

**Vale of York Academy**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Governing Committee held on**  
**held via Zoom on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 5:00pm**

<b>Present:</b>	Toby Eastaugh (Principal) Patrick Looker (Chair) Jenny Smailes David Seddon	Andy Thirlwell Helen Todd Jack Martin Paul Clayton
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Mick Waring (Financial Controller, Hope Learning Trust) [to 5.40pm] Simon Bryan-Smith (Finance Director, Hope Learning Trust) [to 5.40pm] Fiona Hunter (SEnCo, Vale of York Academy) [from 5.30pm to 5 50pm] Gavin Kumar (Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare, Vale of York Academy) [from 5.30pm to 6.10pm] Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor and Clerk)	

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Declarations of Interest</u></b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received, with consent, from Matt Halifax. There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Action Plan &amp; Matters Arising</u></b> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.  With reference to the Action Plan: <i>1. Governors agreed that attendance would need to continue to be monitored closely and requested an update at the next meeting on Year 10 attendance particularly. To be discussed under item 4.</i>  <i>2. The Principal agreed to share the curriculum led financial planning which was being used to set the budget as part of wider discussions at the next meeting. To be discussed under item 3.</i>  <i>3. The Governance Advisor agreed to share the spring term training attendance record with the Chair. Completed.</i>  <i>4. The Governance Advisor agreed to forward details of training opportunities to Jack Martin, newly elected staff governor. Completed.</i>  <i>5. The Principal agreed to circulate working party meeting dates to all governors for information. Completed.</i>  There were no other matters arising.	
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>Resources – Receipt of Start Budget 2021/22</u></b> Mick Waring, Financial Controller, and Simon Bryan-Smith, Finance Director, were in attendance to present the latest monitoring report and draft start budget to governors. A copy of the 2021/22	

budget forecast for Vale of York Academy had been circulated with the agenda, along with a summary of budget parameters for information.

**Period 8 Monitoring Report**

Mick reported some movement in the budget within Period 8 and highlighted a number of changes. He advised that lettings income was significantly below the 2020/21 start budget figure, with a further reduction of around £30,000 by Period 9. Following initial anticipation that the school would make some income through lettings this year, this had not been possible due to Covid restrictions.

However, Mick reported that around £13,000 additional funding had been received in income through the Covid Testing Grant, with another similar amount expected in Period 10 which would be reflected in next month's accounts.

With reference to staffing, Mick highlighted a number of savings which had been made due to a reduction in overtime and vacant posts not being filled. It was noted that this equated to a positive variance of around £27,000.

Mick reported that an additional £13,000 had been included in the budget to cover the expected cost of offsite behavioural provision. He noted that this figure was a best guess and similar to costs in the spring term, as the actual amount was not yet known due to late invoicing from Danesgate.

**Governors noted the expected overspend deficit of around £70,000 this year and asked what the key elements of this were.** Mick advised that the majority was due to loss of income from lettings, which usually generated around £80,000 for the school. He noted that there had also been an overspend on supply cover due to Covid.

**Governors asked whether the Trust would support the school in budget issues due to loss of income and additional expenditure which was outside of the control of the school.** Simon advised that the Trust did not have income to cover any additional costs outside of the control of the school due to Covid. However, he advised that Trustees were understanding of the situation, and recognised where schools had made an effort to make savings and do what they could to bridge the gap. It was agreed that this had been an exceptional year.

**Governors asked whether the Trust was overall happy with the financial performance of the school.** Mick advised that the school was growing, and was therefore working on lagged funding for increasing pupil numbers which affected the finances. He noted that the original start budget for 2020/21 had been adjusted to include an additional member of staff, and this had been approved by Trustees, with other additional costs being mainly in relation to Covid. He advised that if savings could be made towards the end of the financial year, the Trust would recommend that these be pushed through, but it was recognised that Covid had hit all schools in the Trust in terms of finances.

