

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting**  
**held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 5:00pm at Walton Academy.**

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

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Absence</b>
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Senior Principal	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs L Owen	LO	Outcomes Lead	
Ms L Cluley	LCL	Head of Post 16	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	4	Governor's present	7
-----------------	---	--------------------	---

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/ when</b>
<b>AC/01/2425</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Mrs Purcell who is currently on maternity leave, and these were accepted by the committee.</p> <p>Mrs Ind and Mr Morgan had notified the governance professional that they would be arriving late due to traffic. All attendees agreed to start the meeting.</p>	
<b>AC/02/2425</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Chair and vice chair</b></p> <p>Mrs Crerar informed the committee that she would be standing down from her position as interim Chair of Governors and in doing so also stood down as vice chair of governors.</p> <p>The governance professional explained that with Mrs Crerar having stood down from the position the committee should look to appoint a new chair and vice chair to the role. A number of interim options were put forward such as having two co-chairs, each committee member taking some time in the role in turn to see if it something they would like to do more permanently and potentially requesting help from other chairs of committees within the trust. Governors expressed their reasons for not</p>	

	<p>feeling that they are in a position to stand for Chair of Governors or vice chair.</p> <p>HI and DM arrived at 5:10</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> when the next Ofsted was expected and Mrs Leonard replied that it would be in approximately 2 years.</p> <p>The governance professional said that she would ask if another chair from within the trust might be available to support the committee in the short term.</p>	<p><b>NB</b> <b>09/10/24</b></p>
<b>AC/03/2425</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interests</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda.</p>	
<b>AC/04/2425</b>	<p><b>Governance Report</b></p> <p>The Governance Professional (GP) reminded all governors to complete the Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 if they have not already done so <b>[AP-Govs]</b>.</p> <p>Mrs Ind said that the form did not allow her to enter N/A as answer without also entering a date. The governors agreed that the form was not user friendly but explained that where a date is required, today's date could be entered.</p> <p>The GP reminded all governors to read and sign the Code of Conduct for 2024-2025 if they have not already done so <b>[AP-Govs]</b>.</p> <p>The GP explained the remaining sections of the governance report contained actions for governors to complete and asked all governors to review the document and complete necessary actions around training and housekeeping.</p> <p>The GP informed all governors that the Conference, originally planned for 1<sup>st</sup> October had been cancelled and all governors should have now received notification about this. The GP added that a governors Teams meeting had been set up and invitations sent to all LAC members to plan activity for the year ahead.</p> <p>Mr Robertson has been having issues with his email and hasn't received a number of invitations. The GP will contact IT to ensure email addresses are correct. Mrs Ind has also not received meeting invitations.</p>	<p><b>Govs</b> <b>09/10/24</b></p> <p><b>Govs</b> <b>09/10/24</b></p> <p><b>NB</b> <b>09/10/24</b></p>
<b>AC/05/2425</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the acting chair.</p>	
<b>AC/06/2425</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>AC/62/2324 [complete]</b></p> <p><b>AC/64/2324 [complete]</b></p>	

	<p><b>AC/66/2324 [complete]</b>  <b>AC/66/2324</b> Mr Robertson confirmed that he will be holding his GDPR link meeting tomorrow and will feed back. Complete. <b>JR will resend the notes from the GDPR meeting in July [New AP-JR] complete.</b>  <b>AC/68/2324</b> (previously AC/51/2324) Mrs Ind and Mrs Leonard to ensure a safeguarding link meeting is arranged with Mrs Dolby and Mrs Ind will include Mrs Purcell in her invitation. <b>HI to book a date with K Dolby and provide minutes from the last meeting to NB. [NEW AP – HI]</b>  <b>AC/68/2324</b> (previously AC/51/2324) Mr Horsfield to arrange a Health &amp; Safety visit with Katie Bagnall <b>[JH]</b>  Mr Horsfield confirmed that he would arrange a meeting before the end of term. Complete <b>Mr Horsfield will send the notes from the H&amp;S meeting in July to NB [New AP-JR]</b>  <b>AC/72/2324 [complete]</b>  <b>AC/75/2324 [complete]</b></p>	<p><b>JR</b>  <b>02/10/24</b></p> <p><b>HI</b>  <b>02/10/24</b></p> <p><b>JH</b>  <b>02/10/24</b></p>
<b>AC/07/2425</b>	<p><b>Principals Report</b>  Mrs Leonard began by telling the committee that there has been a positive return to site in all aspects. The community has come back positively with new staff and students, all who seem to have hit the ground running and she added that she would like to commend staff on the smooth running of the systems put in place. The community week at the end of the summer had a positive impact on students and the momentum appears to have returned following the summer with the sense of belonging continuing to be an objective. Mrs Saxelby echoed Mrs Leonard’s sentiment having been around the Academy since the start of term.</p> <p><i>The Governors wondered</i> if the activities to link with the feeder schools and new parents had also impacted positively on the incoming year 7 cohort. Mrs Leonard agreed that the events at the end of last year to welcome new year 7 and year 12 students have had a positive impact. Mrs Leonard added that she felt that some of these pupils appear to have been less impacted by the pandemic and told the committee that she has written to all year 7 parents to commend their children after the first week and received positive comments back from parents.</p> <p>Mrs Owen presented the <a href="#">exam results data</a> to governors, providing context around the information shared, explaining that it is a set of data for a completely new school in terms of the demographic, therefore comparisons with previous years are not appropriate to measure performance of the school. Predictions were slightly higher than actual results in terms of P8 and A8 and this reflects the optimism of staff when predicting grades and is not uncommon.</p> <p>Mrs Bellett joined the meeting via video link.</p> <p><i>The Governors asked</i> how much of the impact on attendance has been due to holidays during term time. Mrs Owen explained that holidays have had a larger impact in the last year, describing how reduced attendance correlates to lower progress and attainment. Mrs Leonard added that procedures are followed according to government guidance but still the</p>	

