

# HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on  
Monday 1 March 2021 at 5.30pm, via Zoom

**Present**

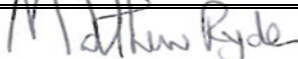
**Governors:**

Mr Matthew Ryder (MR) - Chair of Governors  
Mr Mark Coles (MC) - Vice Chair of Governors  
Mr Mark Patterson (MJP) - Principal/Governor  
Mr John Brown (JB) - Foundation Governor  
Mr Paul Askew (PA) - Co-opted Governor  
Mr Alan Winchcombe (AW) - Co-opted Governor  
Mrs Vicky McGregor (VM) - Co-opted Governor  
Mrs Emma Leach (EL) - Parent Governor  
Mr Mike Shaw (MS) - Parent Governor  
Mr Chris Woodbury (CW) – Staff Governor  
Mr Brad Panther (BP) – Staff Governor

**In attendance:**

Miss Anna Nightingale (AN) - Vice Principal  
Mr Simon Cooke (SAC) - Vice Principal  
Mrs Kate Tandy (KMT) - Vice Principal  
Mrs Vicky Rix (VKR) – Head of Sixth Form  
Ms Becky Palmer (BP) – Lead of PSHCE  
Mrs Debbie Warner (DW) - Clerk to the Governors

<b>1. Apologies for absence</b>	
	There were none.
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	
	There were no new declarations of interest.
<b>3. Elections/Resignations/Vacancies</b>	
	The Chair welcomed Chris Woodbury as staff governor to the local governing body.
<b>4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held 7 December 2020</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting were considered to be an accurate account of proceedings. Action points from the last meeting were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair of governors to write a note to thanks to Steve Fidler – <i>completed (Chair)</i></li> <li>- LGB self-evaluation – <i>to be discussed in agenda point 6.11 (MJP)</i></li> <li>- Add student survey evaluation to the next LGB meeting – <i>to be discussed in agenda point 6.6 (KMT)</i></li> <li>- Update against key points in quality of teaching presentation – <i>to be discussed in agenda point 6.8 (SAC)</i></li> <li>- Equality policy to be presented for approval at next meeting – <i>to be discussed in agenda point 7.2 (MJP)</i></li> </ul>
<b>5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</b>	
	All other matters are included in the agenda.
<b>6. To ensure accountability of the SLT for the educational performance of the school</b>	
	<p><b>6.1 To receive the Principal’s report (MJP)</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked The Principal for his report which had been made available to governors prior to the meeting. The Principal summarised the key points contained in the report. <u>COVID-19 Testing</u>: The Principal was able to confirm that the testing process is in place ready for the school’s reopening. <u>Remote Learning</u>: SAC has been leading on this provision during lockdown and analysis of the survey will be discussed in agenda point 6.6. SAC added that much of the CPD has been focused around remote learning which has been a massive learning curve for teachers. <u>Curriculum update and Y11 and Y13 predictions</u>: AN advised governors that Teacher Assessed Grades will replace formal exams for 2021. AN was pleased with the decision and is confident that the school will be able to repeat the robust process that took place last year. <u>Ofsted</u>: The Principal advised governors that</p>

Signed: 

Date: 17/05/2021

Ofsted is likely to recommence inspections from the beginning of the summer term. He did not think the school would be a high priority but, nevertheless, planning has commenced to ensure readiness. He was able to assure governors that the current school data suggests reflects a “good” grading and, if this is the case, the school could expect to receive a section 8 inspection. The Principal aims to work with governors to ensure they are ready for a possible inspection in the summer term. Digital strategy: The Principal advised governors of the progress that had been made in this area and that the use of Microsoft Teams is being used effectively to deliver live lessons. Attendance and admission numbers: Standing items that have been addressed in the report.

