

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar	LC	Appointed Governor	
Mrs H Ind	HI	Appointed Governor	A
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	A
Mrs K Hardy (Chair of Governors)	KH	Appointed Governor	
Mrs A Bellett	AB	Appointed Governor	
Ms C Marion	CM	Appointed Governor	
<i>2 x parent governor vacancy</i>			

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Executive Principal	A
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs K Dolby	KD	Assistant Principal for Behaviours and Attitudes	
Mrs L Owen	LO	Assistant Principal for Outcomes	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	4	Governor's present	6
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/25/2425	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Purcell who is currently on maternity leave, Mrs Ind (illness) and Mrs Saxelby (attending a conference) and these were accepted by the committee.</p>	
AC/26/2425	<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/27/2425	<p>Academy Committee Membership The governance professional told the committee that Ms Marion has been a governor for Diverse Academies Trust for just over a year, based at East Leake Academy. Following a move to Grantham, she has asked if her role could transfer to the Walton committee.</p> <p>The request was communicated to all governors and there were no objections. Ms Marion will therefore become a Walton Governor with effect from 15th January 2025 with her current 4-year term of office from</p>	

	<p>13th November 2023 remaining unchanged. All committee members welcomed Caroline.</p> <p>The governance professional told the committee that Jon Robertson has been appointed as Diverse Academies Trustee with effect from 9th December 2024 and therefore has resigned as a member of the local academy committee.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy volunteered to become the Chair of Governors at Walton Academy. The governance professional advised that governors should vote, and Mrs Hardy left room. Governors voted unanimously to appoint Mrs Hardy as Chair of governors Mrs Hardy returned to the room and accepted her appointment with effect from 15/01/25 to 01/09/2025 (the remainder of this academic year).</p> <p>The governance professional advised the committee that they should look to appoint a Vice-Chair to support Mrs Hardy and ask governors to consider whether they might be interested in volunteering for the role. Mrs Hardy added that now would be a good time to volunteer as she embarks on her learning curve as Chair of governors she will be looking to the trust and academy to help develop knowledge and skills so this could be embarked upon together. Mr Morgan said that he would be happy to volunteer to be vice chair at this point but added that his circumstances may change and that there may need to be some flexibility. All governors were happy to appoint Mr Morgan as vice chair with effect from 15/01/25 to 01/09/2025.</p> <p>The GP will schedule a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss next steps. [ACTION]</p>	<p>NB 29/01/25</p>
<p>AC/28/2425</p>	<p>Local Training Questions/ Answers following previous meeting:</p> <p>Mrs Leonard addressed the 3 questions raised following the last meeting:</p> <p>Q. The Pupil Premium strategy statement references a Pupil Premium governor lead, is this all part of the Safeguarding link governor role?</p> <p>A. The Pupil Premium governor lead doesn't necessarily have to be part of the Safeguarding link governor role, and it would be a good idea to have a separate Pupil Premium link governor.</p> <p>Q. Are there any particular reasons why the P8 and A8 results were lower than for 22/23? Was this a particularly challenged cohort?</p> <p>A. Mrs Leonard explained that the data from this summer was not comparable to previous years as it was the first cohort of the new academy following the significant change in demographic, adding further context by explaining that this was the first co-ed cohort at Walton as well as these students having been significantly impacted in their first 2 years at Walton due to the pandemic. Mrs Leonard added anecdotally that it had always felt like this cohort hadn't fully bought into Walton, although the recent achievement evening for these students was really well attended which showed that despite this perception, a sense of belonging had been there. Mrs Leonard</p>	

