



**WYMONDHAM HIGH ACADEMY TRUST  
GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

**Minutes of a Board Meeting  
held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

Present:	Mr N Collins (M)	Dr R Cross	Mr M Heard	Mr J Robson	Mr P Wadlow
	Mr S Blease	Mr A Fehners	Mr A Hurst	Mr M Savage	Dr J Winpenny
	Mr R Boulton (M)	Mr J Gillett	Mr J Lansdell	Mr M Scharff	
In Attendance:	Mrs L Fox	Mr J Rockey	Mr J Dickson	Rev'd A Slater	Mrs V Dinwoodie

**1. Governance - Neil**

1.1. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

Apologies were received and accepted from Paula. Steve and Alex were also absent.

It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

None.

1.3. Link Governor – RE – this item was postponed re MAT decision and restructuring of GB.

1.4. Notice of AoB

Rodney advised of one item.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Julian referred to page 5 Personnel item re probationary period added to all staff contracts – this statement should exclude NQTs, who are employed under a separate contract. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the chair.

**3. Matters Arising – see summary action points report**

Julian asked whether the school would be involved in any further appeals re the Rugby club planning application.

Neil advised the hearing attended by Russell and himself resulted in the inspectors refusing any of the large housing developments. They had no further plans for appeal.

**4. Update on Sponsor Application**

Neil gave feedback on the meetings with the three Wymondham Primary Schools and the current status of our application to become a MAT.

The application has been submitted and acknowledged, however there will be no further action until after the election. Russell and he have met with the three primary school heads and chairs of governors.

The overriding reason for schools to convert should be to improve the outcomes for children in Wymondham. There would be financial advantages and being part of a larger body could help with the retention of staff as there would be greater opportunities for career paths. This needs to be balanced against the complexity and work involved in undertaking the conversion process.

Offers made to schools:

- Back office services
- Buying power
- Educational benefits
- Support with Leadership and Governance
- Full delegation of power if good or outstanding – most important or of concern at schools

\* Might consider offering preferred admissions at Y7 or Y12.

**Process** – receive approval as a Sponsor Academy, restructure and bring other academies (primaries have to convert individually into academies) into the MAT – a 4 or 5 year process.

Tim Coulson, the Regional School's Commissioner is visiting this week, and Gordon Boyd, Norfolk's Deputy for Education is visiting on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

### **Restructure**

4 – 6 Members of the Trust

7 – 11 Directors

Local GBs.

The structure is not likely to change until we are in a position to become a MAT with our first primary Academy ready to join us.

The size of our GB, currently 17, is very large and the DfE recommends a much smaller GB. Committees and meeting frequencies would be similar to the current schedule. The local GBs would feed into the Board of Directors.

Q. Mike H asked whether governors from the local GBs would sit on the Directors Board.

A. Neil replied that we could have sponsor governors to sit on local GBs, and they would sit on the Board of Directors.

Q. Jeff referred to the proposal to not intervene in the autonomy of the running of individual academies (if good or outstanding), which he supported, but questioned whether other models of governance had been investigated.

A. Neil advised that several models had been considered. The discussion with the new Head at Robert Kett focused on this aspect as she had first-hand experience of joining a MAT at her previous school where they had to relinquish control. A good or outstanding school should be able to self-govern. Neil advised that he would still be looking at other models.

### **Bringing in other academies**

We will bid for the new 4<sup>th</sup> primary school

The other 3 primaries may decide to convert and join us – all changing heads

Common themes of concern – Cluster experience and timing - all worried about a move now due to changes and disruption already taking place.

They liked the model and local aspect and would want to avoid the threat of an external Trust taking over.

They are curious rather than eager.

We may be approached by the DfE to take on other schools.

### **To do now**

Building up a service centre for back of school provision. The new contract with Old Buckenham for IT services is a start and is likely to be extended to include provision for the new Chapel Road School.

Restructuring of our GB. Reduce number to 12 from 17. Currently our Trust Members are all governors, DfE guidance is that most Members should not also be governors, neither should they be employed by the Academy.

We have too many committees and with reduced numbers we are struggling to make a quorum.