**Challenge/questioning:**

- A governor remarked that the remote learning provision looked impressive in comparison to the earlier survey where parents were more critical; it was good to see that parents have been reflective of the improvements.
- A governor remarked that if the school is in the “good” category, how can the school gauge *how good* it is.
- The Principal acknowledged differences within the “good” category and his judgement of the school is currently a “securely good”. His only concern would be around the short KS3 curriculum, Sixth Form (based on the previous inspection) and the disadvantaged gap but other areas of the school evidence real strengths.
- A governor asked if the LGB could receive a financial report to be satisfied of the financial stability of the school going forward.
- Another governor remarked that, although the LGB was now operating under a different structure, it was still important to be focused on financial issues.
- Another governor added that, with the Academy taking top slice, the LGB would like to ensure the school receives good value for money.
- The Principal assured governors that he meets regularly with the Trust’s Finance Director and will request a report to present to governors at the next meeting.
- A governor enquired on the progress of Google Classroom which was previously under consideration.
- The Principal acknowledged that this was the preferred platform in the Autumn term but that it was not sensible for the school, as it entered into lockdown, to switch to a platform that was not generally used by staff. Furthermore, The Principal was pleased to confirm that much progress has been made with Microsoft Teams and staff were delivering an excellent remote learning provision to students.

The Chair thanked The Principal for his detailed report and commended the school for the quality of remote learning and the focus on staff and student well-being during this challenging time.

**ACTION: FINANCIAL REPORT TO BE PRESENTED TO GOVERNORS AT NEXT MEETING - MJP**

**6.2 To receive an update on PSHCE/approve RSE Policy (BP)**

RSE and personal development is statutory to the curriculum and has been adapted and improved to take account of remote learning. BP added that the first part of the consultation requirement of statutory guidance has taken place and a survey was carried out in the Autumn term on topics for inclusion in the curriculum; this received very positive feedback from parents. BP informed governors that the next stage of the parent consultation is approval of the policy, which has been shared with governors prior to the meeting. Key points contained in the policy are issues around diversity, inclusion and same sex relationships. BP was pleased to report that diversity is already well embedded in the school’s ethos and is delivered in lessons.

**Challenge/Questioning:**

- A governor commended BP on the parent leaflet which he thought was very comprehensive and reflected the aims of the PSHCE curriculum very clearly.
- A governor was pleased to see that inclusivity and diversity is a focus and links in well with the ethos of the school.

**ACTION: GOVERNOR TO FEEDBACK ON RSE POLICY BY 14/03/21 + RECIRCULATE FOR APPROVAL - BP**

*BP left the meeting at this point.*

**6.3 To receive an update on Sixth Form (VKR)**

The Chair welcomed Vicky Rix, recently appointed as Head of Sixth Form, to the LGB meeting.

Students/Attendance: Currently Sixth form has 200 students in Year 12 and Year 13 currently have 178 students. VKR was able to add that attendance is generally good, taking the pandemic into consideration. Attendance during remote lessons has been impressive and the Sixth Form team have made contact with any student who has not engaged in online lessons. Once school reopens, any gaps in learning will be assessed. Year 13 completed a set of Mock exams before Christmas which revealed students, with ability to reach higher grades, were hitting mid-range only and this is an area that the Sixth Form team and Heads of Year are working on. Additionally, in Year 12, certain subjects are causing concern on ALPs grades. Admissions: The Sixth Form has currently received 204 internal applications, 122 external applications and awarded 114 internal conditional offers and 64 external conditional offers. Interviews of students will be taking place next week for borderline students. Plans and visions: VKR added that, due to the pandemic, she has experienced some delays in embedding her planned changes. However, she felt that the ethos of Sixth Form has now sharpened up and study habits have improved. There has also been a significant improvement in expectations both from and of the staff. A large enrichment programme for students has been introduced and VKR aims to work with BP to extend PSHCE into the Sixth Form.

#### Challenge/Questioning:

- A governor noted that the Sixth Form did not perform well across subjects in the last Ofsted inspection and asked how VKR will be able to demonstrate improvements going on in this area?
- VKR confirmed that she is currently working with the Heads of Faculty to implement surgeries and interventions for the subjects that are causing concern.
- A governor asked what the capacity is for the Sixth Form.
- Over 450 is where the Sixth Form would begin to make a profit.
- A governor raised concern for the well-being of this age group who are likely to be most affected by the pandemic.
- VKR advised governors that this has been evidenced by the number of students who contacted the school during lockdown. Currently, well-being is a focus and the Sixth Form team have supportive measures in place.
- A governor enquired about career development for students and if the school is still doing this.
- VKR added that the current UCAS cycle is coming to an end. VKR is working closely with the Head of CIEAG to ensure careers work dovetails into that of the Sixth Form to offer CIEAG packages to students. VKR added that some students have been able to sign up to virtual work experience.
- A governor asked if the school is in contact with the government's Kick Start Scheme.
- VKR will check this is happening. Additionally, VKR would like to run Interview mornings and will invite governors to form part of a panel to provide valuable experience for students.
- A governor noted how difficult it had been for Sixth Form students who have missed out on opportunities and celebrations.
- VKR advised governors that the Sixth Form team are aware of this and are looking at some initiatives and celebratory possibilities.
- The Chair thanked VKR for her report and acknowledged the valuable working going on in this area.

