors questioned</u> the measure with regards Russel Group and asked if it was 'the be all and end all'. Mrs Owen explained that it is a measure and provides an easy summary and Mrs Leonard added that it is a measure that the trust ask all





academies to report on. Mrs Leonard went on to express that for some students university is no necessarily the 'be all and end all' and it is very important to ensure all students get support in finding the right pathway for them moving forwards. The governors asked about the small number of Y14 students. 4 students have come back to complete one subject in year 14 to complete their breadth of qualifications. Mrs Dolby presented an update on Safeguarding, see attached slides. PDF SG annual refresher Governor Edition 202 Mrs Dolby explained that Walton is leading on My Voice which is for students to raise concerns via use of a QR code which is posted around the building, is available on the website and will be added to student planners going forwards. The governors asked what type of concern or issue would be a recorded as a 'low level' concern and Miss Dolby explained that this could be a wide range of things from examples such as, a member of staff being accused of looking up a students' skirt to a member of staff saying something inappropriate. It could be anything, staff do report low level concerns and if there is evidence to back things up, they will be escalated up the chain or if a pattern of concerns becomes apparent, further investigation will follow and advice can be sought from the LADO. The governors thanked Miss Dolby for her presentation, noting that it felt very thorough and informative. AC/08/2324 How has the AC held senior leaders to account? There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to: Exam space Building safety and changes to building uses Mid-year admissions Behaviour and achievement data Careers support and guidance SEND, numbers of students, provision and support for students Costing and funding for school trips Exam results data Post 16 take-up and onward progression from Post 16 Reporting safeguarding concerns AC/09/2324 How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld? It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld AC/10/2324 **Complete report to Trustees** AC members discussed the report and agreed to add:





	 A successful visit for 2 students to Oxford University for a taster event has already happened this term and a successful information evening for parent of year 11 students has taken place. New committee members are engaging well at meetings and keen to get more involved in supporting the academy. The committee is still without a chair and vice chair for 2023/2024. Mrs Crerar as acting chair has stated her intention to step down and all governors have agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss succession planning. 	
AC/11/2324	Determination of Confidentiality Equalities Act consideration 7 Nolan Principles AC members considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved; • There were no confidential items discussed • There had been no Equalities Act implications • Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the 7 Nolan Principles.	
	Date and time of next meeting: PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN WEEKDAY FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Academy Committee meeting Tuesday 14 th November at 7:30am at Walton Academy.	
	The meeting closed at 18:57pm.	

Signed by Chair: L Crerar Date: 09/10/2023