

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

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

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Senior Principal	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	4	Governor's present	2
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/49/2324	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Crerar, Mrs Hardy, Mr Morgan and Mrs Purcell and these were accepted by the committee. The governance professional informed the committee that due to the number of absentees the meeting would not be quorate, and no decisions could therefore be made by governors. The governance professional will contact Mr Robertson. [AP-NB]</p> <p>Mrs Ind volunteered to chair the meeting in the absence of the chair.</p>	NB 15/05/24
AC/50/2324	<p>Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.</p>	
AC/51/2324	<p>Governor Candidate Election The governance professional explained that due to the meeting not being quorate, the election of Mrs A Bellett would need to be postponed until the next meeting on 3rd July. The governance professional will include this as an agenda item at the July meeting and keep Mrs Bellett informed. [AP-NB]</p> <p>Skills Audit The acting chair reminded all governors to complete the skills audit by 24th May 2024 which will feed into the self-evaluation and action plan for next year.</p>	NB 22/05/24

	<p>Meeting Dates 24/25 The meeting dates for the next academic year have been shared with attendees and will be confirmed via email to those not present. Mrs Leonard confirmed that the dates have been planned into the school calendar for 2024-25.</p>	
<p>AC/52/2324</p>	<p>Training - Staff wellbeing and development Mr Hoad referred to the workload charter and explained how the charter is used. The workload charter has been in place for around 6 or 7 years. It has recently been reviewed to see if it still describes what is being done. Whilst most academies focus on students first, at Walton there is a focus on putting staff first so that they are then in the best position to put their students first. <u>The governors acknowledged</u> the value of the document stating that they have seen it several times over the years and continue to be very impressed by it.</p> <p>Mr Hoad said that there are things on the charter that are more mindset types of action such as resisting fads and making sure that things are introduced slowly so that they are trialled, tested and rolled out correctly.</p> <p>Mr Hoad asked if there were any questions about the charter and governors agreed that the charter appears to be working well and had no further questions on the charter itself.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the current staff turnover is like. Mrs Leonard explained that in comparison to other academies, Walton does not have a high turnover of staff. The main reasons for staff leaving Walton are for promotions/career progression which is supported by the team at Walton in particular if positions aren't available for them to progress within Walton and the second reason which has become more prevalent in recent years is staff wanting to work closer to home. This appears to be a general trend. <u>The governors expanded on the reason for the question and suggested</u> that low staff turnover demonstrates that Walton is not an unhappy work environment. Mr Hoad added that recruitment is still challenging within the industry and the workload charter is a good selling point when recruiting staff.</p> <p>Mr Hoad talked through the staff CPLD provision document and explained the 3 tiers of training delivered within the academy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academy level training which includes statutory training, SEND training, behaviour and attitudes updates throughout the year. These headings have already been built into the training calendar for next year. - At a faculty level training is taken down to subject specific detail. Within the set agenda packs for link meetings at a faculty level, there should be some element of subject specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD). (for example, the 2 weekly cycle team meetings of the maths team will cover operational discussions but also as a team they will work through exams questions, share teaching methods and work together on improvement suggestions). <u>The governors asked</u> if there is anyone who marks papers that can feed into this part of training and Mr Hoad said that the number of staff who mark papers is reducing and there aren't as many 	