Mick noted that the school had also had to cover the cost of two technicians over this year, a member of staff on long-term sickness absence and also cover for this post. He noted that this cost had hit the budget in excess of around £3,000 per month, but was again outside of the control of the school.

**It was noted that external behaviour support costs were significantly above the original budgeted figure. Whilst there were clear reasons for this, he questioned whether the same amount budgeted for 2021/22 was realistic.** The Principal noted that the retrospective way in which invoices were issued from Danesgate had meant that this area had seen an overspend against the budget. He did not also, however, that more could have been accounted for in this area over the year. The Principal advised that he had spoken to the Head of Danesgate as well as their finance team, and it had been agreed that they would provide termly updates from this point, in order to be able to have a clearer idea through the year of expected costs.

**Governors asked what percentage of overspend if any would be accepted by the Trust.** Simon

advised that any overspend would be looked at in detail, though as previously noted, it was recognised that the loss of lettings income and some additional expenditure was outside of the control of the school. He advised that Trustees would expect a narrative as to why there was an overspend in the budget, and would request that schools put tighter controls in place as far as possible due to more reserves than expected being used to cover the deficit.

### **2021/22 Start Budget**

Mick presented the 2021/22 start budget. He advised that the Year 7 intake of 165 was based on the latest figures provided for September 2021, with future years' forecast based on the previous years' intakes of around 140. He noted that by not inflating pupil numbers in future years, this enabled a more realistic forecast. It was also noted that bursary funding forecasts were based on an expected 1% uplift on Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) costs.

With reference to lettings, Mick advised that the school would usually have income of between £78,000 and £80,000 per year. However, £35,000 had been included for 2021/22 as it was expected that whilst income would start to re-generate, this may not be at the previous rate. Mick advised that if by the end of the next financial year lettings were looking to return to "normal", he would suggest increasing forecast income in future years.

With reference to expenditure, Mick highlighted a number of key points. He advised that teaching staff costs now included 0.4 FTE for the SENCo's work across the Trust. Costs for exams invigilators had been included at the same rate as the previous year, on the assumption that exams would go ahead in 2022. Premises staff over-time had been cut to 50% of the usual amount, due to the expected reduction in lettings in the next year. Mick advised that if lettings bookings increased, this expenditure would also go up, though would be offset by income. Midday Supervisor Assistant (MSA) over-time had also been increased in-line with this year, to cover the staggered lunchtime arrangements in place due to Covid restrictions.

Mick advised that supply teaching costs had been budgeted at £25,000. He advised that this was a potential risk, as the school had spent over this amount in the current financial year. Whilst this had included covering a substantive post in 2020/21 which would not be the case next year, Mick advised that this was an area which would need monitoring.

With reference to educational supplies, Mick advised that the Principal had requested additional budget to be included here, as departments had not had an increase in capitation during the current financial year. He advised that this included a contingency of £15,300 which could be potentially moved to a different budget area later in the year if needed.

As previously discussed, it was noted that costs for offsite provision would need to continue to be monitored closely over the year.

***Governors noted the total revenue balance for 2021/22 of £0.85, also noting the contingency of £15,300 which had been highlighted above within educational supplies.***

It was also noted that moving forward, the forecast budget position showed an increased surplus due to higher pupil numbers in future years.

***Governors noted the expected surplus of around £50,000 this year which would enable the budget to break even by the end of 2022. Governors asked whether any of the expected income streams were subject to change as far as it was known.*** Mick advised that the AWPU increase was confirmed at £400 per pupil, though there would be no grant increase for teachers' pay and pensions.

*[Gavin Kumar and Fiona Hunter joined the meeting at 5.30pm]*

Mick advised that a 2% increase for teachers had been included as an assumption, though this was

currently a best guess. He also noted that the 1.5% uplift for support staff had been confirmed, and was built into the budget.

Although it was expected that additional funding would be provided from central government for Covid catch-up use, this had not been confirmed and was therefore not included in the budget at this point.