**ACTION: INVITE GOVERNORS TO FORM PART OF PANEL FOR SIXTH FORM INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE - VKR**

#### **6.4 To receive School Development Plan and Recovery Plan 2020-21 (MJP)**

MJP provided an update on progress on the school's priorities. Focus has been on remote teaching due to the pandemic and therefore progress on quality of teaching and learning has been hindered. The Principal informed governors that behaviour is one of the areas that must improve in order to be judged outstanding and, although behaviour has improved, there is still further work to be done in this area. He added that mental health and well-being are strengths in the school. He added that staff turnover is currently very low.

#### Challenge/Questioning:

- A governor asked if quality of teaching for remote learning is being monitored. SAC informed governors that development of pedagogy has happened at department level and a significant amount of time has been spent on how they can deliver the HAT more effectively. He added that excellent progress has been made in the use of remote learning.
- MJP added that KPIs currently meet the needs for Hinchingsbrooke School and takes into account the Ofsted handbook. Languages will now be a core subject in response to Ofsted direction which will

increase uptake of students taking Ebacc. He added that there will be a minority of students where a language will not be appropriate and this will be determined in consultation with the SEND team.

- A governor asked about the variety of foreign languages on offer at the school.
- French or Spanish will be available in KS4. The school will also try to accommodate students with a wish to do 2 languages.
- In order to track improvements in the Sixth Form, a governor asked if a further governor visit should be arranged.
- It was agreed that a Sixth Form visit should be arranged.
- A governor agreed progress has been made but has been slow. Tangible evidence to support the progress being made needs to be demonstrated.

The Chair acknowledged that a lot of progress has been made on the plan despite the setbacks.

#### **ACTION: SIXTH FORM GOVERNOR VISIT TO BE ARRANGED - SAC**

#### **6.5 To receive a Behaviour/Pastoral update (KMT)**

6.5.1 Exclusions and Blue Room Report: Exclusion and Blue Room figures are broadly in line with previous years.

6.5.2 Behaviour & Pastoral Report: KMT agreed that behaviour is good but not yet outstanding and students need to be more self-regulating. Behaviour in lessons is good and continues to improve with most behaviour issues associated around social and break time. Antibullying Club has been re-established and a number of students have completed training to act as ambassadors to listen and support students.

#### **6.6 To receive Student Survey evaluation**

KMT informed governors that she was delighted with results of the survey which confirmed that parents are very happy in terms of the remote learning provision. Barriers to learning revolved round technical issues but the school was quick to react to supply technology to eligible students. Anxiety and lack of motivation amongst students has led to an increase in calls home to check in on students.

#### **Challenge/Questioning:**

- A governor acknowledged that the results from the survey were good but the school could consider an anonymous helpline for both students and staff.
- KMT was able to advise governors that the school works with the Education Foundation and work has been done, and continues, in promoting the use of apps and online services.

#### **6.7 To receive an update on progress of key pupil groups: Disadvantaged/SEND (AN)**

AN informed governors that, since lockdown, the gap between disadvantaged and the rest of the cohort has unfortunately widened. However, this is a national picture. Engagement in remote learning was significantly down on the rest of the cohort. The areas representing a challenge to these students are reading speed; vocabulary deficit; low self-esteem; low aspiration. Interventions are in place to cover all these areas. The literacy team are working on phonics training and reading projects have been implemented. Books have also been circulated to these students linking to World Book Day. Students across all year groups have been identified and will have access to a coach. Mike Shaw, link governor for Pupil Premium, had recently met with AN and CN to discuss how he can support the development of some of the schemes: mentoring programme; holiday club; national tutor programme; students' night club. Additionally, there will be a workshop over Easter as well as other initiatives which are being considered.

#### **6.8 To receive an update on Remote Learning (SAC)**

SAC informed governors that, during the first lockdown, remote learning was delivered through Doodle but there was an expectation of live teaching from parents. He added that a lot of progress has been made since then and staff have progressed and deliver effective live lessons. Blended learning was also received positively by parents. He added that the school has worked swiftly in facilitating laptops for students.