	<p>number of holidays doubled last year from the previous year. Mrs Leonard went on to explain that the bigger issue seems to be that the value of education is not where it was pre pandemic. <u>Governors clarified</u> that Mrs Leonard was referring to the value of education according to people's perception. Mr Hoad then added that holidays will be a small percent compared to the rest of the reasons for poor attendance which can be complex and are difficult to address.</p> <p><u>Governors wanted to know</u> if there is a correlation between highest attenders and highest grades, Mrs Owen explained that this will become clear as she goes through the presentation but that there is a clear correlation. <u>The governors then wondered</u> if regular attenders might already be those better performing students. And Mrs Owen accepted that in some cases this is true but not always and that kind of data is difficult to measure exactly. <u>The governors asked</u> what else can be done with the disengaged students. Mrs Owen responded that belonging and aspiration is key and that is what Walton Academy are focussing on within the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP).</p> <p>Mrs Leonard explained that the GCSE results being reviewed are from the first co-ed cohort who were also severely impacted by the pandemic in their first 2 years at Walton Academy so their sense of belonging never really took hold, the data shows significantly more disengaged students were in this cohort than there are in the current year 11. Mrs Owen also added that the first group of boys into Walton had no older male students as role models and this too had an impact on their sense of belonging. <u>The governors wanted to understand</u> if the disengaged all sit within the low attendance category. Mr Hoad explained that some of the disengaged do attend regularly as school is their safe place and gives them their routine, but they struggle to engage in learning whilst in the Academy. <u>The governors then questioned</u> how many of the disengaged students are SEND students and wondered if this could be the cause of disengagement for some of the students. Mrs Owen explained that she would share some data around the number of disengaged SEND students [AP- LO] and added that some students arrive from primary with no information about their needs and it takes time for them to show themselves. <u>Governors then asked</u> if more can be done with the feeder schools to develop knowledge of these students before they arrive. Mrs Leonard responded that the SEND cohort this year was a complex cohort because of the hub and that some of the students sit within the positive P8 figures, but many had very complex needs and will sit within the disengaged group.</p> <p>Mrs Owen went on to identify the strengths identified at Walton by the results, Science, Maths, Philosophy and Photography and also EAL (English as an Additional Language - children who are learning English in addition to their first language) students did very well. <u>The governors wondered</u> if the strengths are good results compared to national average. Mrs Owen explained that the national average data is not yet available, but they are strong results based on those specific students, and in comparison, to the other subjects within the school. Mrs Owen described the issues identified with this cohort in terms of coursework not being</p>	<p>LO 02/10/24</p>
--	---	------------------------

