

Minutes of a Governing Body meeting of Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy on Wednesday 14 July 2021 at 5.30pm

Governors Present: Chris Smith (Chair), Andrew Fowler (Principal), Katie Barron, Andrew Chanse, Guy Currey, Cllr Sheila Gallagher, Joel Greenwell, Dr Jane Halpin, Alison Logan, Heather McClean, Elena Ovington, Kevin Thompson

Others Present: Joe Dicocco (Observer, Deputy Principal), Albert Leaf (Observer, Member), Caroline Mathias (Observer, Member), Alex Rayner (Observer, Assistant Principal)

Clerk: Kim Ashford

The meeting started at 5.40pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

- Apologies were received from Louise Doran, Claire Godfrey and James Pedlingham. Consent was given for their absence.

2. Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

- There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last Governing Body meeting held on Wednesday 10 March 2021

3.1 Approval of the minutes

- Governors received the minutes of the last Governing Body meeting on Wednesday 10 March 2021, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting. The minutes were **approved** as a correct record.

3.2 Matters arising

- There were no matters arising.

4. Governing Body

4.1 Governing Body membership and vacancies

- Governors received the Governing Body membership and vacancies report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

4.1.1 Governors **noted** the appointment by Members of Louise Doran to a 4-year term of office from 25 June 2021 to 24 June 2025.

4.1.2 Governors **noted** the resignation of Mark Surtees as Staff Governor, effective 1 July 2021.

- The Chair welcomed Katie Barron to the Governing Body as Staff Governor, replacing Mark Surtees.
- The Chair thanked Jayne Hooker for the service and support she has provided to the Governing Body as Parent Governor, from November 2018 to her recent resignation in July 2021.
- The Chair thanked Elena Ovington for the service and support she has provided to the Governing Body as Member Appointed Governor, from May 2020 to date. Today is Elena's last meeting as member of the Governing Body. Elena resigned as a Governor at the end of the meeting.
- It was noted that there are now 2 vacancies on the Governing Body. Potential candidates will be considered in terms of any skills gaps that need to be filled.

4.2 Governing Body meeting attendance

- Governors received and noted the Governing Body meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

4.3 Governor training and development

- Governors received the Governor training and development report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- The Chair asked that Governors email the details of any training they have undertaken to the Chair and the Clerk, so that this can be recorded. **Action: Governors.**

4.4 Link Governor roles and visit reports

- Governors received the Link Governor roles list and visit reports 4.4.1, 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 (listed below), as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting:

4.4.1 Behaviour – Link visit with Dave Cave by Chris Smith & Claire Godfrey

4.4.2 CPD/Staff Development – Link visit with Louise Ford by Joel Greenwell

4.4.3 Attainment in Reading at Year 7 – Link visit with Kate Kendall by Heather McClean

4.4.4 Academy Website – verbal update from Andrew Chanse

- Andrew Chanse stated that there has been progress with the

website, and advised that there is a document on the NGA website that is very helpful in providing guidance as to what needs to be included on the school website to ensure compliance.

- Andrew explained that the school was almost compliant across all areas, and that Academy staff are currently working on the areas that need attention.
- Andrew assured Governors that there were no areas that are a cause for concern.
- It was **agreed** that Andrew would liaise with the Principal to agree deadlines for completion of each section of the website that still needed attention, and to RAG rate the work that remained to be done. **Action: Principal, Andrew Chanse.**

5 Committees

5.1 Committee membership

- Governors received the Committee membership report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that Guy Currey would be nominated as Chair of the Board at the first meeting of the Full Governing Body in September 2021, in succession to Chris Smith.
- A new Chair for the Academy Management Committee will need to be appointed, and discussions on this matter will take place over the Summer. Action: **Chair and Governors.**

5.2 Committee meeting attendance

- Governors received and noted the Committee meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

5.3 Committee meeting minutes

- Governors received and noted the following Committee meeting minutes, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
 - Student Progress Committee, 19 May 2021
 - Academy Management Committee, 16 June 2021

6 Budget 2021/2022

6.1 Financial Advice and Support Report

- 6.1 To review and approve a revised budget the 2021/22 academic year.

To note – There have been significant amendments to the draft budget approved by the Academy Management Committee on 16 June 2021 and so Governors are required to review and approve a revised budget.