	<p>went on to explain that this was the first set of data around the ‘New Walton’ which will be scrutinised to develop current and future cohorts moving forwards. She added that for the next 2 years P8 is not a measure that can be used as students did not complete SATs in year 6. Students will therefore be measured against A8 and 4+, 5+ measures on performance. This will be challenging due to the location of the academy being in a ‘grammar school town’.</p> <p><i>The Chair wondered</i> if there is the possibility for some additional coaching / training on how to interpret the data to help with understanding and asked the rest of the committee if they would be interested. Mrs Leonard and Mrs Owen agreed to look at putting something together for governors.</p> <p>[ACTION]</p> <p>Q. Why does the PP percentage drop in years 12 and 13? Is 40% of the school a representative level of PP across Lincolnshire and Grantham?</p> <p>A. This is an accurate reflection in that the students that tend to achieve better are the students not receiving pupil premium. Mrs Owen added that we don’t have PP at Post 16, they are bursary students, and the onus is on the parents to apply for bursaries. For those students moving through the academy the school can identify them and encourage them to apply but new students coming in might not apply. Mrs Leonard went on to say that when she looks at the inspection data summary report and the deprivation indicator, Walton’s postcode is not an area of deprivation however the pupil population does sit above average in terms of deprivation which has meant that Walton has taken a much higher proportion in recent years and currently is higher than average. This is expected to fall in line with the average over the coming years.</p> <p>SEND overview</p> <p>Mrs Leonard delivered a short presentation on SEND, providing current data and statistics at Walton and explaining the way in which students with SEND are allocated support.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> how often the ‘1’ category students are reviewed. Mrs Dolby explained that all students on the ‘monitoring’ list are reviewed on a fortnightly basis, but monitoring is ongoing. <i>The governors then asked</i> if the students and parents know they’re on the list. Mrs Leonard confirmed that they are aware, in fact sometimes it will be parents that have initially raised a concern with the academy. Mr Hoad added that it is important for teachers to know that students are on the list and if they identify anything in their lessons they can help build a clearer picture.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard explained the ways in which SEND students are identified and described how Primary School visits help to identify the majority of SEND students before transition.</p> <p>Depending on their needs some students will have an Educational Support Plan (ESP), some will have a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) and</p>	<p>JL 12/03/25</p>
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	<p>these are reviewed with parents either in person or over the telephone depending upon the level of need. All Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) are reviewed face to face with parents annually.</p> <p><i>The governors wanted to understand</i> what the plan was designed for <i>and asked</i> if the ESP is the strategy to support the student. Mrs Leonard confirmed that and added that they are discussed and addressed with parents. <i>The governors then wanted to know</i> if parents are informed when changes are made to the plans and Mrs Leonard confirmed that they are.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> if parents have access to the provision map. Mrs Leonard explained that data can be taken from the provision map to share with parents but that they are not given direct access. She went on to tell the committee that consideration is currently being given to providing universal access to all staff and following that the academy may consider sharing access with parents. <i>The governors wondered</i> if parents engage with the process. Mrs Leonard confirmed that generally there is good engagement and where there is not, the SEND team will try all avenues to get parents engaged. <i>The governors asked</i> if the identification checklist is broken down into areas of need. Mrs Leonard confirmed that it is and agreed to send a copy of the checklist to governors [ACTION].</p> <p>Mrs Leonard went on to explain that EHCPs are not the answer, but they do bring with them additional funding to help with the cost of the support in place and made it clear that not having an EHCP does not prevent support being given.</p> <p><i>The governors wanted to know</i> what the success rate is in getting EHCP's agreed. Mrs Leonard said that it is difficult to answer that question due to the well-publicised issues within all local authorities around this area but added that she and staff at the academy have worked hard at developing relationships with the SEND team at Lincolnshire Local Authority. <i>The governors then asked</i> what the average timeline was from application to decision. Mrs Leonard told the committee that application should be addressed within 20 weeks, but this is not always met, she re-iterated that despite delays or issues with approval for an EHCP, the students will still receive the right amount of support at Walton. Mrs Bellett added from her experience that sometimes parental requests are processed more quickly if the parents can be encouraged to apply and asked if Mrs Leonard could provide her with the breakdown of the primary areas of needs and percentage levels [ACTION].</p> <p><i>The chair asked</i> what the academy needs from governors in terms of support for SEND. Mrs Leonard said for SEND in particular, support to help 'bang the drum' and also to continue to challenge the leadership team to share what is being done and possibly support with parents on occasion, particularly with those parents that don't have the knowledge or ability, having a 'neutral person' can be a great help.</p> <p>There were no further question in relation to SEND.</p>	<p>JL 29/01/25</p> <p>JL 29/01/25</p>
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Pupil Premium Strategy – Overview

Mrs Owen delivered her presentation on Pupil Premium (PP) and shared a copy of the strategy statement due to be updated on the website with all governors. She explained that PP funding is not ringfenced and whole strategies sometimes work best. Unfortunately, there will always be a gap between PP and non-PP students due to the nature of society. Mrs Owen explained that the national picture shows that the gap tends to widen as students move through the years, however at Walton the gaps are narrower than average.

