

Minutes of a Governing Body meeting of Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 5.30pm

Governors Present: Guy Currey (Chair), Andrew Fowler (Principal), Katie Barron, Andrew Chanse, Louise Doran, Cllr Sheila Gallagher, Claire Godfrey, Joel Greenwell, Dr Jane Halpin, Alison Logan, Heather McClean, Kevin Thompson

Others Present: Joe Dicocco (Observer, Deputy Principal), Paul Walsh (Guest, Assistant Principal)

Clerk: Kim Ashford

The meeting started at 5.35pm and was quorate.

In the absence of the current Chair, Chris Smith, Vice-Chair Alison Logan started the meeting, and asked members of the Governing Body to introduce themselves for the benefit of new Governors. It was noted that Guy Currey would take over the meeting as new Chair, once he had been elected at item 3.

1. Apologies for absence

- Apologies were received from Chris Smith. Consent was given for his absence.

2. Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

- There were no declarations of interest.

3. Election of Chair

- One nomination had been received from Guy Currey. After delivering a presentation to Governors, Guy left the room and a vote was taken. Governors **agreed unanimously** that Guy would be **appointed** as Chair of the Governing Body.

4. Election of Vice-Chairs

- Nominations had been received from current Vice-Chair Alison Logan, and Dr Jane Halpin. After delivering presentations to Governors, Alison and Jane left the room and a vote was taken. Governors **agreed unanimously** that Alison would be **reappointed** as Vice-Chair, and Jane would be **appointed** as new Vice-Chair.

5. Minutes of the last Governing Body meeting held on Wednesday 14 July 2021

5.1 Approval of the minutes

- Governors received the minutes of the last Governing Body meeting on Wednesday 14 July 2021, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting. The minutes were **approved** as a correct record.

4.2 Matters arising

- Item 4.3 – Governor training and development:
The Clerk confirmed that she had not received notification of any training undertaken by Governors.
- Item 9.2 – Educational Visits policy:
It was **agreed** that the Principal will pass this policy document to Cllr Gallagher, when it is in final draft.

6. Governing Body

6.1 Register of Interests

- The Register of Interests was passed to Governors to complete and sign, before passing back to the clerk, who will forward a copy of the Register of Interests to the school. **Action: Clerk.**

6.2 Governor Code of Conduct

- Governors received the Lord Lawson of Beamish Governance Handbook 2021/22, which contains the Governor Code of Conduct, as circulated by email prior to the meeting.
- Governors **approved** and **adopted** pages 14 to 17 of the Governance Handbook, which relate to Trustees' Role and Responsibilities, and Trustees' Personal Commitments and Undertakings.

6.3 Governing Body membership and vacancies

- Governors received the Membership and Vacancies report, as circulated by email prior to the meeting.
- It was **noted** that there are currently 2 vacancies on the Governing Body, and that Chris Smith had provided concise notes on 6 potential candidates.
- It was **agreed** that Alison Logan, Dr Halpin, the Principal and the Chair would be involved in the process for identifying and recruiting the most suitable candidates. **Action: Chair, Principal, Alison Logan, Dr Halpin.**

6.4 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.

6.5 Governing Body training and development

- Governors received the Governor training and development report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- A Governor asked whether it was necessary to attend the Lord Lawson safeguarding training, if this had been undertaken at another school. The Principal **agreed** to follow this up and revert to Governors. **Action: Principal.**