- Since the draft budget was approved at the Academy Management Committee on 16 June 2021, it was noted that the in-year surplus has risen by £150,000 and is now £343,000.
- There has been less opportunity to spend money during the pandemic, resulting in significant cost savings, including savings on the £50,000 budgeted for supply costs.
- The school gained £120,000 from the teachers' pension grant, which was not included in forecast income. This is due to the 3 year pay deal, where the school is paid to the end of the financial year rather than the fiscal year.
- There is now a balanced budget of £15,000 on the restricted funds.
- Governors **approved** the revised budget.

7 Principal's Appraisal and Personal Development

7.1 To note that the Principal's mid-term appraisal has taken place

- It was noted that the Principal's mid-term appraisal has taken place. It is clear that good progress is being made by the Principal. The Principal will meet with the SIP, the Chair and two Vice Chairs of Governors in the Autumn term.

7.2 To confirm arrangements for a period of study leave for the Principal in the Autumn term 2021/2022 to facilitate the completion of his PhD

- The Governing Body **approved** the Principal's period of study leave to facilitate the completion of his PhD, which will happen during the Autumn term. Governors are keen to support the Principal in this matter.
- It was noted that Joe Dicocco would be Acting Principal in the Principal's absence.
- The Principal stated that he was very grateful to the Governors for approving his study leave.

8 Principal's written report

8.1 Teacher Assessed Grades

- The Deputy Principal, Joe Dicocco, gave an on-screen presentation to Governors on Teacher Assessed Grades. The Clerk will obtain the spreadsheet displayed in the presentation and will circulate to Governors.
Action: Clerk.
- It was noted that disadvantaged children are still under achieving. However, with 9 to 7s in English and Maths, there is strong evidence of improvements.
- Targets for 2020/2021 have been inputted into the spreadsheet. Regarding TA grades, the school is either above or on target for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.

- The aim is for disadvantaged students to over-achieve their targets for grades 9 to 7.
- In terms of 9 to 5s, students are nearly on target, however disadvantaged students are falling further below. The school will need to encourage the lower part of the cohort to achieve more, and the disadvantaged students to achieve 9 to 4.
- The school is improving in terms of achievement, but mainly in the higher grades, and not among disadvantaged students.
- Year 10 students have taken end of year exams and have achieved well, with clear improvements being made.

The Deputy Principal gave the following responses to questions from Governors:

- *Are Teacher Assessed Grades based on the full curriculum?* No: we can assess only on what is taught. We did not complete the courses, however they were largely completed. Assessments were focussed on what we knew the students had been taught. Almost the full curriculum was covered.
- *What impact will this have on those going on to do A-Levels?* Year 11s left before half-term. Those going on to study were invited back to help prepare for the sixth form and to fill some curriculum gaps.
- *How is Key Stage 5 data looking?* The value added is similar to previous years. The process lends itself more to Key Stage 5; it worked better as a process for those students. The process is robust, and the results are roughly in line with expectations. Students are not 'upgraded to achieve', as this could result in students struggling later in their studies.
- *Can you provide evidence when asked for feedback?* Yes, we have been rigorous in our procedures, checks and administrative systems. We do not expect our judgements to be overturned. We have maintained the integrity of the whole process.
- The Deputy Principal gave an on-screen presentation to Governors on the Overview of Recovery Actions, which will be circulated to Governors for reference. Governors asked questions after the presentation.

The Deputy Principal gave the following response to a question from a Governor:

- *For those students who did not engage with remote learning during lockdown, is this down to a lack of IT facilities, or just the students' choice not to engage?* Both reasons. However, once the IT issues had been addressed, several students continued not to engage, so they were brought into school for full time education provision.
- In terms of pastoral changes, it was noted that the school is moving from a vertical organisation (the house system) to a horizontal organisation (a year-

group based system). There are clear benefits, including enhancing the progress and wellbeing of students. This is a strategic change that will allow attendance, behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning to mesh together. The school has moved away from the house system (where 4 different heads of house and a Student Welfare and Family Liaison Officer – SWAFLO – were responsible for the students in one house) to a system where there is one Year Leader for each year group (with a deputy), ie, one point of contact instead of many. The aim has been to bring together the academic and the pastoral, focusing jointly on behaviour, attendance and progress.

- The school's own teachers have been engaged to undertake additional tuition, rather than hiring external tutors, as there were concerns around the quality of some of the external tutors and there could be issues around students not engaging with external providers.
- It was noted that next year, there will be a whole-school focus on Reading and Literature, following a point for development from the recent Ofsted remote monitoring visit to act on this. Assessment and feedback will also be a priority.

