

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar	LC	Appointed Governor	A
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	A
Mrs K Hardy (Chair of Governors)	KH	Appointed Governor	
Mrs A Bellett	AB	Appointed Governor	

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Executive Principal	A
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs F Gilbert	FG	Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	3	Governor's present	4
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/50/2425	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Purcell who is currently on maternity leave, Mrs Crerar due to work commitments and from Mrs Saxelby due to other work commitments, these were accepted by the committee.	
AC/51/2425	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The governance professional asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Mrs Bellett, Mr Morgan and Mr Horsfield have recently changed employment status and it was agreed that the governance professional would collect the updated information. [Action] The chair asked the committee to consider the report to trustees throughout the meeting and shared a sheet to jot down prompts.	NB 09/06/25
AC/52/2425	Vision Mission Values (VMV) The chair explained that it is important not to lose sight of the vision, mission and values of the academy and the trust and noted that they usually sit at the bottom of the agenda. The chair therefore suggested that all attendees consider them and share examples from recent weeks that have caught their attention and to think whether as governors we are delivering the VMV.	

	<p>Wanting to express where things are going well, the chair said that the VE day celebration was wonderful, respectful and caring and added that she was sorry she was unable to attend but could see from Facebook that it was huge success.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard agreed with the chair in relation to VMV and added the KS3 recognition evening the previous week was a fantastic evening. This is something that started last year with recognition evenings for each key stage as an extension to celebration assemblies recognising the superstars, those that have gone over and above, some are faculty based, some extra-curricular and community and demonstrate core values. A good format has been established, it's a one-hour event which has been positively received by parents and students.</p> <p>Mrs Bellett added that the year 7 parents evening was very well organised and added that the values of the trust were clearly demonstrated in that every teacher knew her child very well and clearly cared about him. She acknowledged that this can be hard for secondary school staff.</p>	
AC/53/2425	<p>Training – CPD Overview</p> <p>Mrs Gilbert introduced herself to the committee and informed them that her role is to cover all professional development needs for all staff and newly qualified teachers.</p> <p>Mrs Gilbert shared her slides with the committee and provided an overview of how CPD is delivered at Walton explaining that all development is done strategically.</p> <p>Mrs Gilbert described several aspects to Personal Development via a variety of pathways.</p> <p>Assessment Only Route is open to unqualified teachers who have been teaching for several years, they can apply because they have already been teaching for a long time. This offers a different pathway into teaching to the PGCE. There is training and support for trainee teachers and for those in the early stages of their career. Coaching and mentoring is also offered both informally and formally to develop leaders.</p> <p>CPLD is delivered at academy level, faculty level and on an individual basis. Use of time for training during inset days, twilight sessions, off timetable and staff are encouraged to use PPA time. An annual budget is set by the trust for the academy to use and all requests for training must be approved at trust level.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard added that Walton is very proactive in ensuring that staff development is at the heart of what we do, putting staff first to put students first is a priority. This a definite choice that is made at Walton and doesn't happen everywhere. Mrs Gilbert agreed and added that it doesn't mean that she says yes to every request explaining that she looks closely to prioritise where the need ensuring that all staff feel that they are being heard.</p>	