#### **Challenge/Questioning:**

- A governor added that it was her view, as a parent, that there was a marked difference in provision between the 2 lockdowns.
- A governor added that there is a risk of fatigue amongst teachers around remote learning and this should be monitored.

**6.8.1 T&L Monitoring:** SAC advised governors that he has continued to populate the monitoring document for governors to gauge the progress that has been made. He updated governors with the results from the Autumn 1 term learning walks which were compared against the HAB and learning walks in Autumn 2, which focused on HAT (features 1-3). He added that certain departments were identified as strong in HAT features. Drop in information has also been disclosed to governors. RWAV questionnaire is now delivered through lessons rather than during tutor times and the results from the Autumn term are very encouraging. Governors were happy with the way the information was presented and pleased to see progress has been made in these areas.

**Challenge/Questioning:**

- **A governor asked about the terminology used in the document and how assessment is quantified: is it just opinion or a measured response to observations?**
- **SAC explained that it was an intention to move away from gradings but for TLR holders to work within the categories in order to give consistent feedback.**
- **A governor asked what improvements are being made and how the impact is being measured.**
- **SAC explained that this is done through CPD and a peer observation program. Colleagues who are experts in their field share their knowledge with less experienced staff through teaching observations.**
- **A governor remarked that, given an earlier discussion around the Sixth Form, is there scope of doing a snap shot across these measures for a more focused approach.**
- **AN advised governors that there are discussions taking place with VKR in this regard.**

**6.9 To receive a Safeguarding update (KMT)**

KMT updated governors on a safeguarding report prepared by Tony Heath (DSL). Welfare checks have taken place with the most vulnerable students and the Student Services team are working with them. Continuation through lockdown of VECs meetings has helped to prioritise and tackle individual students. A Home Visits policy has been implemented to allow visits to take place during lockdown. MyConcern has recorded a significant amount of concern around students' anxiety and well-being with students feeling a sense of social isolation. Additionally, there have a number of students who are dealing with bereavement. Ironically, a few students have preferred working from home and anxiety has been around returning to school. The school counsellor is working with a number of these students.

**Challenge/Questioning:**

- **A governor asked if there are escalation points for students who have not attended remote learning lessons; what is the plan?**
- **KMT was able to advise governors that attendance is monitored and the Year teams make contact with students and families by email and phone calls home. Additionally, laptops have been issued where access to a digital device has been a barrier and, in a small number of cases, students have been invited to attend the key worker and vulnerable school. A very small number of students have persistently refused to engage and work is ongoing with these families.**

**6.10 To review schedule of governor visits (MJP)**

It was agreed by governors that a curriculum visit should be carried out in the summer term, subject to Government restrictions.

**ACTION: DATES TO BE EMAILED TO GOVERNORS FOR CURRICULUM VISIT - SAC**

**6.11 To discuss LGB self-evaluation/effectiveness (MJP)**

It was mooted by a governor at the last meeting that a self-evaluation should be performed to reflect on current practice and analyse the effectiveness of the LGB. MJP provided an example template together with up to date questions, based on 20 key questions for governors, for consideration. Governors thought the framework was good and a self-evaluation will be progressed at the next LGB meeting for completion by the July LGB meeting.

**ACTION: AGENDA SELF EVALUATION AT MAY LGB MEETING – CLERK**

<b>7.</b>	<b>Approval of policies</b>
	<p><b>7.1 Drugs Policy (KMT)</b> There were no changes to this policy. Governors agreed that it was fit for purpose and approved the policy.</p> <p><b>7.2 Equality Policy (MJP)</b> This policy has received input from the Trust and from the school's Diversity Champion in order to bring the existing policy up to date and more relevant. Additionally, the school's equality objectives have been added to the appendix of the policy. Governors thought the policy reflected the school's ethos well and were happy to approve the policy. The Chair acknowledged the significant amount of work that had been done to improve the policy and asked The Principal to relay his thanks on behalf of the LGB to the members of staff involved.</p> <p><b>ACTION: RELAY LGB THANKS TO STAFF FOR WORK ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE EQUALITY POLICY - MJP</b></p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
	None.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
	17/05/2021 – 5.30 pm

Meeting closed at 7.58pm