

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Wednesday 13th November 2024 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar	LCR	Appointed Governor	
Mrs H Ind	HI	Appointed Governor	
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	A
Mr J Robertson	JP	Appointed Governor	
Mrs K Hardy	KH	Appointed Governor	
Mrs A Bellett	AB	Appointed Governor	
<i>1 x Chair of governors vacancy</i>			
<i>1 x parent governor vacancy</i>			

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Executive Principal	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs L Owen	LO	Assistant Principal for Outcomes	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	
Mrs A Elway	AE	Head of Governance	

Quorum required	4	Governor's present	7
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/13/2425	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Purcell who is currently on maternity leave, and these were accepted by the committee.</p> <p>Mrs Ind had messaged to say that she was running late, and the committee agreed to start the meeting.</p>	
AC/14/2425	<p>Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The governance professional asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.</p>	
AC/15/2425	<p>Ofsted Training The governance professional asked if all governors had reviewed the Ofsted training recording prior to the meeting. Governors confirmed that they had viewed the recording.</p> <p><i>Governors asked</i> for clarity following the training, wanting to understand if a safeguarding issue were identified, would it result in an automatic fail</p>	

or would there be an opportunity for the issue to be resolved. Mrs Leonard said that Ofsted have changed the process as part of recent reforms, if a safeguarding concern appears to be rectifiable by leaders, parents will be made aware, the inspection is paused for 3 months to allow the issue to be addressed, and the report will be completed after that return visit. Mr Hoad expanded that this could be an administrative or compliance issue that can be resolved.

Governors wanted to understand if there is clear visibility around Alternative Provision (AP) providers, how often they are audited and what they provide. Mrs Leonard explained that there has been a big piece of work around the vulnerable children within the academy. The young people on AP are included within it. It regularly reviewed in a formal setting and is also tracked through quality assurance. Every half term, one of the leaders goes out to AP providers, visiting the young people and meeting with their leaders. Students with SEND at AP have visits every 30 days and this information is all held within the AP folder and managed by Kim Dolby. The Academy only use Ofsted registered providers, and all details of their Ofsted ratings are available. Attendance checks are completed every day with the AP providers to ensure young people are attending.

Mrs Ind arrived at 7:41am

Governors then asked if parents are involved when reviewing AP. Mrs Leonard confirmed that all AP is arranged with parents and parents are invited to be part of the Quality Assurance meetings for AP.

Governors fed back that the Ofsted training was great and asked how many students at Walton are on part-time timetables and wanted to better understand the impact of part-time timetables. Mrs Leonard said that the number of students on part-time timetables is now less than 10 which is much reduced this year adding that Heads of Year and Kim Dolby manage them. They are implemented on a case-by-case basis and are reviewed fortnightly. The purpose is always to get the student back into school full time. Sometimes it will be a hybrid system with some online learning at home. Official trust paperwork is used which is led by Patrick Knight, parents are always involved from the start and need to be in agreement for this approach to be used. Governors further asked if the Local Authority give funding and support for this. Mrs Leonard responded that it is complex and one of the things that Walton Academy have made a definite decision to do is work more closely with the Local Authority as it is clear that the Local Authority is in a similarly difficult position as the schools, they serve with regards funding. Mrs Leonard has recently met with the admissions team and will be meeting the head of inclusion this half term. Positive Regard have been commissioned by the Local Authority and a visit has been booked for March, this will be supportive, thorough look at behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, SEND etc. The Governors then asked if the academy feel that support is being provided from the Local Authority. Mrs Leonard said that academisation has made it more difficult for the LA to get collaboration and acknowledged that she has felt frustrations in the past when Walton Academy have had to make