	<p><u>Governors wanted to know</u> if ad hoc training can be delivered as need arises such as the recently announced work experience changes may identify a need for training for staff in having conversations with external agencies to develop relationships with local businesses, such as cold calling/ outbound call support.</p> <p>Mrs Gibert said that this can be delivered in house and something such as this can often be delivered in a short period of time. Communication is a continuous training requirement, and work continues as and when necessary, adding this is also the type of thing that could be put into the INSET day activities.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard informed the committee that the September INSET will have an outside speaker, Nicky Perfect delivering a session on the art of communication. Nicky will be speaking to the whole staff body, she trained as a negotiator and focuses on the sense that you can't change people, but you can change the way you respond and communicate with people. Mrs Leonard added that difficult conversations and critical conversations are inevitable as leaders and from her own experience with complaints, it usually boils down to communication.</p> <p>Continuing with the presentation, Mrs Gilbert displayed a slide showing a variety of pathways, explaining the levels of coaching and training delivered by the association. She told the committee that because staff and middle leaders are sharing their positive experiences, staff come to her rather than her having to go to staff to encourage them to sign up for additional training.</p> <p>Due to the high pupil premium number Walton have been able to access additional courses nationally. Support is given to staff to ensure they are able to complete coursework etc.</p> <p>Mrs Gilbert will always signpost staff to valuable courses to gain knowledge.</p> <p><u>Governors wondered</u> if any staff have external certifications that they want to maintain. Mrs Gilbert said that some have QTLS that retain membership and Mrs Leonard added that there are some staff that have come from industry and there is no expectation to fund this, however if it were to come up and was of value it would be considered.</p> <p>The trust holds a license to be Olevi trainers and staff are getting trained so that they can facilitate the programmes as well. Any legal requirements/statutory training should come from the central budget.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> if the whole team understands how much is spent on training and Mrs Gilbert said that a lot has been spent this year on the science faculty, need for staff and technicians to complete training and Mr Hoad said there is often a misconception that training is going on a course to become an expert, whereby some reading and own directed learning is also valuable training.</p>	
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	<p><u>Governors commented</u> that sometimes the one-off training can be lost if there isn't a colleague to share the learning with and therefore it is important to consider training the trainer, ensuring that all staff get the value from specific training.</p> <p><u>Governors wanted to know</u> if the training budget keeps up with inflation and Mrs Gilbert confirmed that it does. Core expectations for teaching and learning and links to the trust values and have been designed by the staff body and everything hits the 7 expectations.</p> <p>The chair thanked Mrs Gilbert and said that feedback from staff survey was good in terms of training and development and it appears there is a healthy appetite for more.</p>	
AC/54/2425	<p>Governance Report</p> <p>Mr Horsfield confirmed that he has completed the suspensions and exclusions training.</p> <p>Mr Morgan shared some feedback from the chair/vice chair training that both he and Mrs Hardy have been attending. The course is delivered online with the same cohort of people who are other chairs and vice chairs across the UK. Some of the time is spent in break out rooms with all sorts of different schools and issues and this has helped him to realise the level of engagement from the staff at Walton and support from the governance professional. He shared that attendees had been tasked with attending a committee meeting elsewhere and told the committee that he had sent an invitation on the WhatsApp chat to come to observe at Walton meeting but had no response as yet.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy shared feedback from her recent link meeting with Sophie Emerald (careers) and Sonia Byrne (personal development/EDI) who is the leading light / best practice for the trust and will be working with Matt, Jacqueline and Mrs Hardy to try to get more external companies involved in the work experience and training days. This is an example of how Walton is ahead of the game with this. Mrs Gilbert added that both Sophie and Sonia are going to the careers fair in London. Mrs Hardy said that she would be happy to spend some time with Sophie with calling companies.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy also attended the recent SEND training, the focus was on vulnerable people and sharing the discussion with staff and enabling a reduction in the number of suspensions and exclusions etc.</p> <p>Mr Morgan confirmed that he had completed a careers link visit and will share his report with the governance professional [Action - DM]</p> <p>Mrs Bellett asked if she could have the meeting invitation to the SEND training session [Action - NB]</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>The chair referred to the governance action plan and said that it needs simplifying and reprioritising. Mrs Leonard explained the difference</p>	<p>DM 09/06/25</p> <p>NB 09/06/25</p>

	<p>between the Governance Action Plan and the Academy Improvement Plan and added that the action plan should sit around the pillars of the new Ofsted framework. The governance professional explained that a self-evaluation of governance is normally completed by the chair with support from principal and governance professional and this then helps to formulate the action plan moving forwards. It was agreed that all committee members should be involved in the self-evaluation activity and the governance professional will schedule a meeting. [Action – NB]</p> <p>Mrs Bellett has a meeting scheduled with Mrs Dolby on 11th June to discuss SEND and safeguarding. The governance professional will share a visit report template. [Action – NB]</p> <p>The chair shared that she and Mrs Bellett had touched base and she felt the conversation was very constructive, she will continue to do this regularly with all governors and asked if Mr Horsfield would be happy to have a similar catch up. [Action – NB] to schedule something</p>	<p>NB 09/06/25</p> <p>NB 09/06/25</p> <p>NB 09/06/25</p>
AC/55/2425	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 11th March 2025.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/56/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>AC/39/2425 NB will send the link to Dol form to AB. Complete</p> <p>AC/40/2425 NB will get in contact with TC to discuss putting a recruitment article in the Grantham journal. Carried forward</p> <p>AC/40/2425 NB to ensure requirements of role and the job description are clearly referred to in the governor induction complete</p> <p>AC/40/2425 NB to reschedule the remaining meetings for this academic year and work with everyone to develop a timetable of meetings for the 2025/26 year complete</p> <p>AC/41/2425 Governors agreed to let NB know when they have reviewed the suspensions and exclusions session. complete</p> <p>AC/41/2425 Governors agreed to consider attending the governance conference and to let NB know if they plan to attend. complete</p> <p>AC/42/2425 Mr Morgan to check his records and provide any outstanding mandatory training certificates. complete</p> <p>AC/42/2425 Mrs Hardy to attend the SEND LINK training on 26th March. complete</p> <p>AC/42/2425 Mr Horsfield to schedule a H&S meeting with Mrs Bagnall. Complete, JH attending once a term to the H&S meeting.</p> <p>AC/42/2425 Mrs Hardy to pick up personal development and careers Link role with Sonia Byrne and Sophie Emerald. complete</p> <p>AC/42/2425 Mr Horsfield to support with the careers fair and will share more information with the Mr Hoad.</p> <p>AC/44/2425 (AC/27/2425 carried forward.) NB to schedule a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss next steps. complete</p> <p>AC/44/2425 NB to include an agenda item for training on interpreting outcomes data in the July agenda. complete</p> <p>AC/44/2425 NB to schedule a separate training session on behaviour and attitudes. Carried forward</p>	<p>NB 09/06/25</p> <p>NB</p>

