

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Thursday 10th July 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar	LC	Appointed Governor	
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	
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	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	3	Governor's present	6
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/62/2425	<p>Thank you and welcome back</p> <p>The chair thanked Mr Hoad for the tour of the garden and said it was a great start to the meeting. All governors were very impressed by the garden and said it has clearly been a really positive experience for all involved.</p> <p>The chair welcome Mrs Purcell back following her maternity leave and all governors agreed it was lovely to have her back.</p>	
AC/63/2425	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
AC/64/2425	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda.</p> <p>The governance professional reminded all governors to complete new declarations for 2025-26 by selecting the link within the governance professional report. [ACTION]</p>	LC/AB/ JH 24/07/25
AC/65/2425	<p>Vision Mission Values (VMV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The garden is looking lovely and working well ➤ Messages shared with the community about children's achievements outside of school are lovely to see ➤ The Walton Facebook page is excellent ➤ The open evening was very positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ and a potential new governor revealed themselves 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ that teachers were amazing, and all extremely positive about Walton ○ the bus driver who was present at the open evening spoke very positively about the good behaviour manners and attitude of Walton students <p>➤ Feedback following the year 11 prom has been very positive</p>	
AC/66/2425	<p>Continual Professional Development – Focus On My Own Learning Keeping Children Safe In Education Update</p> <p>Mrs Bellet has completed the DfE Prevent Training.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy and Mr Morgan have completed the NGA chair of governors training.</p> <p>Mr Morgan shared some feedback from the governance conference held at Trust HQ on 11th June. The slides have been shared within the GP's report and Mr Morgan encouraged those that weren't able to attend the conference to have a skim through them.</p> <p>The key speaker Samira Sadeghi was very engaging and the group sessions with other governors and staff within the trust were an interesting exercise.</p> <p>Mr Morgan shared a brief overview of Samira's session which he summarised into 4 areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background to TGP (Trust governance professionals) and the role of governors in the UK, school governors form the largest volunteer force in the country. - The political landscape (recruitment issues, broken SEND system, regulation, emerging risks, key challenges such as the influences of social media etc. - principals of governance, theory of change, concerns of succession planning. under 40's massively underrepresented in governance and a shift towards stewardship – need to shift in mindset from propriety to stewardship and for governors to consider themselves as custodians rather than owners. - Governors should need to be assured rather than reassured, reducing the "fluffload", revising structures to prevent duplication, reducing minutes and streamlining, utilising AI where it can be used to our advantage. <p>Mrs Hardy added that it was an outstanding presentation which provoked everyone to think about things in a different way.</p> <p>There was discussion around how to refine the agenda's and reduce the minutes from LAC (local academy committee) meetings and there had been mention in the presentation that Ofsted do not require full minutes. Mrs Saxelby said that we need to ensure that the LAC remains compliant but we should look to reduce minutes to a hybrid of full minutes / action log.</p>	

	<p>Governors discussed how to make the best use of the GP's (governance professional) time and the reduce the "fluffload". Governors were concerned about the number of requests this year for governors to support with discipline panels across the trust and Mrs Saxelby told the committee that the concerns were shared at trust level and other ways of managing this are being considered.</p> <p><u>The governors wondered</u> if the discipline panel meetings could be filmed rather than minutes being taken and Mrs Leonard said that from a legal perspective and DfE procedures, minutes are required should the parent decide to request an Independent Review Panel. Minutes are essential to this process.</p>	
AC/67/2425	<p>Governance Report Code of Conduct 2025-26 needs to be read and signed by LC/AB/JH [ACTION]</p> <p>Skills Audits 2024-25 needs to be completed by LC/DM [ACTION]</p> <p>The chair reminded all governors of the need to get together to review the AIP, the governors action plans and put together a plan for 2025-26. Diaries were addressed and a decision was reached to meet during the summer holidays to start this activity. The governance professional will send calendar invitations for the meeting on 19th August at 5:30pm but will not be present for the meeting due to term time working. [ACTION]</p> <p>Mrs Bellet gave feedback from her recent SEND and Safeguarding link meeting explaining that she will be feeding back to the trust on the best practice she has seen at Walton, particularly around parental engagement and the consistency in useful conversations which enables good communication she added that Walton has the balance just right and this should be shared across the trust. From a safeguarding perspective, she informed the committee that she had observed a genuine team approach to safeguarding and all staff know their stuff and work collegiately.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy told the committee that she would be spending some time after the meeting looking at Future Thinking and talking careers with Sophie Emerald.</p>	LC/AB/JH 24/07/25 LC/DM 24/07/25 NB 24/07/25
AC/68/2425	<p>Appoint committee chair and vice-chair for 2025/26 Governors unanimously agreed to appoint Mrs Hardy as chair and Mr Morgan as vice chair with effect from 1st September 2025 for the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>Both welcomed their roles and said they are looking forward to the coming year and further developing good relationships with the committee and the SLT.</p>	