	<p>difficult decisions and haven't always had support but moving forwards the mantra is to work with the LA to find solutions to difficult issues.</p> <p><u>Governors fed back</u> that the training was clear and understandable <u>and questioned</u> whether the school view the Ofsted changes as positive. Mrs Leonard said she feels the immediate changes are a step in the right direction; taking away the judgement grade, knowing the call will come Monday and inspection will be Tuesday and Wednesday, the Ofsted academy and access to training feels like it is more of a collaborative approach. There are still things in the air around inclusion, vulnerable students and safeguarding and it is difficult to comment on the whole set of changes. Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) school improvement teams are going to be in place before the report cards and there is some anxiety around the report card and what that will look like. Mr Hoad added that policy changes are the ones that will have the greater impact. <u>Governors wanted further clarity</u> around the earlier discussion <u>asking</u> if a 3 month pause in Ofsted due a safeguarding issue will ultimately have a detrimental impact on the eventual grading given. Mrs Leonard explained that the pause would allow issues to be resolved and if they are resolved properly, the report will be issued, and result would not be impacted.</p> <p><u>Governors then asked</u> if there had been any initial feedback from parents in relation to the headlines around Ofsted changes and wanted to know if parents will still have access to the same level of information. Mrs Leonard said that parents will probably get more detailed information to better inform their school choices, she added that parents were consulted in the same way that schools were during planning. There is a percent who will look at Ofsted to inform their choices, but a larger percentage will visit schools, attend open evenings and listen to local recommendations. These things carry a greater influence on most parents than an Ofsted report.</p>	
<p>AC/16/2425</p>	<p>Governance Report</p> <p>The Governance Professional (GP) reminded all governors to complete the Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 Mrs Ind and Mrs Crerar confirmed they have completed the Dol and Mr Morgan agreed to complete his. [AP-DM].</p> <p>The GP confirmed that all code of conduct responses had now been received.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next governors only meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th December 7:30am in person.</p> <p>Mr Horsfield confirmed that a H&S LINK meeting has been scheduled. Mrs Bellett intends to schedule a meeting with Mr Hoad to discuss curriculum.</p> <p>Mr Robertson told the committee that he has attended a GDPR meeting with Mr Hoad and will write up his notes and share them with the</p>	<p>DM 11/12/24</p> <p>JR 11/12/24</p>

	<p>committee. The highlights from the meeting were fed back to the committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weduc relaunch in Jan 25 - Staff GDPR training is up to date - There have been a couple of minor GDPR breaches, nothing went outside the trust and all have been dealt with. - There have been a few SAR requests recently which create a huge amount of workload for the team. <p><u>Governors asked</u> if there is legal advice for SAR requests to ensure that it is clear what they are looking for. Mrs Leonard confirmed that the business manager has had appropriate training and is able to request for more specific details. Mr Robertson went on to say that there had been an interesting discussion about archiving and how that might impact on historic reporting in the future.</p> <p>Upcoming events Mr Morgan confirmed that he attended the recent Post16 open evening. Mr Horsfield will be attending the fashion show, Mrs Hardy will be attending the achievement evening and Mrs Crerar with also be in attendance as a parent.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> if there are any other events coming up for which governor attendance would be welcome from the academy. Mrs Leonard said that governors are always welcome to attend any school event so long as they let the school know they will be coming and it was agreed that there will be sufficient governor representation at forthcoming events.</p>	
<p>AC/17/2425</p>	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 18th September 2024. The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the acting chair.</p>	
<p>AC/18/2425</p>	<p>Matters Arising AC/02/2425 The governance professional said that she would ask if another chair from within the trust might be available to support the committee in the short term. [AP-NB]. The governance professional confirmed that the search for a new chair of governors was ongoing. AC/04/2425 all governors to complete the Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 complete see AC/16/2425 AC/04/2425 all governors to read and sign the Code of Conduct for 2024-2025 complete AC/04/2425 NB will contact IT to ensure email addresses are correct. Mrs Ind has also not received meeting invitations. complete AC/06/2425 JR will resend the notes from the GDPR meeting in July complete. AC/06/2425 HI to book a date with K Dolby and provide minutes from the last meeting to NB. [AP – HI] carried forward AC/06/2425 Mr Horsfield will send the notes from the H&S meeting in July to NB complete AC/07/2425 Mrs Owen explained that she would share some data around the number of disengaged SEND students complete</p>	