6.6 Link Governor roles list

- Governors received the Link Governor roles list, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- Governors also received the full Link Governor roles list, as set out in the Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy Governance Handbook 2021/22, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting. Governors noted that the full Link Governor roles list is as follows:
 - Alison Logan: SLT Link Joe Dicocco; Quality of Education; Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact
 - Heather McClean: SLT Link Kate Kendall; Curriculum Intent (Options, timetable and all transition points)
 - Joel Greenwell: SLT Link Louise Ford; Curriculum Implementation (Staff training/ CPD and ITT and early career framework)
 - Dr Jane Halpin: SLT Link Alex Rayner; Curriculum Implementation (Mental Health/ Safeguarding/ Pastoral/ Attendance and Student recruitment)
 - Claire Godfrey: SLT Link Janey Stubbs; Curriculum Implementation (Pupil Premium/ Supported Learning provision/ Personal Development)
 - Louise Doran: SLT Link James Pedlingham; Curriculum Implementation (Finance/ Staffing/ HR/ Budgeting to improve outcomes and ensuring value for money)
 - Chris Smith: SLT link Paul Walsh; Curriculum Intent and Implementation (Behaviour)
 - Cllr Sheila Gallagher: SLT Link Sue Nellist; Curriculum Intent (Sixth Form/ KS5); Curriculum Impact (Whole Academy assessment and reporting)
 - Kevin Thompson: SLT Link Sue Nellist; Curriculum Intent (Sixth Form/ KS5); Curriculum Impact (Whole Academy assessment and reporting)
- The Clerk **agreed** to update the Local Authority's list in line with the list given in the Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy Governance Handbook 2021/22. **Action: Clerk.**

7. Committees

7.1 Committee membership

- Governors received the Committee membership report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- The following changes to Committee membership were **agreed**:
 - Louise Doran to be appointed as Chair of the Academy Management Committee after the October meeting of this Committee. Louise was **elected** to this post **unanimously** by Governors, in this meeting.
 - Kevin Thompson to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Academy Management Committee with immediate effect. Kevin was **elected** to this post **unanimously** by Governors, in this meeting.
 - All non-staff Governors will join the First and Second Committees.
 - Chris Smith to be replaced by Guy Currey under Members Committee.
 - Chris Smith to be replaced by Guy Currey under Principal's Performance Management Committee.
 - Dr Jane Halpin to join the Principal's Performance Management Committee.
 - Katie Barron to join the Student Progress Committee.
- The Clerk **agreed** to make the above changes to Local Authority records.
Action: Clerk.

7.2 Committee meeting attendance

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

7.3 Committee meeting minutes

- It was **agreed** that the minutes of the following Committee meetings would be deferred to the next meeting of each Committee. **Action: Clerk**:
 - Academy Management Committee meeting, 16 June 2021
 - Student Progress Committee meeting, 19 May 2021

8. Headteacher's Report

8.1 Review school-based end of year assessment data

- Governors received the Teacher Assessed Grades 2020/21 document from Joe Dicocco, and Joe gave a verbal presentation, explaining the document. The following points were noted, as set out in the above document:
 - Students were just under a third of a grade below the school's targets.
 - There is a 12% gap to target in Basics 9-4, and a 3% gap to target in Basics 9-5. The school's focus must be on closing the gap to target

for 9-4.

- Overstaffing has been created to allow for more and smaller teaching groups in KS4. Some groups are sub-15 students and predominantly disadvantaged, with a focus on getting students who need this support to Grade 4. This initiative is being supported by Pupil Premium and Covid catch-up funding.
- In Basics 4+ and Basics 5+ whole cohort, while more students achieved Grade 4 in English than in Mathematics, the school needs to focus equally on improvements in both these subjects. As English is two subjects it is likely that they achieve more 4+ than Mathematics so we cannot draw a conclusion from this that one subject is outperforming another.
- In Basics 7+, the school is above target, reinforcing that the school's teaching is catering well to higher ability students. The focus must be on improving provision for those targeted lower grades, such as Grade 4.
- For Basics 4+ English and Mathematics disadvantaged breakdown, the gap to target is 19%, compared to 12% for the entire cohort. This supports the need to focus on the disadvantaged cohort in this area.
- The gap to target for Basics 5+ English and Mathematics is 7%, against 3% for the entire cohort.
- For Basics 7+ English and Mathematics, disadvantaged students were on track and the whole cohort was above target.

Joe gave the following responses to questions from Governors:

- *Are we earmarking Pupil Premium funding for the small groups of disadvantaged students?* Yes, and also Covid catch-up funding. If these smaller groups are successful, we will look to use Pupil Premium funding going forward.
- *How is behaviour in the smaller groups?* Behaviour is ok; the students are getting used to the smaller groups. In response to queries from some students as to whether they were in the bottom group, students were reassured that this was not the case.
- *Are you letting parents know about the smaller groups?* Yes.
- *Are you identifying students on exam results, or whether they are Pupil Premium/disadvantaged?* Both. The first consideration is whether the student would benefit in terms of exam results, then whether they are disadvantaged is considered.
- *How do you justify these measures to those who are not helped in this way?* Disadvantaged students come with funding, which is how we are able to do this. However, other students will also benefit, as their class sizes will automatically reduce as a consequence.