	<p>as there were however where there are markers in school, they would be leading these sessions in their subject area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual training which sits within the budget and is the result of individual conversations with heads of faculty and with Fran Gilbert. Where support can be provided for this within the financial limits, it will be provided. <p><u>The governors then wanted to know</u> if the financial impact on the building budget has any impact on the training budget. Mrs Leonard confirmed that the training budget and building budget sit separately. Mr Hoad added that there are financial impacts on training to be aware of and went on to describe how the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are no longer nationally funded. These are expensive at around £3000-4000 per year and Walton have previously had a small number of staff on every year which will now stop. There is an assessment only route into teaching to enable unqualified teachers to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) which is a short assessment route with a short placement elsewhere to gain QTS. <u>The governors asked</u> how long it takes and Mr Hoad explained that they must demonstrate that they have been teaching for 2 years but the placement is very short at approximately 5-6 weeks. This has been half funded by the trust and half funded by the individual but now it will be half trust funded and half academy funded. <u>The governors then questioned</u> if there are many unqualified teachers. Mr Hoad confirmed that there are 3 unqualified teachers on a full timetable, 2 are in temporary backfill positions. <u>The governors then asked</u> what route these 3 full timetable staff members are following. Mr Hoad explained that 2 are undertaking the assessment only route and the third is currently working on getting the qualifications needed first in order to take the QTS route.</p>	
AC/53/2324	<p>Actions / Feedback from link governor visits</p> <p>Mrs Ind acknowledged that she has not had a recent link visit and both she and Mrs Leonard agreed to ensure that a meeting is arranged with Mrs Dolby. The governance professional requested that Mrs Ind include Mrs Purcell in her invitation as she has expressed an interest in shadowing. [AP-JL / HI]</p> <p>Mr Horsfield explained that he also needed to arrange a Health & Safety visit, but this had been difficult with the absence of Katie Bagnall. Mrs Leonard confirmed that Katie will be returning from maternity leave after half term, and she will no doubt catch up as part of her return. [AP-JH]</p> <p>Mr Hoad added that he will arrange the next GDPR link meeting. [AP-MH]</p>	<p>JL / HI 03/07/24</p> <p>JH 03/07/24</p> <p>MH 03/07/24</p>
AC/54/2324	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 22nd March 2024.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the acting chair.</p>	
AC/55/2324	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>AC/39/2324 Mrs Hardy to share the slides from National School Governors Awareness Day with the governance professional for distribution to the committee. complete</p>	

	<p>AC/40/2324 Mr Hoad to share the minutes from the recent GDPR meeting with Mrs Crerar and Mr Robertson. Carried forward</p> <p>AC/43/2324 Mrs Saxelby to feedback governors' comments about the format of the ERM report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mrs Saxelby explained that she has fed back comments regarding the ERM report, but the format is unlikely to change. Mrs Saxelby confirmed that she will be able to answer all questions relating to the report as they arise in future meetings. complete <p>AC/43/2324 Mrs Leonard to ensure the calendar of summer events is shared with governors to enable better planning for governor attendance. complete</p>	<p>MH 24/05/24</p>
<p>AC/56/2324</p>	<p>Principals Report Safeguarding</p> <p>Concerns around safeguarding remain consistent, there has been and continues to be a large increase in workload. One of the non-teaching safeguarding team members has been given more time for admin and the upkeep of My Concern which has mitigated some of the issues. The safeguarding team also have a regular fortnightly meeting slot to discuss current issues.</p> <p>Complex cases are shared with the Leadership Team (LT) 3 times every half term through the regular meeting cycle, the Extended Leader team (ELT) once a half term and shared once a term in all staff briefings where appropriate to ensure that people are aware of relevant information, key actions, and risk assessments. Ideally a full-time safeguarding staff member would be beneficial to manage the administration of my concern and safeguarding but unfortunately the budget does not allow for this.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the information being received from police had improved in terms of the level of detail provided. Mr Hoad explained that the notification from the police does not contain very much information or context but that this is the way the system has been designed to work. Directions are often for the staff members not to approach the families or ask questions of them and <u>the governors wanted to then understand</u> how a question around this from Ofsted would be managed. Mr Hoad explained that the relevant and appropriate observations would be made to ensure the child is ok unless there is a specific relationship with the child, social worker etc. and Mrs Leonard added that the school will follow protocol instructed by the police.</p> <p>Priorities for 2024/2025 (Evaluation of current Academy Improvement Plan (AIP))</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that there are 2 pieces of work currently underway. The first is the evaluation of the AIP for the spring term and the second is to look at priorities for 2024-25.</p> <p>The overarching focus will continue to be around Aspiration and Belonging with 4 objectives for next year.</p> <p>Objectives 1 and 2 are in line with Ofsted areas for improvement and have remained the same, focussing on the Personal Development (PD) curriculum and ensuring appropriate challenge for all, particularly with lower prior</p>	