	<p>AC/44/2425 JL to ensure that a session on Staff CPD is delivered in the May meeting. complete</p> <p>AC/44/2425 NB to add Staff CPD as an agenda item in the May agenda. complete</p> <p>AC/45/2425 JL and KB to review the wording within the risk report around the use of the part time timetable. complete</p> <p>AC/45/2425 To add something into the risk register around support for staff in dealing with behaviour. complete</p>	09/06/25
AC/57/2425	<p>Principals Report</p> <p>Mrs Leonard summarised the Principal's report starting with the feedback from people value survey which she said highlighted the work being done around people value across the trust. The first part of this was herself, Mr Hoad and Mrs Bagnall meeting with the HR team / people team from the trust which sparked some work to gather thoughts across the academy.</p> <p>The first pulse questions, one question a week is sent out on a Friday from Mrs Leonard to all staff. The headlines are detailed in the principal's report and feedback was shared in the more detailed document. So far feedback has been positive, and the things people would like to see improvements in link with the priorities already identified by leaders. There has been some follow up around the answers received. Following on from the pulse questions, the next step is people value discussions. Senior leaders all have a series from the sample group to delve deeper. So far comments are very positive and feedback is good in that honesty and communication is proving to be a useful too to enable staff to be put first. The SLT (senior Leadership team) have the detailed feedback and are using it to map out priorities for next year. <u>The governors asked</u> if answers can be honed to leaders. Mrs Leonrad said she knows who has answered everything and <u>governors then wondered</u> if this could be useful coaching feedback for the leaders. Mrs Leonard said that she is regularly in tune with staff so generally knows what people are feeding back, much of the Frustrations being expressed by staff relate to the national picture rather than Walton specifically but gathering views this way is interesting to get that constant flow of quick short sharp feedback. <u>Governors were interested to know</u> if respondents feel that they can be honest is they can be identified by their answers <u>and asked</u> if this method enables a clear measure from year to year. Mrs Leonard explained that the large-scale trust survey has not been helpful in the past. This method is more specific to Walton and has better buy in from staff providing a temperature check with staff in a more informal way which is very useful.</p> <p><u>Governors suggested that</u> this approach might not be optimal if staff were disengaged or disgruntled however they are likely to buy in if they see that the output brings improvement <u>and asked</u> if the feedback goes back to the trust. Mrs Leonard explained that the consensus around the annual survey was fed back and that's why it has been discontinued, and this new method has been brought in. She went on to say this will be used to develop priorities and it ties into the work that Sonia is leading on around EDI.</p> <p>Year 11 and Y13 update.</p>	