### **For discussion at the next board meeting 29<sup>th</sup> June**

- Restructuring GB
- Appoint Trust Members – non-governing
- Restructure committees and appoint members
  - *Resources* – finance, premises and personnel
  - *Teaching and Learning* – curriculum, standards
  - Audit
- Increase frequency of meetings to once a half term.

Neil asked governor to think about what role they would like to fill, member/trustee/governor.

There would be some natural loss to the GB as terms of office ended.

Q. Mark asked when the bid process for the new primary would take place.

A. Neil advised that it should have started in March as the school is due to open in September 2017.

Q. Mike H asked whether some of the work of the GB would be taken on at Trustee level.

A. Neil advised that the level of work currently undertaken by governors was likely to remain the same, with slightly longer or more frequent meetings.

Q. Mike H asked whether he envisaged a reduction in workload.

A. Neil replied that the workload for the GB would remain the same. With fewer committees there would be more governors sitting on each one, but reduced governor numbers would mean that an increase in workload was likely.

Steve suggested reviewing the ToR and working smarter. Neil replied that only small savings were likely to be made.

## 5. SLT's Report

*Russell* advised that further to the staffing changes listed there had been some addition staff changes in MFL and English. However, he was pleased to report that with the last chance for teaching resignations on the Friday of half term and no indication of any, the school will be fully staffed for September.

There has been a focus on exit interviews with completed questionnaires sent to the Chair of Personnel to monitor, with the committee reviewing these in batches each term.

Russell advised that he had completed a review of the AIP which was for discussion later in the meeting.

*Jonathan* advised that Teaching and Learning was the focus for CPD this year. Another staff survey is due again this term and results will be reported back to committee.

80% of staff judged the overall quality of T & L CPD worthwhile. The Summer term programme is available on GovernorHub. 91% of lessons are now judged as good or better. Following discussion with Jeff, an external review of this is planned.

Governors were asked to advise the clerk if they wanted to attend the staff CPD conference in June.

Support staff CPD – now included in Tuesday afternoon sessions and the June conference. Support team to be more engaged – working with Lyn Ottaway on this.

Whole staff training – CPD Mark achieved.

More use of Metro Central – resources on here instead of stored on the server or paper copies.

*Jeremy* advised that he had been busy with curriculum planning.

Options at the end of Y8, second year changed in response to new accountability measures. The focus has been on MFL this year. The number now stands at 93%. Students not taking a language are on the progress plus study programme. He reported that he was pleased to be able to keep the high percentage of students getting their first option choices. A high number of students are taking eBAC subjects – no major effect on other subjects.

Y12 admissions - 315 acceptances of offers made (5 less than last year). Conversion rates are very difficult to judge, there has been a dramatic change in conversion rates over the years making it very challenging to predict final admission numbers now. The curriculum profile of sixth form is changing with Maths and Science only slightly ahead now.

Jeremy reported that he had spent a lot of time with John Robson reviewing curriculum provision. They met again today looking at financial concerns over curriculum costs. Savings have been made through collapsed teaching sets in Y13. Savings working through KS4 with less option groups. Saved 2.2 FTE teachers and teachers have been asked to teach an extra period per fortnight. More measures and planning for next year. He thanked John for his time and input.

Life after Levels – Jeremy will make a full report to Standards next week. KS3 levels have disappeared, combined with new specifications and ways in which attainment is reported on. This is an opportunity to change the way we track the progress of students using a new system to ensure students make expected progress based on a baseline figure set at KS2.

*Andrew* – included in his report full details of the safeguarding questionnaire responses. The same questionnaire will be sent out again later this term following staff training. We should then be able to report that we are outstanding at safeguarding. We now have a large team of staff who are all safeguarding trained.

Neil reminded governors not to get involved in any safeguarding issue, but to immediately pass on any concerns or reported concerns directly to Andrew.

Russell went through the main points of the finance report – small change in Finance staffing. Looking to fill at the end of the consultation period.

The catering tender has gone out. Only two responses from the 6 invited. More academies are taking this in-house and we may have to consider this option.

IT is going well with Kevin Sait just returned from representing us at Microsoft in American. Kevin and two students were funded to attend a conference in Seattle.