Mrs Owen summarised some of the things that are different at Walton compared to other schools in the way in which PP is spent, such as MFL catchup, equipment for DT and increased funding for food. At Walton parents are asked to pay £10 and school then provide ingredients for food tech to save parents having to supply them. Only about 30% of parents are paying for this with the remainder being covered with PP funding. Star reader assessment tool is funded by PP money, but it is a whole cohort strategy. When the PP guidance changed about 3 years ago the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EFF) were appointed to support schools in developing strategies to effectively use PP funding and ensure that its effectiveness is evidenced. *The governors wanted to understand* if there is a requirement to itemise funding in the PP strategy document. Mrs Owen explained that there is no requirement to share the detail as it could potentially lead to complex queries and data protection issues. *Governors commented* that the wider strategies are very good. Mrs Owen acknowledged that the PP strategy is a significant document and agreed to take email questions following the meeting once governors had had chance to review it.

Alternative Provision - Overview

Mrs Dolby shared the breakdown of AP being used by the academy and the costs associated on the screen. Mrs Leonard said there has been extensive work around AP which means it is now budgeted correctly, compared to last year when the academy was significantly overspent on AP.

Mrs Dolby told the committee that all AP settings are Quality Assured initially and also every half term (30 calendar days). *The governors wanted to know* how **Safeguarding** responsibilities are maintained when students are at AP. Mrs Dolby explained there is a letter of assurance that must be signed off, the academy retains safeguarding responsibilities, and it is the requirement of the AP to raise concerns. All APs are given the relevant Safeguarding data to support their students. All vulnerable students are on a spreadsheet which is reviewed termly with the extended leadership team.

Mrs Dolby explained that Lincolnshire Local Authority does not have places to offer to academies at AP so all places have to be funded by Walton.

	<p><i>The chair asked</i> if a copy of the presentation could be provided to governors with sensitive data redacted following the meeting [ACTION] and commented there aren't as many choices as they thought there might have been.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard explained that good APs are there, but there aren't enough spaces. The reality is that students have been permanently excluded as there is no alternative available and those students are then provided with the AP place that they need. She added that any provision that is not Ofsted registered must be considered extremely carefully. Mrs Dolby went on to tell the committee that relationships are being developed with The Inclusion Team at Lincolnshire Local Authority and with other outside agencies. Mrs Leonard added that first and foremost, all possible solutions will be attempted on site at Walton before looking to AP as a last resort.</p> <p>Mr Hoad added context, explaining that academisation has unfortunately reduced Local Authority accountability in this area.</p>	<p>KD 29/01/25</p>
<p>AC/29/2425</p>	<p>Governance Report Given the time, it was agreed that all governors would review the Governance Report and complete outstanding actions following the meeting.</p> <p>The GP will schedule time at the next governors only meeting to review the document in detail. [ACTION]</p>	<p>NB 29/01/25</p>
<p>AC/30/2425</p>	<p>Governance Strategy and Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference 2024/25 – review AC remits</p> <p>All governors confirmed that they had reviewed the Governance Strategy document with changes and there were no concerns or comments.</p>	
<p>AC/31/2425</p>	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 13th November 2024. The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
<p>AC/32/2425</p>	<p>Matters Arising AC/16/2425 Complete Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 DM AC/16/2425 Share notes from recent GDPR meeting JR complete AC/18/2425 communicate CoG vacancy with existing chairs and vice chairs expired AC/18/2425 Book a date with K Dolby and provide minutes from the last meeting to NB. To be addressed given HI illness NEW ACTION NB and KH to discuss short term plan for safeguarding link responsibilities and make arrangements with KD AC/18/2425 Pupil Premium strategy to be added to agenda for the next governors only meeting NB complete</p>	<p>NB/KH 29/01/25</p>