#### ***Curriculum Led Financial Planning***

Governors reviewed the budget parameters information which had been circulated with the agenda. Simon advised that in terms of contact teaching ratio and pupil to teacher ratio, the school was only slightly above the parameter targets. He noted that with increasing pupil numbers, this would bring these further in line.

The Principal advised that he had looked at where there may be pressures on staff capacity in delivering the curriculum with higher pupil numbers, and he was confident that there was sufficient in place to accommodate this without increasing staffing. He advised that he was aware of the importance of these ratios in terms of efficiency of resources, and was happy that the current levels would work to the set parameters by September 2022.

Governors thanked Mick and Simon for attending, and for presenting the start budget.

*[Mick Waring and Simon Bryan-Smith left the meeting at 5.40pm]*

#### **6. SEND Annual Review Report**

Fiona Hunter, SENCo, presented the SEND annual report which had been circulated with the agenda.

Fiona reported that at the beginning of the academic year there were four students with EHCPs, and three further applications had been approved during the year. She noted that the application process was a long one, taking around 20 weeks from start to approval, and the LA allocation of Educational Psychologist time had been used to support this. Fiona advised that further applications were currently in process via the parental pathway, including four students in Key Stage 3. For information, Fiona outlined the steps taken in the application process, and where the requests included a change of provision to support individual students with significant needs.

Fiona highlighted a number of further potential EHCP applications which were currently in process for students coming into Year 7. She advised that due to a delay in starting the applications by primary schools, these would not be processed before the students started in September. Fiona advised that the identified needs of some of these students was likely to put pressure on staffing resources and capacity due to the need for additional one to one support.

Fiona advised that intervention and provision had been disjointed due to Covid. However, a thematic approach had been set up for students with the highest needs of SEND during the period of wider school closure in January 2021. She advised that this had worked well, and had enabled a smooth transition back to school in March. Fiona advised that moving forward into the next academic year, provision for students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) would be further developed to include a sensory base to help self-regulation.

Fiona advised that planned interventions for the next year would include a continued focus on literacy. She reported that the implementation of Read, Write Inc (RWI) via small group delivery would complement the existing intervention programme of Thinking Reading, which was now being delivered by trained TAs across school. In terms of impact, Fiona advised that those students who had been on the Thinking Reading programme for one month had increased their reading age by approximately six months, and those who had been on for six months had improved by between twelve and eighteen months.

In terms of CPD, Fiona advised that this was very much driven by the needs of the cohort of SEN students in school.

**Governors recognised that this had been an incredibly difficult year, and asked how the school had supported SEND students particularly during wider school closures when they were not in school on a regular basis.** Fiona agreed that it had been very difficult in terms of disruption to interventions. As reported earlier, she highlighted the thematic approach taken to ASC students during the most recent lockdown, which had been positive and beneficial to that group. The Principal advised that the SENCo and Pastoral Support Team had been more proactive during the most recent lockdown in bringing students in to school who were identified as being vulnerable, and this increased contact and support had worked well.

**Governors how the success of interventions was measured, in particular what was working well and what needed to be approached differently.** Fiona advised that she had been working with a consultant in a trust-wide capacity, and they had provided some helpful ideas on how to measure impact. In terms of literacy interventions, it was possible to gather data on student progress. With emotional wellbeing, Fiona advised that it was more of a challenge to come up with data to measure impact. However, improvement in behaviour and monitoring the number of time-outs could be used as a starting point.

**Governors asked how the school was working with feeder primaries on transition arrangements, particularly for students with identified SEN.** Fiona advised that the transition process had been streamlined considerably so that there was a clear understanding of children coming into Year 7, potential behaviour issues and additional needs. She advised that the process was much improved on previous years.

The Principal highlighted the significant development in SEN provision in the last two years, due to the work of the SENCo over this time. Governors agreed, and expressed their thanks to Fiona in recognition of this.

*[Fiona Hunter left the meeting at 5.50pm]*

#### **4. Principal's Report**

##### **4.1 Safeguarding, Behaviour & Attendance**

Gavin Kumar presented the safeguarding, behaviour and attendance report, which had been circulated with the agenda.