<p>AC/19/2425</p>	<p>Principals Report</p> <p>Mrs Leonard asked governors if there were any questions in relation to the principal's report starting with the update across quality of education. <u>Governors asked</u> what EFA means and Mrs Owen explained that it is Embedding Formative Assessment, a 2 year project developed by Dylan William. <u>Governors further asked</u> what was meant by formative assessment. Mrs Owen described it by saying that 'you don't know what you're going to teach until you know what your students don't know'. She added that this was a 2 year project which partnered up teachers across the curriculum and put together small groups of teachers across mixed faculties to work on using particular strategies throughout the 2 year process. The project has now come to an end and Walton Academy has been asked to become an ambassador school. A decision on whether to do this has not yet been made as the academy would like some time to re-enforce what has been developed before making that decision. 3 areas of focus will continue to be developed (whiteboards, multiple choice questioning and questioning). The work has gone back within faculties and with the use of IRIS to make it more efficient.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know more</u> about the technology review. Mr Hoad said the academy are looking to tighten up on the use of mobile phones and smart watches in classrooms. <u>Governors asked</u> if this related to teachers using them or students not using them. Mr Hoad explained this it relates to both of these things. Walton had already introduced a mobile phone ban around the site at break and lunchtimes. But phones were often used to support lessons where staff felt it would be a useful tool. Students however struggled to differentiate between using devices for learning when permitted by staff and just using them all of the time in class. Rules are therefore going to be tightened towards no use of mobile phones except for very clearly defined exemptions for specific reasons. Staff are being encouraged to look at alternatives to using devices in classrooms. <u>The governors asked</u> what IT provision there is in school. Mr Hoad explained that some areas have iPads and laptops for ad hoc IT use and the Academy has 7.5 IT suites, also the library is open longer now that there is a full-time librarian. <u>The governors then wanted to know</u> if students are required to use a phone in a lesson and a student doesn't have one will they have to pair up with another student. Mr Hoad confirmed that is one of the issues that the Academy is trying to move away from.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> about the staffing plan being prepared for 26/27 and wanted to know when the academy will need an answer to the PAN business case in order to factor this into planning. Mrs Leonard referred back to the business case for those governors who had not been present in previous meetings and explained that the business case was put together around pupil place projection in Grantham as there is a significant drop in the numbers of places required over coming years. The business case was for a PAN reduction to 120 based on the data to mitigate against risk. The case went to the Chief Executive Team and is not</p>	

going to be explored any further, the PAN will remain at 180. The academy has put plans in place to try and mitigate against the risk. Projected September 2025 figures are in line with this year at around 120-130 and the Academy will know more in the next couple of weeks following discussions with Lincolnshire County Council. Mrs Leonard added that Walton will possibly take a few more ‘next nearest’ students moving forwards and said that she is working proactively with the Local Authority with a meeting due to happen within next few weeks to see where applications have gone. Another meeting is planned in January with the Local Authority to see more accurate figures and at this point there should be a sense of 1st 2nd 3rd choice offers.

Mr Hoad is already looking at staffing for 25/26 and 26/27 on the understanding that with a PAN of 180 the Academy won’t be full. in year 7 midyear admissions cannot be refused if the school is under PAN and therefore Walton is more likely to receive more midyears into year 7, so planning needs to ensure that there is space for students to join mid-year. From year 8 to 11, the Academy can refuse even if they are under PAN. It is expected that some of those refusals will come back as fair access and there needs to be some space to accept fair access requests. In terms of staffing and recruitment this can make it difficult but looking further into the future it enables employment of permanent staff members. As well as the impact on staffing planning the future of the site efficiency needs to also be considered. Extra facilities and resources have been brought into Walton in recent years with the addition of the temporary block to provide much needed workspace and enough exam space for the larger cohorts. The block has another 3 years lifespan and has a significant cost. Based on the projections moving forwards and understanding that the intake is likely to be lower, Walton may be in a position to remove the block and therefore reduce cost. The governors were interested to know the reason behind the decision to refuse the business case. Mrs Saxelby said that the conclusion had been reached that there was no need to reduce PAN. The governors then questioned what the downside would be should the PAN have been reduced and Mrs Saxelby explained that the Academy might lose staff and middle leaders adding that Mr Hoad is doing a brilliant job at focussing on the numbers and curriculum. Mr Hoad said the challenge is that 129 in year 7 is the most expensive curriculum to run as it’s the same size curriculum as 160.

