

Summary of discussions of the Local Academy Committee meeting

held on Thursday 20th November at 07:30am on TEAMS

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	
Mrs K Hardy	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	A
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs L Owen	LO	Assistant Principal Outcomes	
Mrs T Bassan	TB	SENDSCO	
Mrs K Dolby	KD	Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum	3	Governor's present	5
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Outstanding Actions Log

C	= Complete	CF	= Carried forward	I	= Incomplete (carried forward more than once)
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Agenda item	Meeting Ref	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline	Update	Complete / carried forward
AC/70/2425	Sum2	AC/54/2425 Provide the P16 link visit report DM carried forward	DM	24/07/25	DM has another meeting with Lucy (to be scheduled) and the open evening is on 16 th October. A new report will be shared following this.	I

AC/70/2425	Sum2	AC/56/2425 NB to schedule a separate training session on behaviour and attitudes.	NB	24/07/25	It was agreed that a Teams session be scheduled. AB will pick up with KD when they meet next week.	I
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Q = Question from Governors

A = Answer from senior leaders

Agenda item	Key points / Summary	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline
AC/12/2526	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted for CS and JL. KH told the committee that LC has resigned due to work commitments, adding that we are sad to lose her as she played an important role, stepping into the chair position for a time despite her own busy life. NB will write to her formally thanking her for her service. [ACTION]	Formally write to LC accepting her resignation and thanking her for her commitment to the role.	NB	27/11/25
AC/13/2526	Declaration of interests There were no changes to declarations of interest made at the start of the year and no declarations in relation to the agenda.			
AC/14/2526	Vision Mission Values (VMV) Chair reminded committee of the purpose of the agenda item to set the best foot forward and reflect on what has been great since the last meeting. - KH acknowledged AB and said she had been so valuable in making connections, sharing knowledge and informing the questions. Great job done! JH seconded this and said her insight and knowledge is extremely valuable.			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MH – Walton have hosted a national theatre group – Box Clever for the last 2 and half weeks as they have been constructing their version of Macbeth in preparation for them going on tour of schools around the country. Did their first performance yesterday afternoon for the 50-60 students that have been working with them and rest of year 11. It was an amazing version of Macbeth with just 3 actors. Year 11s were a credit to the academy. 			
AC/15/2526	<p>Minutes of the last meeting Minutes were received and agreed. Actions – Chair wanted a date for the session behaviours and attitudes. NB and KD will get this scheduled [ACTION]</p> <p>LP is progressing with a new approach to recruit governors and will provide an update by the end of term.</p>	Carried Forward AC/70/2425	NB / KD	22/01/25
AC/16/2526	<p>SEND – Summary of discussion on SEND provision. <i>Q: Should SEND and PP be part of new governors' induction considering its significance and complexity?</i> A: NB is developing a new governors induction pack and will consider signposting to valuable SEND information but is conscious that knowledge on SEND needs to build as part of the governance learning curve.</p> <p>General Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governors praised the SEND in a Nutshell document for being robust, clear, transparent, and easy to understand and suggested appending the glossary of terms from the SEND Information Report. - Emphasis on greater prevalence of SEND and inclusion due to Ofsted's focus on inclusion. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TB told the committee the Trust will provide SEND information, which is helpful, but highlighted there are operational differences between Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, so always ask if there are differences in information from the trust and the school. <p>Communication Methods</p> <p><i>Q: Website language is complex; some parents may also have SEND. Are there better ways to communicate?</i></p> <p>A: AB has created a podcast for parents in an informal style (approx. 9 minutes) using AI tools this has been shared with TB as a potential starting point for accessible communication.</p> <p><i>Q: Do terms like ‘target’, ‘intervention’, ‘assess’ create positive impressions and do we get feedback from parents about communication?</i></p> <p>A: Parent voice was reviewed at last SEND session; feedback expected in coming months and will be shared with governors. Glossary included to explain terms.</p> <p>A: There has been a shift in communicating, now prioritising face-to-face and phone calls over emails for complex or sensitive discussions. Coffee mornings encourage positive engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first SEND session for Year 7 is scheduled for this evening, including a literacy intervention session for parents. <p><i>Q: Can the website be less corporate and more parent-friendly?</i></p> <p>A: Walton have limited control as it is managed centrally for corporate identity. TB has raised concerns with the Trust about irrelevant information.</p>			