##### **Behaviour**

Gavin reported that the new Behaviour Intervention Lead had now started in post, working with a small group of Year 7 students with significantly challenging behaviour. He advised that this provision was called the Hive, and as a direct result of this work, the number of fixed term exclusions for this group had reduced significantly.

For next academic year, Gavin reported that he had agreed with the Behaviour Intervention Lead that her role should continue to focus on the lower end of the school with Year 7 and Year 8 students. He noted that transition work with feeder primaries had enabled identification of students who may require additional support with behaviour as they moved up to secondary school in September.

Overall, behaviour for learning across school was very good. Gavin highlighted how this was evidenced both by on call events and seclusion incidents being the lowest recorded in the past three years. He noted that whilst it had not been possible to get a full data set for the last two academic years due to lockdowns, data for this year was still significantly lower. Gavin advised that eight students accounted for 62% of the total number of days' fixed term exclusions for the current academic year. He outlined the interventions and support in place for each of these students, which were aimed at reducing incidents of fixed term exclusions.

Gavin reported that overall, spikes in behaviour issues had been higher in the autumn term than following the latest lockdown. He noted that the increased provision and amount of contact between school and home in the spring term appeared to have made the transition back into a school routine easier for students. Gavin also highlighted that where students had been identified as vulnerable, they had been invited to attend school in person during the wider closure between January and March.

It was noted that there had been two permanent exclusions in this academic year, and three governor panels for students who had received over 15 days' fixed term exclusion.

### **Safeguarding**

Gavin reported that three Progress Leaders had now completed their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training, which had increased capacity within the Safeguarding Team. He advised that there was currently a recruitment process ongoing for a further two Progress Leaders, and it was hoped that these would also be trained up following appointment.

Gavin reported that the school website would now also include a more accessible link to the Whisper anonymous reporting tool, and students and families would be signposted to this. He explained that this was a facility for students and parents/carers to report safeguarding and bullying issues, anonymously if needed.

### **Attendance**

Gavin reported that whilst the current headline figure of 92.78% was above the 91% national rate, attendance had been affected significantly by Covid, and continued to be an area of concern.

Gavin highlighted in particular attendance in Year 10, which was the lowest in the school. He advised that he was working closely with the Attendance Officer and Year 10 Progress Leader to track every student in the cohort, with detailed intervention in place and under review for those with low attendance levels.

Gavin advised that the school continued to follow the agreed process in addressing attendance issues, with formal meetings with parents/carers where students reached a particular level. However, he noted that the LA was not pursuing fines for absence this academic year, despite a number of referrals by the school. He noted that this had caused some difficulty with enforcing attendance requirements with some persistent absentees.

Gavin reported that there were plans in place to hold monthly meetings with LA Officers to discuss specific case studies and strategies to further improve attendance. He advised that this had been trialled successfully in another local secondary school.

**Governors asked whether similar issues with attendance were evident in other year groups.** Gavin advised that there were a group of students in Year 10 with significantly low levels of attendance, which had an impact on the overall figure for the year group. Gavin advised that he had asked the Year 10 Pastoral Lead to RAG rate all students, and attendance monitoring was a high priority in their regular meetings. Gavin noted there was a particular focus on those students rated Amber, where increased intervention could have a positive impact on their overall attendance by the end of the year.

The Principal advised that attendance as of 7<sup>th</sup> June showed Year 7 at 95%, Year 8 at 94.8%, Year 9 at 93% and Year 10 at 88%. **Governors agreed that this level of attendance for Year 10 was particularly concerning as the cohort moved into their exam year from September.** Gavin advised that improving attendance was a high priority and would continue to have a high profile moving into the next academic year. He also noted that in terms of consistency, the Year 10 cohort would have the same Pastoral Lead through to the end of Year 11.

**Governors asked what the school was doing over the rest of the summer term to support Year 10, in**

**terms of progress measures.** Gavin advised that discussions had been ongoing since the previous year about the work needed to push students forward, and all possible interventions were being put in pace to support this, including the increased attendance strategy.