	<p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that exams are now underway, looking at the final data point data before exams if the measure is achieved results will be good. <u>Governors wanted to know</u> how it compares to the national average, understanding that progress data is not available for this cohort due to Covid. Mrs Leonard said that if attainment 8 is above 40 then our young people are doing very well. There are a lot of grammar schools in the area that attract higher prior attainers. Students are coming into Walton with data that is below the national average, she added that despite not having SATs to refer back to progress is still being measured and it looks positive. She went on to tell the committee that significant work has gone in to ensure year 11 are as prepared for exams as possible. One governor shared that they understand that a lot of staff have delivered additional sessions over and above the timetable and wanted to thank staff for giving their time to the students. Mrs Leonard said there isn't an expectation on staff to deliver additional sessions, but some staff do deliver them, and some students really benefit from and appreciate them. There is an embedded plan around year 11, with an alternative timetable to ensure they get the dedicated specialised sessions with their teachers directly before they have an exam in that subject and this has a positive impact in terms of marginal gains. Since January Mrs Owen and Mrs Dolby have been Heads of Year 11 (Mrs Owen will continue into next year) and have been doing a fantastic job in terms of logistics and communications to ensure that year 11 and the staff supporting them are getting the best deal.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> why music and English are concerns. Mrs Leonard said that there is no head of music, they left in January and Walton don't have an expert in this department which unfortunately will impact on grades.</p> <p><u>Governors questioned whether</u> the role is being actively recruited. Mrs Leonard said that it is not being recruited, and support is being focussed on the head of music for KS3, she went on to explain that it is a difficult role to recruit to and unfortunately music is not a government priority. English is a bigger piece of work, not just around year 11. The Trust lead is coming in to work with the English team on a complete day around curriculum. A revisited and revised curriculum offer will be developed. Establish a collaborative and centralised planning approach which is impacting the team and therefore the students. Data has exposed this issue further.</p> <p>The Year 13 data has been put together using the Horsforth quadrant allowing a more forensic and detailed discussion and therefore action around particular students. Mrs Leonard suggested that she will look at getting Lucy Cluley head of post 16 to present to governors.</p> <p>Attendance A huge amount of work has gone into improving attendance, it still isn't where it should be and is a direct priority on the AIP. Attendance needs to be more in line with national average, it's currently too far away and over 1% is significant. Actions are taking place around marginal gains, alternative pathways and coding, there are some students impacting attendance that shouldn't be on the roll and a meeting has been planned</p>	
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	<p>with the local authority to discuss this. A reset will be delivered to students in particular around attendance bandings to move them on.</p> <p><u>Governors queried</u> if the department for education had done what they should, whether the figures would look any different and Mrs Leonard confirmed that the overall attendance figure would be moved up by about 1%. <u>Governors then asked</u> if there is any correlation between the time of year and absence and Mrs Leonard confirmed that the last week of term shows a significant dip in attendance adding that Walton having different term dates to the rest of Lincolnshire has an impact on attendance. She explained that discussions are underway with the trust about term dates moving forwards, for example the last week of the summer term last year attendance dropped as low as 60% on the last day.</p> <p>AIP</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the academy improvement plan ties into a lot of what has been discussed, objective one is around ensuring that all students are getting the right level of challenge and support for them to make the progress and attainment that they are capable of and you would expect to see a rise in outcomes.</p> <p>Mr Morgan gave his apologies and left at 09:12</p> <p>The next objective is around vulnerable students, and we have seen a reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions which is down to ensuring students are on the right pathways, forensic tracking and monitoring. The academy is looking to bring in an alternative pathway provision on site for young people who struggle to engage and behave in the classroom, to be able to deal with that on site immediately will be beneficial to those students. Planning for this will happen next year with a view to it coming on site the year after.</p> <p>Objective 3 around attendance has already been discussed and objective 4 encapsulates the work that Sonia Byrne is leading on to ensure that Walton is a place of preference within the community and that people can see how well Walton are doing. Revisiting how to sell the academy as a place of preference to ensure as many pupil numbers as possible. Mrs Leonard said that this all comes back to communication and working with stakeholders as best we can. The next step is to look at key actions which will then be shared with whole staff in half term 6.</p> <p>Risks</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that intake into year 7 is different to what Walton has previously seen. We are currently looking to take between 130 to 150 which is not currently near the PAN of 180 and this remains a risk. Consideration is being given to realigning term dates to Lincolnshire rather than Nottinghamshire. This will need to go out to consultation and all stakeholders will have a year's notice.</p> <p>Budgets are a risk, not just at Walton but nationally and Walton will receive less funding due to the lower than PAN intake. Teacher pay rises will not be fully funded, national insurance changes, pupil premium not</p>	
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	<p>being fully funded and needs to be funded by trusts and there is significant work going on in the trust around this. Walton is slightly ahead of the game as we have been preparing for lower numbers and therefore lower funding.</p> <p>Safeguarding update Mrs Leonard told the committee that a new inclusion lead and bespoke pathways role is in place and asked if there were any questions in relation to the updated safeguarding checklist. There were no questions from governors and Mrs Bellett said that she will be speaking with Mrs Dolby in more detail as part of her safeguarding link role.</p> <p>Complaints Mrs Leonard told the committee that there is one ongoing complaint – been ongoing for a while and is likely to require a panel meeting and potentially one formal complaint that may yet come through.</p>	
AC/58/2425	<p>How has the AC held senior leaders to account? There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Predicted attainment data ➤ Attendance ➤ Staff retention and wellbeing ➤ Curriculum ➤ Staff CPD 	
AC/59/2425	<p>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld? It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality have been upheld.</p>	
AC/60/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees The report to trustees was completed and submitted by the governance professional with input from all in attendance at the meeting.</p> <p>Governors commented that the recent year 11 parents evening was quiet. Mrs Leonard explained that there are two for year 11 and the second one is generally less well attended and as part of calendar planning, she will be looking at the timing of the second ones. Mr Horsfield said it was a positive experience and provided good feedback from the mocks with lots of positivity.</p>	
AC/61/2425	<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. 	

	Date and time of next meeting: Academy Committee meeting Thursday 10th July 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy The meeting closed at 09:30	
Signed By: Chair: Date:	<i>K Hardy</i> Karin Hardy 05/06/2025	