Risk management – level raised slightly with the staffing situation in finance. This is a temporary increase which will be resolved after the consultation.

Funding has been secured to complete the window replacement programme. This success bid was via our bid writing company. A large area of roofing has been replaced over technology.

Q. Jeff asked whether we had publicised our IT successes.

A. Russell replied that so far it had only been in-house, however articles will be sent off. We are part of a steering group with other Microsoft Academies. Microsoft is going to re-launch the scheme and we are like to be paid a retainer fee. Russell acknowledged that we could do more in terms of publicising this.

Q. John W asked how confident the school was that the current gap in the finance team was covered in the short term.

A. Russell advised that this had been a point of discussion at the recent Audit meeting. The two finance assistants have taken on extra responsibilities and an external person has been brought in to cover the low level administrative tasks. After the consultation period ends the Personnel committee will meet to consider responses and make the decision about the restructure proposal. Appointments will take place as soon as possible after this date.

Q. Neil asked where the £20K extra funding from NCC came from.

A. Jonathan advised that this was extra LAC funding that NCC was holding but had to be claimed before the end of the financial year. We made a successful bid based on specific provision for individual LAC students and the money is ring fenced for this.

Q. Steve asked whether there was any reasons why our bid for the south block repairs was unsuccessful as it was a health and safety issue.

A. Russell advised that schools are only allowed to put two bids in a year for this funding and are usually only successful with one. Bids are judged on the level of need and against all other schools. We will re submit our bid next year and will probably be successful. We will, however, look at using another bid writer.

*Victoria* - Data monitoring and accountability – the focus has been on group progress and how to manage data, ensuring that departments are aware of how they are progressing. The use of new software has helped us to manipulate data and predict and measure the performance of departments.

We need more current data to help intervention planning throughout the year and the RACs are looking at this now.

Current performance grades and predicted grades should be more accurate now and will be good for comparisons in September.

Work scrutinies are taking place across all departments.

Interventions – on-going process.

Support has been put in place for students who have planned not to go to university, with a focus on supporting them and looking at career paths.

Q. Rodney advised that he had recently attended a seminar at the John Innes Institute and we were not represented there.

A. Victoria replied that we had strong links with the John Innes and she would check why our sixth form had not attended.

Neil suggested that governors read through Sarah's report and submit any questions via the clerk.

Russell raised a few points from the report. Attendance remained a priority and the RACs have also had a focus on this. The Portal – students were becoming too comfortable and this was under review. Lexia has had a positive effect on students and a full evaluation of the programme is currently underway.

Q. Peter asked what cover was being arranged from September for the SENDCO post with Sarah leaving and Charlotte on Maternity leave.

A. Russell advised that we must have a nominated teacher for this period within school. He has a meeting with Charlotte tomorrow to discuss options. Pauline is deputy SENDCO and has all the skills and experience but cannot take on the role as she is not a qualified teacher.

Q. Julian referred to G: 3. The Portal and expressed concerns about a TA managing and running the portal on her own.

A. Jonathan advised that he had met with Sarah last week to discuss this matter and she stated that the TA was the best person for the job. The School Counsellor is also based there. The plan for September is to continue with the current situation but to have another TA allocated at all time to the Portal. The aim is also to reduce the number of students to 6/8 instead of 10/12. Training needs will also be looked at.

Q. Julian added that governors had also expressed concerns about the workload of the School Counsellor.

A. Russell advised that he had submitted a report for discussion tonight.

Q. Mike H asked how the CPD programme would be reinvigorated.

A. Jonathan replied that the next CPD conference would allow more independence for staff, with individual projects to undertake. He also wanted to give a much higher profile in school for the CPD leaders.

Q. Mike H asked how our relationship was with the Cluster now.

A. Russell replied that it was limited to the funding of our SEN pupils presently and we have a good working relationship. On the recent visits to the three primary schools we also looked at how we might work together going forward with the new heads. They are looking for opportunities to work together. Relationships are improving. Neil added that he had met with the Chair of the Cluster and the Cluster Coordinator.

## **6. Strategic Plan and Outline of AIP 2015/16**

Russell advised that before planning for next year he had undertaken a review of current progress against the AIP and wanted to gauge the feelings of governors.