	<p>attainers. The key results have changed slightly in terms of the activity around these objectives. Next years' focus will be to embed the improvements and tweaks identified this year around the PD curriculum and a shift from 'next steps' days into 'next steps' weeks with more focus on next steps within faculty areas. In terms of challenge for all, and in particular lower prior attainers, there is now a real understanding of these students and it's about taking the appropriate actions to enable those students to achieve what they are capable of and also feel like they have aspiration.</p> <p>Objective 3 is to reduce the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions within the academy. A spike has been seen nationally, and the objective is not to stop suspending and excluding but is around what actions are being taken to ensure that everything that can be done to prevent suspensions and exclusions is being done with those students that might find themselves in this position. Mrs Leonard went on to explain that one of the key drivers is attendance as the sanctions have had an impact of around 0.5% on attendance figures so far, this academic year. Alternative pathways also need to be cost effective and the best provision for those students. Work is also underway around some of the internal systems to bring them in line with the Lincolnshire Ladder of Inclusion (LLI) which can be very time consuming and slow, almost looking to develop a Walton ladder of inclusion working alongside the LLI.</p> <p>Objective 4 is around fostering positive parental engagement (student engagement) those students that are hardest to reach often have parents that do not engage as much with the academy. Key results are around the uptake from parents with the parental App (weduc) which seems to be an issue this year and further work around on-site events and how parents are encouraged to come onto site and ensuring increased student retention at Post16 and numbers coming into year 7.</p> <p>The document is a working document, and the updated document will be shared at the next governors meeting.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to understand</u> what the barriers are to achieving the AIP objectives, in particular around parental engagement. Mrs Leonard explained that since the pandemic there appears to have been a significant shift in the level of importance placed on education and a shift in parents' mindset in terms of support for school, the need for good behaviours and attendance etc. many of the barriers are not new barriers but parents appear to be less willing to accept the decisions made and advice being given by education professionals and rather than support school will choose to challenge school and side with their children rather than discipline them at home. Mrs Leonard noted that this paints a bleak picture and by no means describes all parents. There has also been a significant change in demographic at Walton and this reflects a longstanding culture within the town that can't be easily changed. Mr Hoad added that what appears to be exaggerating the negative interactions with parents is the growing disengagement and apathy amongst a group of parents which is demonstrated by the poor uptake for the App.</p>	
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	<p><u>The governors asked</u> if the presentation to new parents in year 7 will include a plan to stress to parents the importance of using the App. Mrs Leonard explained that a meeting was held immediately after national offer day which was about welcoming families into the Walton community. The next parental sessions being held on the evenings of the transition days are more operational and logistical sessions and will discuss the app. The App is also covered within the induction packs and visits to primary schools to try and gain early engagement. Mrs Leonard added that there is a fine balance to strike in terms of ensuring the messages are appropriate and parents do not feel that they are being overloaded with irrelevant information which may then lead to them ignoring messages. <u>The governors then asked</u> if the messages can be more focussed to specific cohorts for example and Mrs Leonard confirmed that they can and there is a piece of work to be done to see how active parents are in actually using the App as opposed to just being signed up to the App.</p> <p><u>The governors wondered</u> if parents’ evenings are better attended when they are held online rather than in person. Mrs Leonard responded that the Post16 parents’ evenings continues to be held online but all the rest have returned to face to face meetings to try and get as many parents as possible across the threshold. The evenings are always positive and always well received. This year the academy trialled a hybrid booking system for year 7 parents evening enabling students to book appointments with their teachers directly over the period of a week but then following this with a short window to allow parents to book in further appointments online. Attendance and the number of appointments booked was better, and this approach will be considered for other year groups too. Mrs Saxelby said that it is hard to build a relationship through a screen and added that by having the student and parent make these appointments they take more accountability for the appointment and are more likely to turn up.</p> <p>Transition Year 7 - Mrs Leonard told the committee that she is very proud of the transition programme which is currently in full swing with staff going out and visiting all the feeder primaries. There are 146 students starting in September and the number is not expected to change significantly. The academy has invested in an online transition portal service which is being used and has gone down well with the primary schools this means information transfer between the primaries and Walton can be smooth. Post 16 – the number of post 16 students for next year are as expected and as the larger cohorts come through, those numbers are expected to increase. There is a substantial programme around induction of Post16 students, giving them a good start to their post 16 good journey.