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	<p>Inclusivity</p> <p><i>Q: How do we make the dining room more welcoming for SEND pupils?</i></p> <p>A: The nurture group is available in the hub every lunchtime with activities and staff support. This is a popular and inclusive environment.</p> <p>- Governors praised the SEND ID provision pathway.</p> <p><i>Q: Can students come off the SEND register?</i></p> <p>A: Yes. Students may move from monitoring (I code) to the register (K code) if they are receiving additional support. Removal occurs if needs are being met without additional support in place, but they can return if necessary.</p> <p><i>Q: How do we prevent off-rolling in SEND?</i></p> <p>A: This is a broader issue beyond SEND. WA tends to accept students refused elsewhere. Robust processes exist if WA is not the right setting.</p> <p>Hub Provision</p> <p>The Hub supports Years 7–9 with the aim being for them to transition into school for their GCSEs. It is such a valuable resource that the LA sometimes tries to name the hub as a setting, which it is not.</p> <p>Staff and Parent Engagement</p> <p>AB referenced an interesting question from an article – How do we deter staff from deterring parents? And shared that she feels WA is proactive in supporting parents and that teachers are fully on board.</p> <p>AB requested access to the accessibility client.</p>	Email the link to the accessibility client to AB.	TB	27/11/25
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	<p>TB confirmed it should be on the website and will send the link to AB. [ACTION]</p> <p>TB finished by informing governors that the SEND cohorts outcomes and progress are improving.</p>			
AC/17/2526	<p>Pupil Premium - Summary of Discussion</p> <p><i>Q: What percentage of PP students are service?</i> A: About 20 students in total.</p> <p>Funding Strategy</p> <p><i>Q: PP plan indicates funding is being used similarly to last year. Does internal data suggest these strategies are closing the gap?</i> A: Year-on-year, some strategies work well, but adjustments are needed for specific cohorts (e.g., targeted maths and English intervention for Year 11 due to COVID impact). A significant amount of funding is retrospectively allocated within policy. LO explained that nationally, the PP gap tends to widen over time, making it challenging for schools to close the gap between PP and non-PP students. The focus at WA is on narrowing the gap between WA PP and national PP which is demonstrated to be effective from the data.</p> <p><i>Q: Is spending allocated over a calendar year?</i> A: Yes.</p> <p>MH added context linking PP and SEND under the inclusion agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLT is working on quantifying barriers to inclusion (10 identified: PP, EAL, SEND, midyear admission, safeguarding, etc.). - Each of the 800+ students will receive a vulnerability score out of 10. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This initiative will launch at INSET to guide staff on using the data effectively. - Identified highly vulnerable students who might otherwise go unnoticed. - PP Proportion at WA is around 40% (national average is around 25%). - Local deprivation data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Two wards in the bottom 10% nationally. o One ward in the lowest 2% nationally for deprivation. - <u>Governors praised this work</u>, noting its value in identifying “lost” children early, especially those without high SEND or behaviour needs. <p>Community Support Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LO is starting a Christmas wrapping club and is seeking donations for small gifts. A letter has been shared that will go to local businesses and governors were asked to share with any contacts. - MH is organising a winter clothing bank for vulnerable students after Christmas. <p>Uniform Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MH confirmed current uniform meets new DfE constraints on branded items and cost. - WA aims to make uniform more affordable for all families. - KD met with Uniform Direct, which is more cost-effective than Trutex. - WA has reduced branding over the last 5 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Compulsory branded items: blazer, tie, PE top. o Optional branded items: shirt, jumper, additional PE items, kilt. - Additional supplier identified for the green shirt to give parents more choice. 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KD is confident that Walton is meeting the thresholds - There is a fully operational second-hand shop and PP students get uniform allocation if requested. 			
AC/18/2526	<p>Safeguarding - Summary of Discussion</p> <p>KD shared that the Notts audit that all DAT schools complete is currently a work in progress and it will be shared at the end of this half term.</p> <p><i>Q: is there anything that KD has any concerns about that she would like to share with the committee as DSL?</i></p> <p>A: All safeguarding is working well, team is as robust as it can be. KD will feed back student voice at the next meeting to provide more tangible evidence in relation to safeguarding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting processes remain strong: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Student voice and reporting process in place. o Open-door policy maintained. o Safeguarding assemblies delivered every half term. o Safeguarding covered in tutor time and curriculum. - DDSL is actively triaging concerns from students and staff, delegating appropriately. - Safeguarding provision at WA is considered a strength. <p><i>Q: AB (Safeguarding LINK) hasn't seen the SCR – is this a requirement of the role?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, it is a requirement to be assured the document exists and is up to date. SCR is highly confidential and will be shared face-to-face at the next LINK meeting.</p> <p><i>Q: Have all staff now read the KCSIE?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, all staff have read it. This is recorded on the SCR and can be confirmed at the next LINK meeting.</p>			