	<p>completed at home and therefore having to dedicate lesson time to ensure coursework was completed. <u>The governors asked</u> if this issue has been seen before or if it has been gradually becoming more of an issue over time. Mrs Owen explained that it is the first time this has been experienced to such an extent at Walton. <u>The governors wanted to know</u> which subjects were affected and Mrs Owen explained that it is vocational subjects across the board. Ms Cluley added that there have been changes to the way coursework is completed in recent years and much of the coursework is now completed in school under exam conditions with students expected to have fully prepared at home beforehand, however the preparation is not being done at home. <u>Governors wondered</u> if results next year for this type of subject are expected to follow the same trend. Mrs Owen said that expectations are for results to be higher next year but unfortunately next year comparisons cannot be made in the same way due to there being no Key Stage 3 data.</p> <p><u>Governors wanted to commend</u> Walton Academy and shared that they were very proud of the school as reported 4<sup>th</sup> best in the East Midlands in the Sunday Times and said it was a fantastic achievement.</p> <p>Mrs Owen moved on to the data for P16 results and explained that the cohort is a smaller group so trends can't be measured in the same way. Mrs Owen went on to describe the results displayed within the presentation. <u>Governors asked</u> what is meant by 'pathway' and Mrs Owen explained that it refers to the combination of subjects taken by a student. <u>Governors then asked</u> if students have parental pressure to study STEM subjects. Ms Cluley said it is often student perception in terms of maths and sciences, making sure that the right students are on the right course and advising them if they appear to be on the wrong course. GCSE further maths students have the opportunity to test out whether they are capable of further maths. Core maths is offered to all students which is very different to further maths and is a more practical 'maths for life' subject. Mrs Owen added a 'health warning' when presenting the results explaining that the weaknesses identified from these results are not the same weaknesses of the incoming cohort to Post 16 given the changes to the demographic. Ms Cluley added that it is important to note that the retention for Y11 into this year's Y12 is lower which is reflective of the academy making sure the right students are on the courses. <u>The governors were interested to know</u> if the number of students moving elsewhere for post 16 has risen or decreased. Mrs Leonard said that retention is down this year. It had been quite stable at around 50-60 students but after receiving results, the decision was made that students would not be taken on if they hadn't achieved their predicted grades. This could be setting both the students and teachers up to fail. Ms Cluley added that Walton is a 'new' school, and this is a new sixth form. The Academy are setting a tone and culture for a brand new sixth form and the identity needs to be right from the beginning. <u>Governors questioned</u> whether the range of subjects offered has an impact on retention <u>and asked</u> if students give a reason for choosing to go elsewhere. Ms Cluley said that for the outgoing Y11 subject choice was less of an issue, however in previous years it would have been. 2 years ago Walton didn't</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>offer any languages, sociology, psychology which generally attracts the lower prior attainers. Having those subjects now has been advantageous. Ms Cluley went on to explain that the Walton enrichment programme is very strong to ensure the students stand out in comparison to the grammar schools. Mrs Leonard went on that the careers advisor is working with Y10 and Y11 on 1 to 1 sessions, as well as with the rest of the school and is able to advise students whilst remaining impartial and work is ongoing to identify how the Walton 'unique selling point' is made more explicit to students.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if mock interviews are offered by external companies to help students develop interview skills and give them a sense of aspiration. Ms Cluley said that this is being utilised as part of the Next Steps programme, which is also looking at enabling students to meet real people in real jobs as well as visits from universities.</p> <p>Mr Hoad explained that the enrichment programme contains 5 blocks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Core Elective (core maths, further maths, EPQ, Arts Award)</li> <li>○ 3 Chosen Subjects</li> <li>○ Enrichment</li> <li>○ Core PE</li> <li>○ Core Personal Development</li> </ul> <p>Mr Hoad went on to explain that with retention being low this year, some subjects have been removed from the offer or have been compressed. All subjects will be back on the table again for next year. Ms Cluley added that BTEC subjects can be taught in any order because they are self-contained units which means they can be compressed more easily. Mr Hoad added that some subject such as Drama and Dance have moved to a more academic focus, moving to A level from a more general vocational performing arts subject. <u>The governors asked</u> if the small class sizes are used as a selling point. Mr Hoad explained that the message needs to be put across carefully, but this is a selling point. Ms Cluley added that Walton is a comfortable choice for Charles Read Academy which is a smaller secondary school and that connections with local schools that don't have a 6<sup>th</sup> form need to be cemented.</p> <p><u>Governors acknowledged</u> that sixth form isn't always suitable for everyone and that for a proportion of the Walton cohort might not be the right choice. Mrs Leonard agreed that just because there has been significant growth in numbers within school, it doesn't necessarily mean there should be significant growth coming through into sixth form, particularly given the change in demographic. As an example, on results day Grantham College were invited on site to be able to speak with young people that had not perhaps achieved what they had hoped for and were able to leave the Academy knowing the options available to them.</p> <p><u>Governors wondered</u> if implementing the 'house' system will give more visibility and encourage a better uptake. Ms Cluley agreed that having male role models for the first time in post 16 for the boys will make a difference. Mrs Leonard added that she has seen some of the male post</p>	
--	---	--