Teaching and Learning and the improvement of CPD is now entrenched in what we do. PM improved last year but can be made even more robust. Great colleagues have been identified and should have representation at SLT meetings. An external view of T&L is now required and he will move forward on this.

Restructuring of the sixth form was hugely successful due to the appointment of Victoria, who has her own action plan and this will be incorporated into next year's AIP. John and Steve worked with her over the last year.

Attendance – likely to keep to the same 96% target; currently running at just over 95%. The system is now robust and we now need to work with groups of students i.e. Y10 girls.

Data flows – lots of work already achieved. Currently working with a new programme, Power Pivit, which will transform the way we work. Second strand to this is a new programme to monitor spend and the impact of pupil premium.

Lexia is now fully integrated with 158 students using it, further development of the programme is required.

Facilities – we will continue to bid for funding.

Increasing work with groups and achievement of all young people.

Media strategy – we need to be stronger. Adrian has had a huge impact on some areas. Focus on social media and increasing and improving press coverage.

MATS should form part of what we are doing. Russell said he would like to hear the views of governors tonight or via the clerk. The SLT are meeting off-site the week before half term to develop these areas.

Neil commented that good progress had been made against the AIP with good monitoring throughout the year via committees. The improvement in T & L was an excellent achievement. He proposed writing a joint letter to parents from the GB and the school informing them of the improvements and advances made through the CPD programme this year.

John W suggested waiting until after the external review for validation before doing this. This was agreed.

Neil said that looking forward he would like to see the continued momentum of CPD; success of business aspects; seeking out outstanding practice from other schools and involvement of middle leaders in this.

Mark suggested looking at other ways of developing engagement with parents. He suggested considering forming parent forums to get more ownership from parents.

Russell supported this and looking for new ways to improve communications and further engage parents.

Jeff commented that Jonathan had run a parental survey that fed into a curriculum meetings and had received 140 responses.

Mike H advised that a key question to parents at Parent Evenings is around feedback and communication.

Responses have been that the information provided on Go4Schools is good, however there may be a lack of understanding on some of the data.

## **7. Report on School Counsellor Service and Future Provision**

Russell advised that provision had been reduced from 1.2 FTE to .8 FTE two years ago. Costs are detailed in the report as are the number of referrals. There is a large workload and mental health issues feature highly particularly with girls. The School Counsellor also works with parents; which was initial part of her role. However, due to her workload, her work may not be integrate into the school as we would like i.e. with HoH and Andrew. The school is lucky to have a Counsellor; we could use more time, but we have not budgeted for this and money would have to come from another source.

Q. Peter asked why the role was .8 FTE.

A. Russell replied that it was at her request.

Q. Peter asked whether anyone was employed in a similar role by the Cluster.

A. Russell advised that the Cluster pays money to the Loxley School and they can provide a service but it is external to the school. Our SC is the initial contact before signposting other services. CAMHS is next port of call, but this service is severely under resourced as well.

There is a critical amount of time to be effective, and based on conversations with the SC and Sarah, 1.5 FTE would enable us to also support the parents to support their child.

Q. Julian asked whether the SC is being used effectively and supported within the school; should we consider her work in relation to a group of students ie 50 rather than an individual service.

Steve suggested that as this was an urgent requirement and costs were known we should take this to be an opportunity for fundraising.

Q. Mike H asked whether we could provide more administrative support for the SC.

A. Russell said he would look into this. Andrew added that confidentiality may be an issue.

John R suggested that if governors thought this provision was essential it should be part of the curriculum provision and should be reviewed to find the £25k for this.

Neil agreed that they had a desire to support the school in funding this provision and asked the school to look at funding options.

**Action: Russell**

Russell commented that the pupil premium does allow for a counselling service. He said he would try to identify income strands, however he warned the he may need to look at cutting other budgets to fund this service.

Mark suggested developing into a bigger service which if then sold to other schools could become self-funding.

Russell said that he would add this to next year's AIP.

Action: Russell

John R suggested the need for a sharper focus on the evaluation of its impact if a bigger investment were to be made. Victoria added that small group work is also being looked at.

Jeff suggested trying to get some qualified voluntary support, he has some contacts and will investigate this aspect.