</p> <p>Preparation for September Keys tasks are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting of priorities - Self-evaluation document <p>These will be finished at the start of next half term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalising the academic calendar for the next academic year. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CFP and timetable - Planning first week and INSET days <p>Staffing update Mr Hoad told the committee that there is an advert out for a full time PE teacher and a 0.6 Science teacher at present and all other posts have been recruited. Timescales are very tight, so it is important to recruit within the next 8 days to ensure staff are in post in September. Interviews will be held next week and assuming there are no resignations in the next few weeks, the academy should be fully staffed. <u>The governors acknowledged</u> that there are a number of staff on maternity leave <u>and questioned</u> whether their positions have all been covered. Mrs Leonard confirmed that much has been able to be covered internally which is good for staff development opportunities in house.</p> <p>Exams space The solution is in place and the new top floor is a good space, E45 (the big exam space) is being utilised. The cost of the new top part of the building has come out double what was originally stated to the Academy. Mrs Saxelby and Mrs Leonard are now working with Simon Lowe in terms of the impact on the budget and what the solution will be. The academy still needs to look at a long term solution and this activity needs to be up and running from September. The current building has a life span of 5 years and consideration needs to be taken around the numbers of pupils coming in.</p> <p>Pupil Admission Number (PAN) and long-term pupil number projections. There is a risk to the trust in academies where the PAN is higher than the admissions number (i.e for Walton a PAN of 180 and admissions of 150) leaves academies open to mid-year admissions and fair access and these students bring with them complex issues and needs. The trust is aware of this risk and Mrs Leonard has been speaking to the trust about what it looks like locally. A working party within the trust is looking into this further. Further discussions are being held to look at pupil projections in the area in the coming years with Matt Clayton from the local authority. There is a meeting in July to consider this in more detail and maintain a good working relationship with the local authority. Jo Green, the Walton admissions lead has worked extremely closely with the admissions team and continues to do so. Mrs Leonard has also met with Martin Smith, Assistant Director For Education across Lincolnshire alongside Dave Cotton to forge strong relationships between the trust and Lincolnshire. A lot of work is being put into the marketing and approach to the upcoming open evening. The language has been changed slightly to reach further out to the village schools with electronic leaflets and leaflet drops already underway.</p> <p><u>The governors were concerned</u> that bus routes needed to be in place if attracting students from further afield <u>and asked</u> if there are any issues with getting buses out to the villages. Mrs Leonard said she has a very good relationship with Marshalls (bus company) who are keen to work with the academy, a meeting is booked in for next week, but no issues are anticipated.</p>	
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	<p><u>The governors then asked</u> if French is being offered as a subject at A level. Mr Hoad said that both French and Spanish were offered but the uptake was for Spanish. Both will be offered again this year. Mr Hoad also confirmed that Psychology has been offered and the take up has been high. <u>The governors then wanted to know</u> what other subjects for Post 16 are being considered, Mr Hoad explained that the broad offer goes out to students, but the number of requests dictate what courses will run. Business is now secured; it is expected that they will eventually add music over the coming years and there are significant changes expected in the vocational qualifications available in coming years.</p> <p><u>The governors expressed concerns</u> that the additional unanticipated building costs to the school appear to be unfair. Mrs Leonard and Mrs Saxelby explained that the trust is aware of this and there is some flexibility within the trust to mitigate the impact.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard informed the committee that there is an ongoing freedom of information (FOI) request which is currently with solicitors for advice before it can be responded to.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> for an update on any CAT C trips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Normandy goes out after half term. ➤ Belgium at Christmas is up and running. ➤ Borneo has been launched – it needed 12 students for World Challenge to commit to run the trip, there has been interest from 30 and 10 deposits have already been paid which is encouraging. ➤ A further trip request is being submitted to the trust this week for approval to run a combined Disney trip with the French trip next year, this will be a slightly longer trip (approximately 36 hours longer) and will incorporate Disney with the trip to Normandy. Mrs Ind offered to help with planning and organising any trips as she has lots of experience in running trips for schools. 	
<p>AC/57/2324</p>	<p>Policy Updates The following policies have been approved by the Board Committees and are shared for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Suspension and Exclusion Policy (summary of changes) ➤ Financial Procedures Manual (summary of changes) 	
<p>AC/58/2324</p>	<p>How has the AC held senior leaders to account? There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to: -</p>	
<p>AC/59/2324</p>	<p>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld? - It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.</p>	
<p>AC/60/2324</p>	<p>Complete report to Trustees - The report to trustees will be completed by the governance professional following the meeting.</p>	

<p>AC/6/2324</p>	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Academy Committee meeting Wednesday 3rd July at 07:30am at Walton Academy The meeting closed at 08:35am</p>	

Signed by Chair:

H Ind

Date: 20/05/2024