<p>AC/33/2425</p>	<p>Principals Report</p> <p>Mrs Leonard asked if there were any questions with regards the ERM report.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> about the suspensions data, wanting to confirm understanding that the 9% SEND referred to 9% of the 4.3% suspension figure. This was confirmed</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to understand</u> more about the learning walks and learning reviews questioning if areas have been prioritised for the rest of this academic year. Mrs Leonard said that the whole academy threads are coordinated by Fran and are presented to ELT and then faculty leaders look at their specific learning walks. The key theme is around consistency, but what that looks like in each faculty is different. The meeting cycle enables progress to be monitored, discussed and addressed.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the second round of learning walks are now underway, picking up on key threads from last time and now looking at the finer details of teaching and learning. It is done collaboratively, and accountability lies with Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year. <u>Governors said</u> that it is helpful for them to understand the key drivers. Mrs Leonard said that formative assessment is a key driver. All CPD is linked to this, and Fran has done a piece of work around linking IRIS, walkthroughs and CPD. <u>The chair wondered</u> if it might be useful for the governors to receive a training session on understanding this at a future meeting and Mrs Leonard agreed to look at providing this at the next meeting [ACTION]</p> <p><u>Governors asked for</u> a summary of in year admissions. Mrs Leonard told the committee that there have been 23 mid-year admissions and 33 leavers for a range of reasons, moved, change of school, electively home educated, off site direction in or out etc. Conversations have been held with parents and students leaving. Admissions number for September of this academic year was officially 128 and now sits at 131. Two meetings have been held with the Local Authority already in relation to September 2025 and similar numbers are expected.</p> <p>Mr Hoad has done a piece of work around staffing considering projected pupil numbers to ensure that there isn't too much capacity and is also looking at site planning. The Academy is faced with a 5-10 year period with smaller cohorts but with the PAN remaining at 180. This year the academy is in a healthier financial position than last year and some of the things on the site improvement plan might be addressed however lagged funding will impact on this next year. The temporary building costs £110k per year. This lease ceases in summer 2027 and ideally it would need to be removed at this point. Mr Hoad is currently looking at this with pupil numbers for the current year 8 and the possible impact on exam space. <u>Governors asked about</u> acquiring external space for exams and Mr Hoad confirmed that this option has been considered but costs, logistics and impact on students meant it was not a practical solution. All students have to have the same experience to ensure fairness.</p>	<p>JL 12/03/25</p>
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	<p><i>The chair asked</i> if there are currently any SARs / complaints etc.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the recent stage 5 complaint came to a positive and productive end. There is an early stage 2 complaint meeting due to be held with another parent and at present there are no FOI or SAR requests. Mrs Leonard added that there appears to have been a reduction in formal complaints and explained that where parents are raising concerns, she and the team are trying to address them immediately to avoid complaints escalating.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> if complainants are getting better at defining their complaint. Mrs Leonard said that the team are getting better at identifying what a complainant wants and asking them how the academy can resolve it for them. She added that the Trust have completed a new complaint policy which will be launched soon, and this will be better with fewer procedural stages.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the budget summary has been shared for information. If there are any questions, please bring them to the next meeting on 12th March.</p>	
AC/34/2425	<p>How has the AC held senior leaders to account?</p> <p>There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEND - Pupil Premium - Alternative Provision - Quality of teaching / CPD / learning walks - Pupil numbers / site plans - Complaints 	
AC/35/2425	<p>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld?</p> <p>It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.</p>	
AC/36/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees</p> <p>The report to trustees was completed and submitted by the governance professional with input from all in attendance at the meeting.</p>	
AC/37/2425	<p>Determination of Confidentiality Equalities Act consideration 7 Nolan Principles</p> <p>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:</p> <p>Academy Committee meeting Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 5:00pm at Walton Academy</p>	

	The meeting closed at 09:15	
Signed By: Chair: Date:	<i>Karin Hardy</i> Karin Hardy 27/01/25	