- *Are resits taken at LLOBA?* Yes, but normally only for students who are able to progress onto our A-Level courses, apart from English and Maths.
- *Would you consider a City and Guilds approach for post-16 students?* No. I cannot see the advantage to this, as it would mean a new curriculum.

8.2 Implementation of recovery curriculum

- Governors received the Implementation of Recovery Curriculum document from Joe Dicocco, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- The above document provided an update on the situation with Covid catch-up funding; the support that is in place for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils; and the support that is in place for the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and parents.

Joe gave the following response to a question from a Governor:

- *Have you recruited additional teaching staff for the recovery curriculum?* No, we are working with existing staff.
- *[Comment from a Governor]: I believe that a focus on revision techniques is money well spent, and a very effective use of staff.*

8.3 Behaviour Hubs programme

- Governors received an on-screen presentation on the Behaviour Hubs programme from the Principal.
- The Principal explained that this is a £10 million project, running for 3 years, and that the school was successful in being chosen to be part of the second wave of this project. The Principal and Assistant Principal Paul Walsh had attended the Hub Launch event in Birmingham on 14 September, and the Principal gave a presentation on this project to Governors.
- The main programme objectives include:
 - Creating Hubs to share practice where Lead and Partner schools work closely together to turn around behaviour cultures
 - Equipping senior leaders to improve their school's behaviour policies and practices via facilitated peer learning
 - Generating cultural change in schools that want to reduce their levels of low-level disruption and challenging behaviour
- Intended outcomes of the programme include:
 - Short term:
 - Progress against implementation of new behaviour approaches
 - Consistently applied and understood behaviour policies

- Medium term:
 - Improved school behaviour cultures and staff confidence
 - Fewer incidents of disruption, persistent unauthorised absences and bullying
- Long term:
 - Wider impacts on pupil attainment and outcomes, pupil and staff wellbeing, staff recruitment and retention
- As a reflective activity, the Principal asked Governors to consider what they would like Behaviour at Lord Lawson to look like. Governors were divided into 5 groups, and the response to the above question from each group was as follows:

Group 1

Positive attitudes towards behaviour in the classroom; respect in the classroom to transfer to outside the classroom; students to be focussed in the classroom; students to still be allowed to 'be children' with the school a happy place, and not regimented which would not suit the culture of the school; students to be respectful because they know it is the right thing – not out of fear.

Group 2

Students to show excitement, enthusiasm, care and ambition; this is a caring school with a strong and supportive community; students to know and understand that they are active citizens in this culture; an ethos of care along with ambition.

Group 3

Students taking control and ownership of their own behaviour and actions – e.g., not having to tell them to pick up litter, as they do not drop it in the first place; having behaviour systems in place that are not necessarily implemented (due to students taking ownership and acting independently in doing the right thing), but are there if needed.

Group 4

Where there are key players in disruptive behaviour, make these key players more interested in their learning, for example via smaller groups; encouraging learning the right behaviour via students' peers, which is often a far stronger influence than being told what to do by teachers.

Group 5

Impact on staff and pupils: would like to see staff better trained and therefore with greater confidence in dealing with behaviour issues; staff to approach students after having a conversation about their behaviour, to make sure all is well with the students; confidence needs to be built to enable staff to do this well.

The Principal and Paul Walsh gave the following responses to questions from Governors:

- *Are the school's behaviour systems going to be changed?* [Paul Walsh]: It is about improving things: building confidence in staff, and undertaking a restorative approach with students
- *Are the students going to be involved?* [The Principal]: The students are not involved yet, but they will be, once this gets going. We want to hear their voices and we value their input.

8.4 Update on School Improvement Plan

- It was noted that Governors **adopted** the Opportunity North East Action Plan (School Improvement Plan) for 2021/22, which has been approved by the DfE.

8.5 Safeguarding

- It was noted that there were 20 Operation Encompass referrals over the summer period, one third of which were repeat referrals. The referrals were in relation to 16 students.
- It was noted the post-Covid trend on referrals is currently on the increase.

8.6 Children with health needs who cannot attend school

- The Principal confirmed that the school was compliant in terms of following the statutory guidance for ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school due to health needs.

8.7 Early Careers Teachers (ECTs)

- The Principal confirmed that the school was compliant in terms of following statutory guidance for the induction of Early Careers Teachers.

9. **Academy Trust Handbook**

Governors were asked to ensure they meet the key requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

9.1 Structures

- Board meetings must take place at least three times a year (and business conducted only when quorate). If the board meets less than six times a year it must describe in its governance statement, accompanying its annual accounts, how it maintained effective oversight of funds with fewer meetings

[this is achieved through the Resources committee also meeting three times a year].

- The Principal **confirmed** that the school is compliant in all matters pertaining to the school's governance including Board meetings structure.

9.2 Management accounts

- The management accounts must be shared with the Chair of Trustees every month, irrespective of the trust's size, and with those other trustees six times a year, even if they do not meet in each of those months.
- It was **agreed** that the Principal would ask James Pedlingham to send the management accounts to the Clerk every month, and that the Clerk will forward the accounts to all Governors. **Action: Principal; Clerk.**

9.3 Audit and Risk Committee

- The board must appoint an Audit & Risk Committee – either a dedicated committee (if annual income is over £50 million) or combined with another committee such as Resources, to advise the board on the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and risk management arrangements, to direct a programme of internal scrutiny and to consider the results and quality of external audit.
- It was **noted** that James is currently working on this, it will become part of the Academy Management Committee's agenda, and that Louise and Kevin will also become involved in looking into this matter. **Action: Louise Doran; Kevin Thompson.**

9.4 Submit audited accounts

- The Academy Trust must maintain adequate accounting records and prepare an annual report and accounts. The accounts must be audited, and the audited report and accounts must be:
 - submitted to ESFA by 31st December
 - published on the trust's website by 31st January
 - filed with Companies House under company law, usually by 31st May
 - provided to every member (under the Companies Act)
 - provided to anyone who requests a copy.
- It was **noted** that the Academy was compliant in all the above.

10. Statutory responsibilities

10.1 Information to publish on a school website

- Governors received the Information to publish on a school website document, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was **agreed** that Andrew Chanse would complete all tick-boxes/RAG

ratings on the above document, indicating where the school is/is not compliant, and will send this document to James for review. **Action: Andrew Chanse.**

- It was further **agreed** that the Principal will ask James to forward the document to the Clerk, who will include it in the papers that are sent to Committee Members for the next Academy Management Committee meeting on 20 October 2021. **Action: Principal; Clerk.**

10.2 SEN Information Report

- The Principal **agreed** to send out this document to Governors, after the meeting. **Action: Principal.**

10.3 Policy schedule

- Governors were asked to re-adopt the following statutory policies that require annual review:
 - Child Protection Policy – Dr Jane Halpin
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy – Claire Godfrey
 - Educational Visits – Cllr Sheila Gallagher
 - Terms of Reference – Student Progress committee (see Handbook)
 - Terms of Reference – Academy Management committee (see Handbook)
- Governors to re-adopt the following statutory policy that requires **periodic review**:
 - Data Protection Policy (review required every 2 years) – Chris Smith
- It was **agreed** that the Principal will send out the following policy documents to relevant Governors for review, and that these policies will go to the next Governing Body meeting on 8 December 2021 for ratification: **Action: Principal; Clerk:**
 - Child Protection Policy
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
 - Educational Visits Policy
- It was **noted** that Governors **adopted** the following policy documents:
 - Terms of Reference – Student Progress committee
 - Terms of Reference – Academy Management committee
- It was **agreed** that the Data Protection Policy would go to the Academy Management Committee meeting on 20 October 2021 for review and ratification. **Action: Clerk.**