The Principal advised that RAG meetings were held with the English and Maths Curriculum Leads, as well as the Progress Leader. During these meetings, staff would look at every single student, their current attainment and progress, and the interventions and strategies needed to support them moving forward. The Principal advised that similar discussions were also run for the EBacc and open bucket subjects, through line management meetings.

The Principal advised that Year 10 students had undertaken exams at the start of the summer term, which was the first formal assessment for the year group since March 2020. Data from these assessments showed that the Progress 8 (P8) score for this cohort was currently -0.3, significantly below where it needed to be. The Principal advised that now that there was up to date meaningful data available, the school would be able to look in more detail at what needed to be done and what would be done to move these students forward.

*[Gavin Kumar left the meeting at 6.10pm]*

#### **4.1 Data Update**

Data for the Year 11 cohort had been previously distributed. The Principal reported that two data collections had been carried out this half term, as well as one at the end of the spring term.

The P8 score following the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process was 0.39. However, the Principal advised that benchmarking against 1600 other schools through SISRA and using the 2019 algorithm, this reduced to 0.05.

The Principal advised that in terms of attainment, basics at 4+ (English and Maths) remained steady at 62%, whilst basics at 5+ (English and Maths) had increased significantly. He advised that this was primarily down to a number of students converting their 4s into 5s in English. The Principal advised that the TAG process had enabled students to be assessed, go back and provide evidence. Where students were motivated they had seized this opportunity to provide further evidence and improve their grades. However, there was also a group of students who had not done so, and this gap had widened between low and high attainers.

The Principal advised that there would be a further update from SISRA on 8<sup>th</sup> June with the most up to date collaborative live data. He explained that this would provide an even clearer picture on how the school compared with others nationally who used the system. The Principal also advised that trust-wide moderation was taking place this week. He highlighted the benefits to the school in being part of this collaborative process.

The Principal highlighted that the P8 for Pupil Premium students had fallen, and also highlighted the P8 for SEN students which was very low at -0.83 (or -1.21 in comparison with other SISRA schools). The Principal noted, however, that there was a very small number of SEN students on the register for this cohort, and of these, three had not attended school since December 2020. He advised that in the event of a review, the context of this data could be clearly evidenced, along with details of the things which the school had put in place to try and get these students to engage.

#### **Staffing**

A summary staffing update had been circulated with the agenda. The Principal reported that there was currently an appointment process running for two Progress Leaders, with interviews scheduled for Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> and Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June. The Principal thanked Paul Clayton, who would be involved in this process, representing the LGC.

5.	<p><b><u>Academy Development Plan / Self-Evaluation Framework</u></b> No update attached.</p> <p>The Principal proposed that the remaining two working party meetings for this term should look at Year 10 and curriculum development. He advised that he would like to discuss with governors whether a three year Key Stage 4 remained the right model for the school moving forward.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: Governors requested a discussion paper from the Principal ahead of the next working part meeting for review, outlining pros and cons on a three and two year Key Stage 4.</i></b></p> <p>The Principal advised that there were no further updates on the Academy Development Plan.</p>	TE
7.	<p><b><u>Governance Update</u></b> <b><i>Summary from Trustee meetings April/May 2021.</i></b> Previously distributed. Noted.</p> <p><b><i>Update from Trust Chairs' Meeting (24<sup>th</sup> May)</i></b> The Chair highlighted the upcoming governor training on the assurance model and strategic challenge of the Academy Development Plan. Governors were encouraged to book a place on one of the two sessions running on 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Trust continued to be heavily focused on the upcoming merger with Sentamu Academy Learning Trust. He noted that whilst it was appreciated this impacted on the capacity of the Central Team during this time, there were recognised opportunities which would come from being part of a wider network of schools.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Safeguarding (standing item)</u></b> It was noted that an update on safeguarding had been provided under item 4.2.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Ethos &amp; Wellbeing</u></b> <b><i>Governors asked for an update on staff motivation and morale.</i></b> The Principal noted that all staff had been exhausted by half term, particularly impacted by the huge piece of work involved in the TAGs process.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Policies to Note/Approve</u></b> It was noted that the Lettings Policy had been scheduled for annual review, though no updates had been made. The Principal asked whether there were any Covid specific amendments which needed to be made to the policy as lettings started to open up again.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: The Governance Advisor agreed to check with the Trust for advice on any Covid specific amendments to the Lettings Policy and forward this information to the Principal.</i></b></p>	JS
11.	<p><b><u>Items and Questions to Raise with the Trust Board</u></b> There were no issues to raise with the Trust Board.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b> The Principal advised that there were a number of proposed residential trips which required approval to go ahead. A question was raised about delegated authority to approve these trips, and the Governance Advisor agreed to check the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and advise the Principal accordingly.</p> <p><b><i>i) Year 7 Residential – Lake District</i></b> The Principal advised that this had been run in 2019 very successfully, though the proposal was to move the date from September to November this year. He advised that the school would like to run</p>	