	<p><i>Q: Have all governors completed the annual safeguarding training?</i></p> <p>A: Some governors are outstanding.</p> <p>[ACTION] NB to chase up individuals after the meeting.</p> <p><i>Q: Has the school secured an outside counsellor for SEMH support?</i></p> <p>A: External counsellors require school funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A counsellor has been identified with a reasonable package. - Exploring PSPs (Pastoral Support Plans) via PRT (Pupil Reintegration Team, Lincolnshire) to bid for funding. - Aim: Broader student benefit beyond PSP cases. - Loss of in-house counsellor (previously 2 days/week) has created a gap; staff are finding creative solutions to support students quickly. <p><i>Q: Curriculum review focuses on secondary schools; potential changes in citizenship – impact?</i></p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic meeting held Monday on curriculum review. - Plan to tighten PD (Personal Development) delivery teams, linking pastoral and safeguarding teams for a joined-up approach. - Citizenship within PD was an Ofsted improvement area and is under close review. <p>KH: Difficulty articulating PD objectives/measures after recent link visit; keen to see outcomes of current work.</p> <p>KH: Concern about teacher wellbeing given high volume of vulnerable students;</p> <p><i>Q: How can progress around PD be evaluated?</i></p>	<p>Contact governors individual for outstanding mandatory training completion.</p>	<p>NB / All Govs</p>	<p>19/12/25</p>
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	<p>MH: New measures in curriculum review around PD and extracurricular activities (Powerful Learning/Powerful Knowledge).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five new categories will form performance measures for school profile. - Challenge: Non-statutory guidance makes building measures complex. 			
AC/19/2526	<p>Link Visits</p> <p>JH – conducted a site walk with KB. Report will be written up and shared. [ACTION]</p> <p>There are issues around fencing in relation to government guidelines. Waiting to see which category WA fits into around Martyn's Law which may also mean that management of events has to be handled differently.</p> <p>DM has a Post 16 link meeting later this morning and will share his report following the meeting. [ACTION]</p> <p>AB had to cancel her safeguarding link meeting with KD due to work commitments and will reschedule a Teams meeting with KD followed by a face to face to check the SCR. [ACTION]</p> <p>LP shared feedback from meeting with SE, TC and KH with a focus on fostering and building connections with local businesses in Grantham and identify where governors can lend a bit more support to the work that already underway. Looking to meet again in January to keep the energy and momentum up and address the next steps.</p> <p><i>Q: What is the anticipated value of Linked In?</i></p>	<p>Write up link visit report and share with NB</p> <p>Write up link visit report and share with NB</p> <p>Reschedule safeguarding link meeting and SCR visit.</p>	<p>JH</p> <p>DM</p> <p>AB</p>	<p>05/12/25</p> <p>05/12/25</p> <p>05/12/25</p>

	<p>A: The team already have lots of positive outreach with local business and Walton has good presence at local events. However, it is looking at how to gain valuable responses and traction from local businesses to talk about work experience and come into school and talk about job opportunities etc.</p> <p>KH It was a very good meeting, talking about careers but also links with Post 16.</p> <p>KH wants to book some time with MH and SB to redefine the definition of the link role for PD. [ACTION]</p> <p><i>Q: is there more context around the trip to Digger Land?</i> WA won a design competition and won a prize to go to Digger Land however financial constraints meant there was not the budget to pay for transportation, KH made a donation to enable them to attend.</p>	KH to arrange to meet with SB to look at this further.	KH	05/12/25
AC/20/2526	<p>Governance Action Plan All governors agreed to provide updates to the action plan. [ACTION]</p> <p>AB will look at the curriculum work alongside the Academy Improvement Plan and schedule some time with MH during the next term.</p> <p>It was agreed that James would pick up the GDPR link role alongside the H&S role with KB.</p>	All to review the action plan, provide updates on their areas and consider another meeting to drive this forward.	All Govs	22/01/25
AC/21/2526	<p>Complete report to Trustees Broader education piece and SEND and PP, the documentation and information has been very informative and enabled valuable questioning and hope that this continues.</p>			

	<p>Governors much prefer the style of having the information in advance and being able to prepare and ask questions as it enables a much better understanding.</p> <p>Senior leaders feel this format allows more opportunity to frame responses to the questions and fill in all the gaps.</p> <p>Timing of the SEND link meeting as a lead into the in-depth session was ideal.</p> <p>Feedback from Trustees following September meeting: The celebration of exam results and the success of student participation in external competitions, such as the Newark Showground engineering event, are commendable, Mental health and SEND efforts are valued, and the January follow-up on staffing is noted by the committee.</p>			
AC/22/2526	<p>Determine Confidentiality Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any confidential items discussed have been recorded separately. - There had been no Equality Act implications. 			
AC/23/2526	<p>Next meeting Thursday 22nd January at 07:30 am at Walton Academy</p> <p>All governors were reminded to come prepared with questions and discussion points having read any relevant detail beforehand.</p> <p>Closed at 09:04</p>			

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Signed by Chair: <i>Karin Hardy</i>	Date 08/10/2025
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