8.2 Update on School Improvement Plan/ ONE Vision

- Governors received a verbal presentation from the Principal.
- The Principal explained that, over the last two weeks, a reciprocal tutoring arrangement has been suggested and developed, where Whickham, Park View and Kings Meadow schools hire each other's teaching staff to tutor students via Teams, on either a 1-1 or 1-2 basis. This is a supplement to the teaching undertaken with the school's own teachers. This system could allow the school to use catch-up funding to pay for the tutoring, and also allows a greater degree of quality assurance than is possible with other external tutors.
- The students who receive the tutoring are small groups of around 14 Year 10 and Year 11 students who are currently predicted less than grade 4 outcomes. Year leaders are responsible for monitoring achievement data.
- It is thought that this method of tutoring could have significant benefits, and will be monitored closely to ensure all is progressing well. If this method does not come to fruition, the academy will engage its own staff to provide extra tuition.
- In terms of social and emotional support, the school is operating a 3-tier system. Additional TAs and HLTAs have been taken on to ensure there are enough staff for all the students. A member of the SLT, a Year Leader and a Deputy Year Leader are always available at all breaks and lunchtimes to ensure students are adequately supported. There is also a more rapid response to teachers needing support. More robust and immediate sanctions are in place for lateness and absence.
- Governors received the Opportunity North East Action Plan from the Principal, who asked Governors to review the document and email any

questions to him after the meeting. **Action: Governors.**

8.3 Safeguarding

- Governors received a verbal report on Safeguarding, from Alex Rayner, Assistant Principal.
- It was noted that there has been a surge in safeguarding incidents due to the pandemic, where families have been forced to remain indoors in close proximity during the periods of lockdown, which has led to strained relationships.
- There were 28 incidents of domestic violence in the homes of our students reported in the period from September 2020 to December 2020, mainly fuelled by alcohol, which have involved the police. From January 2021 to April 2021 there were 9 incidents, and from April 2021 to July 2021 there have been 31 incidents. Incidents have increased as the year has progressed, possibly due to the relaxation of the rules and people visiting pubs and consuming alcohol more often, sometimes resulting in disorderly and violent behaviour.
- It was noted that the Social Worker will remain at the school until March 2022 at the earliest, as funding for the Social Workers in Schools programme has been extended due to the pandemic. Her case load has increased to the maximum capacity of 16 students. Some students have been taken on by other social workers. The School Counsellor has increased her hours from 3 days to 4 days a week to cope with the increased demand for her services. The Rise Team (mental health) is currently in school for 1 day (5 hours) a week for 6 weeks, however this service will cease as of next academic year. The Rise Team will work with students over the Summer period.
- In terms of Keeping Children Safe in Education, there is a big push around sexualised behaviour and how to address this. A website has been set up where children can share experiences. Alex Rayner works with students to identify and deal with their issues around this. Alex referred to a case study where it had become apparent in a PSHE lesson that a female student was experiencing problems and when this was looked into, further issues were discovered including self-harm and suicidal thoughts and behaviours. The case was referred to social services and picked up by the school Social Worker who worked with the student and her family and safeguards were put in place at the family home. The parents co-operated with the process and the student and her family understand each other more. The student is also receiving mental health support from the Rise Team, and is progressing well.
- It was noted that the school wishes to retain the services of the Social Worker and is liaising with the local authority to find a way of doing this. Currently the Social Worker is funded by the local authority.

9. Policy schedule

- Governors received the Policy schedule document, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

9.1 Uniform – Chris Smith

- It was noted that there have been no further changes to the Uniform Policy since the last meeting. Reform of the School Uniform Policy will be put on hold for the time being, until further guidance on this matter is received from the government in the Autumn term.

9.2 Educational Visits – Cllr Sheila Gallagher

- The Educational Visits Policy is currently with the Principal. The Principal is working on this policy and will ensure it is with Cllr Gallagher before September. **Action: Principal.**

10. Dates and times of future meetings for all clerked meetings for 2021/22

- The dates and times of all clerked meetings for 2021-22 are as follows:

Autumn Term

Wednesday 15 September 2021, 4:00pm

Wednesday 8 December 2021, 5.30pm

Spring Term

Wednesday 9 March 2022, 5.30pm

Summer Term

Wednesday 13 July 2022, 5.30pm

11. Any other business

The Chair

The current Chair, Chris Smith, is stepping down as Chair. This is the last Governing Body meeting that Chris will Chair, and Guy Currey has been nominated for this role going forward. Governors thanked Chris for all his hard work, commitment and dedication to his role as Chair and to the Academy, and expressed that they were very glad that he will remain on the Governing Body and continue to work with Governors and the Principal to support the Academy.

The meeting finished at 7.35pm.

Date..... Signed.....