	<p>the trip subject to all necessary risk assessments being in place. In response to a question regarding funding, the Principal advised that parents/carers would be offered the chance to pay in a staggered way between now and the autumn term, with a full refund should the trip not go ahead. He advised that subsidies would also be offered to disadvantaged students using Pupil Premium funding.</p> <p>On this basis, governors agreed they were happy to approve the Year 7 residential trip.</p> <p><b>ii) Football Tour</b> The Principal advised that this had now been moved to 2023, and details of this would be brought for discussion and approval at a later date.</p> <p><b>iii) Skiing – Easter 2022</b> The Principal advised that the Vice Principal would like to run a skiing trip, subject again to all required risk assessments being in place. Governors raised a question about where this would fit with curriculum needs, and suggested that further detail was needed before approval.</p> <p><b>ACTION: The Principal agreed to provide further information on the proposed skiing trip for governors to make an informed judgement before approving.</b></p> <p><b>iv) Morocco – July 2022</b> The Principal advised that Mark Rampling, who had overseen the Morocco trip in 2019, would like to run the same trip in July 2022. He noted that the trip had been incredibly successful, and he would recommend governors’ approval. Governors noted that this had been a fantastic opportunity for students on the previous occasion it was run. Jack Martin also noted that he was involved in the fundraising for the trip, with events planned in school as well as support for individual students in their independent fundraising. Governors agreed there were clear links to social wellbeing as well as experience for students involved.</p> <p>Governors agreed they were happy to approve the proposed Morocco trip in July 2022, subject to foreign office advice at the time of travel and all necessary risk assessments being in place.</p>	TE
13.	<p><b><u>Dates of 2021/22 Meetings</u></b> Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 5pm Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 5pm Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 5pm Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 5pm Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022, 5pm</p> <p>A full Trust meeting schedule for 2021/22 had also been circulated for information.</p> <p>The Principal agreed to circulate proposed dates for two further working party meetings in the summer term – the first with a focus on Year 10 and the second on curriculum moving forward.</p>	

The meeting closed at 7.00pm

***These minutes were approved at the Vale of York LGC meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021***

**Vale of York Academy LGC – Action Points from the Meeting of the Local Governing Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

	<b><u>Action Point</u></b>	<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Timescale</u></b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Governors requested a discussion paper from the Principal ahead of the next working part meeting for review, outlining pros and cons on a three and two year Key Stage 4.</i>	5	<i>Toby Eastaugh</i>	<i>23/07/2021</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>The Governance Advisor agreed to check with the Trust for advice on any Covid specific amendments to the Lettings Policy and forward this information to the Principal.</i>	10	<i>Jess Swarbrick</i>	<i>30/06/2021</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>The Principal agreed to provide further information on the proposed skiing trip for governors to make an informed judgement before approving.</i>	12	<i>Toby Eastaugh</i>	<i>20/09/2021</i>

**Items for next agenda:**

APPROVED