**Action: Jeff**

Neil asked that the next curriculum meeting follow up on this.

**Action: Clerk to add as an Agenda item for curriculum meeting**

## 8. Committee Reports

- 1.1. *Chairs* – Neil advised that the meetings were primarily planning sessions.
- 1.2. *Audit* – Mark reported that discussions were had on key areas of concern including the risk area in finance. Site access and security was again under discussion. The external audit of H&S was useful.
- 1.3. *Finance* – Mike H reported that they had reviewed purchasing decisions and taken action on tightening up procedures, the monthly budget was reviewed, the finance manager issue was discussed in relation to the management of the situation.
- 1.4. *Learning, Teaching & Curriculum* – Jeff report a good session with middle managers in. One outcome for staff of the CPD sessions was more preparation required for lessons. Staff reported that learning walks were good providing immediate feedback was given in a positive way and then it was well received. The shorter SLT visits and were commented on as staff received less feedback and actually miss that feedback.
- 1.5. *Personnel* – Julian reported on an HR services review that was underway with concern about this provision. Russell advised that HR were coming in this week to meet with Julie. It is an agenda item for the next meeting. A request was made and agreed for the support staff holiday provision timing to be rationalised for financial purposes. Staff handbook from HR was considered but governors were unhappy with the tone of the document. Review of policies and monitoring process was undertaken.
- 1.6. *Premises & Community* – Mike S reported that the new build extension works planning continued. Bids were discussed. Social media aspect discussed and works re fire risks. Russell added that the design was still to be finalised on the 4 classroom block, site surveys have taken place. Mike S asked for input into the design, which Russell agreed to.
- 1.7. *Standards* – John W advised that they had reviewed the destination of school leavers with the majority going on to further education. Attendance was reviewed, presently at 95% and meeting the Government's target. Figures are published on GovernorHub weekly. Raise on Line information was reviewed looking at attainment and expected progress. Sixth form ALPS data was also reviewed.

*Jeff left the meeting at this point.*

Q. Rodney noted that in Physics 10 students were ungraded, he asked whether students had made wrong choices in selecting their subjects.

A. Victoria replied that in some cases she thought they had, however, the department had experienced a lot of changes this year. A new deputy head of department has been appointed who is a physicist which will help. The students did receive a lot of support this year.

Q. Mike H asked whether there were any rumours about national issues around changes to grade boundaries this year.

A. Jonathan replied that he hadn't heard anything.

## 9. Policy Statements for Ratification

**1.8. SEND Information Report** – this is standard document, based on a template from County. Parents, staff and students have reviewed.

Rodney asked whether we had a high or low level of SEN. Peter replied that although it stands at 10.5% the level of need could be quite wide ranging. Russell advised that we get some pupil specific funding linked to TA provision. Neil checked on line and against other schools in the County we are fairly low for SEN.

**The statement was approved by all.**

## 10. Confidential Item – Staffing Restructure

*Victoria and Jeremy left the meeting at this point.*

Russell advised that the Personnel subcommittee had instructed him to enter into a period of consultation around the restructuring of the Business Administration of the Academy. The Finance Director and Director of Enterprise and Community roles cannot be supported financially. It is proposed to merge them into one Strategic Business Manager role. This was originally one role, split by Victoria Musgrave when the school had more money. At the start of the consultation period the Finance Manager role became vacant. The 4 week consultation period started just before Easter (not including the holiday). All staff have access to the restructuring documents. 4 submissions have been received to date and shared with the chair of personnel and chair of governors. Follow up documents have been supplied to one person.

The Personnel committee will review this at their next meeting and decide on the way forward.

Neil added that he had heard good arguments for and against and suggested that the decision was finely balanced.

Q. Mark asked whether the new JD had been designed.

A. Russell replied that it had been and that anyone can see this on request. The consultation document will be put on GovernorHub.

**Action: Clerk.**

**11. Any Other Business**

Rodney advised that he would be standing down from the GB at the end of the academic year after 23 years' service as a Governor. Neil thanked Rodney for his services over his many years as a governor.

**12. Items Deemed Confidential**

**None.**

**13. Date of the Next Meeting – Monday 29th June 2015**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm