

Vale of York Academy
Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Governing Committee held on
held via Zoom on Monday 25TH January 2021 at 5:00pm

Present:	Toby Eastaugh (Principal) Jenny Smailes David Seddon Matt Halifax (Vice Principal)	Andy Thirlwell (Vice Chair) Paul Clayton Helen Todd
In Attendance:	Janet Edgar (Governance Support Officer and Clerk)	

		Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received, with consent, from Patrick Looker. It was noted that Miriam Zulkarnain was not expected to join the meeting as she had completed her term of office.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020, Action Plan & Matters Arising</u> The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record. There were no actions or matters arising to report.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Principal's Report</u> The Principal's Report had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><u>Remote Learning Update</u> The Principal advised that the school had structured provision differently during this lockdown; the normal timetable was followed and teachers made themselves available for remote provision when they would have been teaching. There was increased remote provision, with posting taking place lesson by lesson rather than weekly, and greater levels of student engagement. Teachers updated student engagement to green or red on a spreadsheet so that rates could be tracked. Current rates ranged between 65-80% in the core subjects across the year groups, with foundation subjects being slightly lower. In summary, the level of student uptake was higher and productivity was much higher.</p> <p>The Principal went on to explain that the school aimed to offer a blended approach of pre-set, pre-recorded and live tuition, not 'wall to wall' zoom lessons. Teachers were available for live support for one lesson a week in Key Stage (KS) 4, which was expected to increase. There had been a good response to a parent survey that had been circulated on 22nd January, with 170 replies being received right away. The responses showed a high level of support from parents, and it was evident from the comments that families would like to see more regular contact between students and teachers. The Principal said that the blended approach would continue, but he would be talking to curriculum leaders about developing more contact with students, for instance through Google Meet.</p> <p>A Governor asked for clarification about whether the sessions were for teachers to deliver live teaching, or to answer queries from students. The Principal said that it was both, for instance a</p>	

teacher met with the class at a given time, introduced an activity and then remained on live stream to answer any questions. The class would be brought back together to provide feedback and to discuss learning. There were other models, for instance the teacher being available for the first 15 minutes of a session to deal with common queries. Generally the session would not be a fully taught lesson, however the English Department was increasingly confident in this and was at the forefront of live delivery tuition.

The Principal advised that Year 11 students had recently completed online assessments in English and Maths. These were not referred to as mocks. There had been a high take-up.

With respect to CPD, increasing teacher expertise in remote learning was a priority, and the Principal explained how 'show and share' sessions had recently been introduced to build confidence and share best practice between peers.

The Chair asked if governors had any questions.

Governors wanted to know more about the remote learning engagement of different year groups.

The Principal used the screen share facility to show governors how the tracking spreadsheet worked and the response rates for different year groups. There was around 75% engagement in the core subjects for each year group. A Governor asked how engagement was measured. The Vice-Principal explained that a pupil had to submit work to be classed as engaged; as this was a weighty piece which had to be marked there would be a lag in the data. It was explained that engagement was more than a student being 'in front of the screen'.

Governors asked if the staff sharing was completely in-house, or did it include others in the Trust or external input. The Vice Principal said that the CPD was developing organically, with various levels of support. The Trust Teaching and Learning Leads met as a group, and there were shared Trust folders for resources. If staff felt that they needed professional development, this was available remotely. Regular network meetings, for instance to explore what was working well in English, or with technology, were taking place.

Governors recognised the mental health impact on students of the current restrictions, and asked how this was being addressed through pastoral care. The Principal explained how a spreadsheet, which was shown on screen, was used to identify those students doing well and those that required higher levels of communication. Those who were doing well had email communication, and a phone call every three weeks; those who required more support had more frequent phone contact. Staff were able to drill down to identify which students were struggling with their wellbeing, or were 'hard to reach'. It was noted that some children were marked as red across the board, meaning that they were not engaging with remote learning at all. Staff were working hard to maintain regular contact with the hard to reach, including student support advisors 'knocking on doors'.

Behaviour and attitudes

The Principal reported on the improved distribution of Chromebooks, which was now more coherent and involved prioritising different category groups. About 135 had been issued, with the Trust providing a further ten. The school was very grateful to Acomb Rotary who had bought five Chromebooks for the school. In all, IT coverage at home was much greater than it had been in the summer.

Governors heard that the provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable children was working well. The number of children in school was higher than the previous lockdown, and was proportionally similar to other secondary schools in York. The students followed the same programmes of learning as those at home, supported by staff in school.

A Student Survey was being sent out the next day. This was the last survey, with the one to parents and staff already completed.

	<p>The Principal reported on the Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) that was available in school to staff twice a week, or when they came into school if on a rota. As of last week, 80 adults had been tested. The Trust primary schools were also using the testing facility. The testing of students had paused due to further guidance being required from the DfE on whether children would still have to self-isolate if identified as a contact. It was noted that the feedback from parents had been that they were content for their children to be tested.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for his report.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Autumn Term Data Update</u> Year 11 data had been distributed with the agenda.</p> <p>The Principal explained that the fourth column of the distributed paper provided the most recent data for Year 11 students. This showed a Progress 8 score of 0.15, which was reasonably close to the FFT20 (representing the top 20% of schools nationally) target of 0.24. Governors noted the positives, as summarised on the report.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the most significant question at the moment was how grades were going to be awarded. A consultation exercise was currently being undertaken by Ofqual. It was anticipated that there would be a mixture of teacher judgements and tests, with externally set papers being one source of evidence. The use of a national algorithm to determine results was not thought to be likely.</p> <p>In response to a question from a governor, the Principal said that he expected that the external tests would be used to inform teacher assessment, and would be one element of data collection. Schools would be looking for multiple pieces of evidence that a student was achieving at a certain Grade.</p> <p>Governors queried whether there had been a dip in the Progress 8 score since Spring Term Year 10, as the figure shown was 0.28 and now it was 0.15. The Principal said that this was due to a few factors - Year 10 results tended to be more optimistic; three children had had to be discounted eg due to permanent exclusion; and the impact of Covid. He added that the school had been lucky as it had few positive Covid cases, and before the latest lockdown students had been able to attend school with relatively little disruption.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Academy Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Framework</u> The Self-evaluation and academy development plan had been distributed with the agenda. The Principal advised that the SEF was a draft document which followed a Trust wide format. He had attempted to keep it concise. The document started with the Trust Strategic Plan, and went on to provide an overview, summary of priorities, context and success criteria. Actions were identified for each priority, with a RAG rating. The document covered the period to summer 2022 and brought together an overview of evaluation alongside the development plan.</p> <p>It was agreed that the document would be reviewed by one of the working parties, when it had been considered by staff.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Finance Update</u> The Management Accounts and Financial Report for Period 12 (2019-20), and the Financial Report for Period 3 (2020-21) had been distributed with the agenda. The Principal reported that the forecasted in-year revenue position for Period 12 showed a surplus of £6,954. This was a better position than had been expected in September, for the reasons listed in the report. However, although the Start Budget for 2020-21 had been set with a surplus of £51,830 the forecasted in-year position for Period 3 showed a deficit of £21,877. The reasons for the variance were outlined on the report, and included the long term sickness cover for a member of staff (£10k) and additional expenditure on electrical testing (£8k). The Principal advised that this increased expenditure could have been covered had the</p>	

	<p>school not lost income from Lettings. This was a valuable source of income for the school, but it had been prohibited due to the lockdown. The school was approximately £73k away from its budgeted position.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that a business could claim part of the lost Lettings income through its insurance, and queried whether this would be an option for the school. The Principal said that through its insurance scheme the school could claim back the cost of trips, and he would investigate whether this was also a possibility with respect to earnings through Lettings. He advised that there would be some savings on staffing and the supply budget, therefore the size of the predicted deficit could reduce by the end of the year. Other schools were in a similar position. The silver lining was that funding would increase due to an increase in pupil numbers.</p> <p><i>ACTION: The Principal to check whether the school could claim back Lettings income losses through its insurance.</i></p> <p>Governors asked whether the school would be recruiting to vacancies in the summer term. The Principal outlined recruitment plans, advising that it would be possible to delay the advertising of some posts, due to not being in school. This would recoup some costs. It was confirmed that there had been no resignations.</p>	TE
7.	<p><u>Governance</u> Safeguarding training - It was noted that governors had been asked to ensure that they had completed basic safeguarding training in the last two years. Any governor who had not completed the training must complete the NGA Learning Link module as soon as possible, and provide a copy of the certificate on completion to the school.</p> <p>The Chair, Mr Seddon and Ms Smalles advised that they had completed online training on cross-curricular activities, health and safety, and safeguarding respectively.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Safeguarding (Standing Item)</u> It was noted that an update on safeguarding had been provided as part of the Principal's Report.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Policies to Note / Approve</u> There was a query over whether the policies were for approval or noting. The Clerk said that she would check this with the Governance Advisor. <i>[Update – The Governance Advisor confirmed that the policies were to approve, but had already been agreed by the Trust, therefore could not be changed. Governors were required to be aware of the policies, and their responsibilities within them.]</i></p> <p>The following policies had been circulated with the agenda for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exclusion Policy * Anti Bullying Policy * NQT Induction Policy <p><i>APPROVED: Governors unanimously approved the policies.</i></p> <p>Governors noted the following policies, which had been reviewed and approved by Trustees for adoption trust-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School Minibus Policy * Pupils with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy * NQT Induction Policy – COVID addendum * Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy * Alternative Provision Policy 	
10.	<p><u>Items & Questions to Raise with the Trust Board</u> Governors noted the Board of Trustees Update for LGCs – January 2021. There were no items or</p>	

	questions to raise with the Trust Board.	
11.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> <u>Governor information</u> – The Principal said that it appeared that the LGC would need to operate remotely for some time, therefore he wanted reassurance that governors were receiving the information they needed.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that communication from the school was good, and they did not feel that they were missing any information that went out to parents. In addition, they received information that was not shared with parents, as appropriate. Although there were certain difficulties with virtual meetings, it was felt that the same questions were being asked had the meeting been face to face. The area most affected was the role of the link governor, which had been stepped back due to not being able to visit schools and the workload of staff. However, it was felt that if there was a reason to, link governor activities could be reinstated.</p> <p>This prompted a governor to ask how the staff were coping with the current situation, pointing out that they were juggling teaching in school and online. The Principal advised that in a recent staff survey colleagues had been asked to comment on their workload – everyone had agreed or strongly agreed that they knew what was expected of them, and three quarters of staff had said that they were managing the workload.</p> <p>The Principal referred to the earlier discussion about the ‘show and share’ CPD, which was a supportive way of sharing good practice. Half of the staff had attended the show and share meeting the previous week. The Vice-Principal reported on efforts to encourage more social interaction, as this would help to combat feelings of isolation. The Principal said that teachers were in school on a rota basis once a fortnight, but the rest of the time they were at home. There were weekly staff briefings to help keep people in touch, as well as curriculum meetings, with some subject teams touching base on zoom on a daily basis.</p> <p>The Vice-Principal said that there was a good deal of new work and adaptation going on, but it was important to remember that there was still ‘the day job’ to do, for instance curriculum leaders reviewing their development plans.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Dates of future meetings</u> Monday 12th April 2021 at 5.00pm Monday 7th June 2021 at 5.00pm</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.09 pm

Patrick Looker

Patrick Looker, LGC Chair

12/04/2021

Date

Vale of York Academy LGC – Action Points From the Meeting of the Local Governing Committee held on 25th January 2021

	<u>Action Point</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
1	<i>The Principal to check whether the school could claim back Lettings income losses through its insurance.</i>	6	<i>Principal</i>	<i>Update to next meeting</i>