AC/69/2425	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 13th May 2025. The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/70/2425	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>AC/51/2425 collect the updated declarations of Interest. complete</p> <p>AC/54/2425 Provide the P16 link visit report DM carried forward</p> <p>AC/54/2425 forward the meeting invitation for the SEND training session to AB NB complete</p> <p>AC/54/2425 Schedule a meeting for all governors to complete the self-evaluation. complete 19th Aug 25</p> <p>AC/54/2425 share a visit report template with AB. NB complete</p> <p>AC/54/2425 schedule a 1 to 1 meeting with JH and KH. Carried forward</p> <p>AC/56/2425 NB will get in contact with TC to discuss putting a recruitment article in the Grantham journal. Carried forward</p> <p>AC/56/2425 NB to schedule a separate training session on behaviour and attitudes. Carried forward</p>	DM 24/07/25 NB 24/07/25 NB 24/07/25 NB 24/07/25
AC/71/2425	<p>Principals report</p> <p>Mrs Leonard referred to the principal's report.</p> <p>AIR (Academy Improvement Review)</p> <p>A team from the trust come into the academy with a specific focus, this year the 2 areas of focus were the quality of KS3 provision and attendance. The full report will be issued before the end of term and this will be shared with governors.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the areas of focus were last year. Mrs Leonard said it was a different type of a review this time due to the timing within the school calendar and this has allowed the trust to approach it differently, rather than being a 'mock Ofsted' it made sense to do a more focussed review. Mrs Leonard told the committee that she has fed back to the trust that it has been the most helpful review in terms of its forensic approach which has enabled the team to streamline the AIP in terms of KS3 provision.</p> <p>Governors stated that they were keen to learn more about formative assessment. Mrs Leonard said that Walton has done a big piece of work around formative assessment driven by Lori Owen, in the new academic year Lori will be happy to deliver an overview around this.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if it is possible to quantify learning points from the last Ofsted compared to the current picture. Mrs Leonard said that the Ofsted identified two areas for improvement, the Personal Development curriculum which Mrs Leonard is confident has been rectified and, the right challenge for all children across all groups. Strides have been made forwards particularly in KS4 and KS5 but Mrs Leonard acknowledged there is more work to do at KS3 which will filter through into KS4 and KS5.</p> <p>Priorities for the AIP (Academy Improvement Plan)</p> <p>Mrs Leonard explained that AIP remains a live document throughout the year and takes into account all quality assurance evidence, the evaluation</p>	

	<p>of the current AIP, and results from any audits or reviews. All priorities are in line with the government and the trust.</p> <p>The 4 priorities moving forwards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate challenge for all, particularly KS3 along with the new independent work strategy. - Ensuring vulnerable students are on the right educational pathways, reduction in suspensions and AP (alternative provision) and potentially bringing some alternative pathways onto site. - Attendance – small marginal gains have been made but need to be more in line with the national average and there is work to do with those young people sitting between 85% and 95% attendance, governors wondered if they might be able to support with home visits. - Ensuring that Walton is a place of preference within the community. Looking at community, marketing and stakeholders for both year 7 and year 12 uptake. <p>Governors wanted to know how many applicants make Walton first choice currently. Mrs Leonard said that between 90 and 100 select Walton as a first choice out of an admission number of around 130, governors then asked Mrs Leonard what her preferred number would be. Mrs Leonard said that a cohort of 150 would be the ideal number of students taking into account the size of the site and staffing etc. Governors wondered why people aren't putting Walton down as a first choice. Mrs Leonard said there are a combination of reasons, numbers of students are falling in Grantham, West Grantham are a place of parental preference and only have a PAN of 120, the pull of Sir William Robertson which has increased Pan to 190, Priory Ruskin over offer to an additional class every year so Walton is surrounded by good schools. Mrs Leonard went on to explain that Walton's term dates don't align with Lincolnshire so this also impacts on parental preference when siblings are in the local primaries. Term dates will be moving back in line with Lincolnshire from September 2026 as this does impact both on uptake and attendance. Governors asked if the villages Facebook pages are tapped into with regards advertising and sharing socials. Mrs Leonard said she would discuss this with Tao [ACTION]</p> <p>Governors then wanted to know if there is data on what parents make key decisions on and Mr Hoad explained that they only have access to the data for the students that attend Walton. Governors acknowledged that some of the competitor schools have very modern new building which will be a draw for many parents. Mrs Leonard said a lot of the marketing is currently around selling the Post 16 offer and the same theme and strapline will be used to encourage students to the rest of the cohorts. Governors asked if the press come to Walton on results day. Mrs Leonard said they circulate around the schools each year and Walton always issues a press release. Governors were keen to see the marketing campaign and Mrs Leonard said she will share it in September.</p>	
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JL
24/07/25