Governors asked if there is any scope to build on the SEND experience in terms of attracting parents to choose Walton. Mrs Leonard explained that it is a double-edged sword as schools are being supported to take in students that in the past have gone into special provision. The Hub provision at Walton is in a strong position but the reason it works is because it is a small provision. Expanding it internally might threaten its’ ability to meet needs and if you open up your provision to the Local Authority for funded places, you are then taking it away from your community. Mr Hoad added that the hub is the most expensive provision.

The governors wanted assurance that there would be financial support from the Trust if numbers were to increase again. Mr Hoad said that the

help would be provided if it was needed again in the future and Mrs Saxelby confirmed that block was always planned as a temporary measure. Mrs Leonard added that the Trust have been clear in saying that they will support with any changes such as this. Mr Hoad added that if numbers were to begin to rise again, you would see it coming down the line and have time to prepare. *The governors asked* what the ideal PAN would be for Walton. Mrs Leonard said the site is an aging site with not a great deal of space. From a site perspective, 150 in each year group and a post 16 of 120 would be manageable.

The governors wondered if there has been any research into why parents choose other schools over Walton. Mrs Leonard said that many staff on the leadership team know the town and the community very well. Across the last 10 years there has been significant change in the educational landscape. Every school in the town is now good or better, there are grammar schools and several well performing academies in the surrounding area. What is more challenging for Walton is that unlike Priory Ruskin (which is on par), from a selling point of view, they have a shiny new building and brand-new facilities and resources.

Governors expressed their view Walton has a family feel which ultimately should be Walton's unique selling point. Mrs Leonard agreed and said that staff and the Academy have to continue to work hard to sell that message.

The Admissions policy was discussed, there has been no major change to the policy which was ratified by all governors in attendance.

The governors raised a question following the previous committee meeting about the exams results data and the proportion of students referred to as disengaged wanting to understand more about how the measure was applied. Mrs Owen explained that she had been looking at the figures and from understanding the students over the years could see that the data was affected by a small number of students for whom the outcome could not have been impacted. The disengaged included those students that have had significant strategies and support in place and are still not engaging. The figures were refreshed to understand what the results would look like with those students removed. It was not about hiding them or sweeping them under the carpet but demonstrating what is happening in the classroom and explaining that is where attention needs to focus. It also helps to reassure staff that they are doing a good job.

Mrs Leonard said she had seen a recent report which indicated the national picture is that nearly 50% of students don't feel that they belong to their secondary school and community. *Governors queried* if this study had included the parents of those students and Mrs Leonard said that it isn't always the case but often it is disengaged families not just disengaged students.

Mrs Owen added that this group of students will be discussed in faculty meetings and wherever there are 'winnables' they don't give up.

	<p><i>The chair asked</i> if there were any cat C trips to be confirmed. There were no new trips to discuss</p> <p>It was agreed that the Pupil Premium strategy would be added to the agenda for the next governors only meeting. [AP -NB]</p>	<p>NB 27/11/24</p>
AC/21/2425	<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"> - Quality Assurance of Alternative Provision - The use of part time timetables for some students - Use of mobile phones and IT in schools - Staffing / planning around upcoming pupil number projections - Student engagement and how this can be addressed 	
AC/22/2425	<p>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld? It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.</p>	
AC/23/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees The report to trustees was completed and submitted by the governance professional with input from all in attendance at the meeting.</p>	
AC/24/2425	<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 Wednesday 15th January 2024 at 07:30am at Walton Academy</p> <p>The meeting closed at 09:07</p>	
<p>Signed By: Chair: Date:</p>	<p><i>Jon Robertson</i> Acting Chair 27/11/2024</p>	