	<p>16 students sitting with year 11 boys at lunchtimes which has come about through chess club and these connections will be able to grow.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard asked if there were any more questions in relation to exam results analysis. There were no more questions.</p> <p><b>Academy Improvement Plan - Objectives for this year</b></p> <p>Mrs Leonard referred to the report shared with governors and explained that the headlines haven't changed. Aspiration and Belonging remain a priority. Leadership teams are now working on their post and pre-mortems to drill down into the data and work out what the next steps need to be for the current year 11. As last year was a milestone having 5 years through co-ed. This year is a milestone now that there is a set of results for the new school. Based on the analysis of data, the Ofsted feedback, AIP etc. the leadership team will be assessing; What is not having an impact and perhaps need to be scrapped?, What might need to be re-introduced?, What new things should be brought in?</p> <p>This has been done academy wide and the team are currently working on a 4 year and beyond plan which will consist of immediate actions, actions for next year and then 2026 and beyond.</p> <p><u>Governors commented</u> that there doesn't appear to be anything about improving attendance. Mrs Leonard said that although it is not a 'title' within the AIP, attendance sits within objective 3 and there is some significant work around attendance and the finer details will be shared when the AIP comes back to the committee for further review. Mrs Leonard reiterated that she feels that the bigger issue around attendance is to do with belonging and value of education. All statutory process and procedures are being followed properly.</p> <p><u>Governors wanted to know</u> how many Y11 students there are currently on an alternative pathway. Mrs Leonard said there are 2 students in college 1 student with an EHCP at a SEN setting in Lincoln, one young person with reduced subjects and 3 students completing 1 fewer option (varied reasons), this is a much smaller number in comparison to last year. Across the whole academy there are 7 young people at outside providers. <u>Governors wondered</u> if this is a sign that the impact of the pandemic is improving, and Mrs Leonard agreed this could be the case. <u>The governors then asked</u> if there has been a change in the number of disengaged students compared to last year. Mrs Leonard responded that there appears to be a very different culture and climate compared to last year's year 11, the complex issues experienced with the previous year 11 are not prevalent to the same extent. There are many extenuating circumstances but also every cohort is different. Mr Hoad added that the last year 11 cohort were the first Hub cohort, and that the Hub has evolved over the last 5 years. <u>Governors acknowledged</u> that the HUB is unique, and Mr Hoad and Mrs Leonard agreed that it needs to be protected for those SEND students.</p>	
--	---	--

	<p><b>The Business Case</b></p> <p>There was a confidential discussion regarding a business case currently being considered the senior executives within the trust.</p> <p><b>CAT C Trips</b></p> <p>Mr Hoad explained that any school trip with international travel, overnight stay, involvement with water, adventurous activity is classed as Category C and needs to be approved centrally, then confirmed with governors before going to Nottinghamshire County Council, final approval sits with Mrs Leonard.</p> <p>Mr Hoad told the committee that tomorrow Ms Cluley will be taking 3 students to Oxford for an overnight stay in halls, followed by the open day and taster lectures.</p> <p>Other trips discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Geography A Level Residential in October going to Yorkshire with 2 other schools in the trust.</li> <li>○ Belgium Christmas truce trip (24 hours), there and back within a day in December.</li> <li>○ Barcelona in June is being considered.</li> <li>○ Geography field work</li> <li>○ DofE expeditions restarting in the summer term all being well.</li> </ul> <p>Longer term trips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Iceland has been approved for Spring 2026</li> <li>○ Disney Paris has been paused this year</li> <li>○ Ski trip has also been paused due to the cost</li> <li>○ Borneo World Challenge - full approval has been given for summer 2026.</li> </ul> <p>Mr Hoad explained that there has been a change in policy within the trust whereby any trip where the student cost is more than £1000 per head must go through procurement practice to ensure value for money. <u>The governors asked</u> if the Trust have preferred or contractual relationships with travel companies. Mr Hoad explained that there are not as it is important to keep relationships with trusted companies. Mrs Saxelby added that it is important to understand that the best option is not necessarily the cheapest choice, and all relevant details will be considered at Trust level to make the right decision for the students.</p> <p><u>Mr Horsfield added</u> that this isn't a new process as he works in school travel <u>and asked</u> if the academy claim the right elements of PP and SEND for travel stating that overnight costs can be claimed and it is possible to ask the travel company for an approximate per person cost so it can be claimed back.</p>	
AC/08/2425	<p><b>Budget summary 2024-2025</b></p> <p>JL confirmed that there will be something to share at the next meeting.</p>	



<b>AC/09/2425</b>	<b>How has the AC held senior leaders to account?</b> There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Performance</li> <li>○ Attendance</li> <li>○ Student engagement</li> <li>○ Post 16 offer</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/10/2425</b>	<b>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld?</b> It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.	
<b>AC/11/2425</b>	<b>Complete report to Trustees</b> The report to trustees was completed via Forms.	
<b>AC/12/2425</b>	<b>Determination of Confidentiality</b> <b>Equalities Act consideration</b> <b>7 Nolan Principles</b> AC members considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There were confidential items discussed and these have been recorded confidentially</li> <li>○ There had been no Equalities Act implications</li> <li>○ Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the 7 Nolan Principles.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Academy Committee meeting <b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 07:30am</b> at Walton Academy  The meeting closed at 18:43	
<b>Signed By:</b> <b>Chair:</b> <b>Date:</b>	<i>L Crerar</i> <b>Linda Crerar (acting chair)</b> <b>07/10/2024</b>	