	<p>SEF (Self Evaluation Form) AI was utilised when looking at the SEF, all data was fed into AI and it produced a very good, streamlined document which only required minor tweaks, it added in a comparison table at the top to see where progress can be measured. Following the Ofsted framework changes this may need tweaking.</p> <p>Quality of Education Mrs Leonard asked if there were any questions on the quality of education update within the principals' report. There were no questions from governors.</p> <p>Behaviour / attendance</p> <p>Attendance The report provides the headline figures compared to last year and to national averages, and to East midlands and Lincolnshire averages. Walton has worked more closely with the local authority on this and they came in to help with coding, which provided some marginal gains, and provide advice around fixed penalty notices and fines. The cohort data for the incoming year 6 is now available to academies and this has revealed that Walton will be receiving the worst performing cohort in terms of attendance in the trust.</p> <p>KS2 data from a SATs point of view is also a concern, of the 119 cohort there are only 7 high prior attainers and 3 times as many low prior attainers. Coupling this with attendance shows there will be significant work to do with this cohort. Mrs Bellett told the committee, from her work in primaries, this next group were particularly hard hit in KS1 by the pandemic.</p> <p>Behaviour Suspensions and permanent exclusions have been a lot lower, there is currently a spike but these are for all the right reasons for those young people. Generally, the work done around getting vulnerable young people on the right pathways has had a positive impact. There have been 6 permanent exclusions this year and Mrs Leonard reiterated that she is confident they were for the right reasons. 4 for one off incidents and 2 for persistent disruptive behaviour, she added that Walton can do better by looking at developing alternative pathways on site, using the work done with SEND as a guide, this should help with attendance as well.</p> <p>Safeguarding There were no questions on safeguarding</p> <p>Staff wellbeing Governors noted that the outcome of the staff survey was generally positive but that 22% don't believe that senior leaders are supporting staff with managing behaviour. Mr Hoad said that cynically you could save 5-10% of that figure because there's always some staff that don't want to own their part in interactions around behaviour. Governors wondered if Mr Hoad was referring to the more old-fashioned teachers and he replied</p>	
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	<p>it is at both ends. Governors suggested that the EDI work lead by S Byrne will help with this and Mrs Leonard agreed and added that communication levels around behaviour have been raised to ensure all staff understand what is happening with students.</p> <p>Complaints The stage 5 complaint that began in the Autumn term was heard by a panel, there has been no further correspondence from the complainant following the panel outcome and the student is no longer on roll as the local authority have found them an appropriate setting to deliver their EHCP.</p> <p>Stage 2 complaints - 2 meetings are scheduled with parents</p> <p>Admissions Walton will welcome 119 students into year 7 in September and met them through transition last week. Students had a brilliant time and seem excited to join the academy. Staff have been working closely with one young person which has been positively received by the local authority.</p> <p>Curriculum enrichment days were very positive and this will be expanded next year and the open evening was a success.</p> <p>Governors commented that the visual updates have been good and asked if video has a place in training. Mr Hoad described the IRIS system to share best practice through a CPD portal which is used to coach and to share practicals etc. and Mrs Leonard added the Post 16 campaign is built around video from a marketing point of view.</p>	
AC/72/2425	<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"> ➢ Academy Improvement Review and AIP objectives ➢ Attendance ➢ Suspensions and exclusions including support from governors ➢ Admissions numbers and marketing to attract more students ➢ Post 16 marketing 	
AC/73/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees The annual report to trustees was completed by all attendees and the chair thanked everyone for their input.</p>	
AC/74/2425	<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. 	

	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Academy Committee meeting Thursday 25th September 2025 at 5:00pm at Walton Academy</p> <p>The chair thanked all for attending and wished everyone a restful summer</p> <p>The meeting closed at 09:30</p>	
Signed By: Chair: Date:	 Karin Hardy 14/07/2025	