



Present: Tracy Penfold Trustee
 Phil Grundy Principal
 Alan Benton Trustee
 Sophie Boyack Trustee
 Dave Brown Trustee
 Claudine Crossley Trustee
 Richard Palmer Trustee
 Christina Proffitt Trustee
 Andy Sikora Trustee

Also in Attendance: Tom Capewell and Nick Hyde (Assistant Principals)
 Tim Morris Company Secretary/Secretary to the Board
 Jacob Adeshina (School Business Manager)
 Sue Gill (Clerk to the Trustees)

Action summary:

3.2	Christina Proffitt’s reappointment will be updated on GIAS and Company House.
5.3	A date to be agreed for the Trustee Evening.
6.5.2	School to confirm who will submit the self-assessment form.
7.2	Detailed data report on the referral to the Inclusion Room to be made available at the next meeting
7.2.5	Confirmation of verbal abuse exclusions of SEND students
9 and 10.2	Link Trustee Reports including Safeguarding and Careers – agenda item
14	Company Secretary to inform Trustees of the new date for the Trust Board and Academy Effectiveness Committee meetings

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENSE

- 1.1 Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. There were no apologies as all trustees were present.
- 1.2 An apology for absence was received and accepted from Ginette Hogan.
- 1.3 No trustee was eligible for disqualification due to non-attendance.
- 1.4 The meeting was confirmed as quorate with eight trustees and the Principal present.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Trustees to declare any interests they have in any of the following agenda items - none Trustees had nothing to declare in relation to the agenda items.
- 2.2 Standing declarations
 Tracy Penfold - Chair of Governors Edinburgh Primary School and Governor of the Opossum Federation.
 Claudine Crossley – Governor on Churchfields Infants School

3. TRUST BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 To confirm Trust Board membership
 It was noted that Christina Proffitt’s term of office will be ending on 17 March 2022. Members confirmed Christina’s reappointment via an email dated 03/02/22. Her reappointment for another four-year term was noted.

Chair’s Initials:

3.2 Ensure details held about Trustees on GIAS and Companies House are up to date
The Company Secretary reported that Christina Proffitt's reappointment will be updated on GIAS and Company House.

ACTION: Company Secretary.

3.3 To confirm a section 128 check has completed
This was confirmed as having been completed.

3.4 Gifts and hospitality
It was confirmed that no gifts were received in the last academic year

4. MINUTES

4.1 Trustees received the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2021 and agreed these to be an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair of the Trustees will sign a copy of the minutes and these will be retained by the school for filing.

4.2 Matters arising:

2.2	The Company Secretary confirmed that Pecuniary Interest information was on the website.
3.1	The Chair contacted member re. Christina Proffitt's term of office.
7.2.2	The Principal allocated link areas of the SEF to Trustees.
12	Actioned – standing item
15	Vexatious Complaints Policy – this was an agenda item.

5. STRATEGIC SCHOOL ITEMS

5.1 School Strategic Building Document

5.1.1 The document outlined the process of the rebuilding programme. They were at the stage when questions were being asked about the school's uniqueness, curriculum, and link aspect with the community, to help inform the building process. The notes of the Estates Management Committee would be made available to Trustees. It highlighted the key questions in preparation of the discussion with the DfE.

5.1.2 Richard Palmer hosted site visits and informed Trustees that this was being fed into the initial thinking for the project. It was unknown what will be included in the scope. A telephone call was awaited on 11 February 2022 from the DfE giving confirmation on what had been passed through (technical breakdown of the site).

5.1.3 Richard Palmer reported that there had been a significant number of surveys carried out. The school was still at an early stage of the process. Views from the school and Trustees will help the architect to provide a customised site and what will go out to tender.

5.1.4 It was agreed that there should be extra after school curricular activities and offering community use of the site. It was recognised that there would be implications on the caretaking staff.

5.1.5 Thanks was extended to the Principal and Richard Palmer for their work.

5.3 Trustee Day/Evening

5.3.1 The Chair reported that an evening session was preferable. The Trustee Evening will be held on a Thursday. A date will be arranged.

ACTION: A date to be agreed for the Trustee Evening.

Q1: Will ideas be shared on how Trustees will be using the time?

A1: Approximately 15-20 minutes will be spent on clerking and the Company Secretary role. Other areas will include 20 questions, the Trustee Development Plan and possible Ofsted inspection (thought to be in this academic year).

Q2: How many Trustees would Ofsted inspectors speak to?

A2: As many Trustees who were available during the day. During the pandemic conversations were held virtually. The whole Trust Board would be invited for the formal feedback.

6 RESOURCES SCHOOL ITEMS – OVERVIEW

6.1 Feedback from Resources Committee meeting held 27 January 2022

The following points were highlighted:

- The committee looked at the December finance report.
- The contingency figures were confirmed and the Premises/Agency total line was £180,000.
- School resources management assessment form.
- Reserve's policy.
- Lettings rate.
- CIF bids – two applications were submitted and works overlapped with the SRP scheme and would need to be amended.
- Estates vision statement.
- The SRP was at the feasibility stage.
- GDPR – Nick Hyde was the Data Protection Officer.
- Finance staff – Jacob Adeshina and Alicia Rainger recently joined the school.
- Website compliance.
- Home/School agreement and Uniform Policy were agenda items.

6.2 Feedback from Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 27 January 2022

The following points were highlighted:

- The risk register was discussed. The scoring system will be changed.
- There were 50 risks that needed to be prioritised.
- The contract for the external auditor was going out to tender.

6.3 December Monthly Finance Report

Jacob Adeshina informed Trustees of the process of preparing the January account. The December figures were not as solid due to the year end, but once the adjustments had gone through, it will give a clearer picture on the December figures. Overall the budget had a good surplus

Q: Will the surplus of £106,000 increase?

A: It was likely to increase. There was a need to strip back how certain areas of the budget was reported. As discussed earlier, once the figures were stripped back, the school would be in a better position for January 2022.

6.4 Internal Audit Visit Report 1

6.4.1 Juniper looked at the controls of governance and banking. From the November meeting, there was one high priority (Trustees' declarations were not published on the website). There were no medium or low priorities.

6.4.2 There were some notes that were low priority i.e. business continuity and gifts. A discussion was held at the Audit Committee about the possible change of internal auditors so that the controls in place could be looked at with fresh eyes.

6.5 School Resource Management Self Assessment

6.5.1 This was updated from last year and the action plan will be built into future committee meetings. These documents can be accessed from the portal.

6.5.2 Trustees approved the self assessment for submission (by 15 March 2022)

Q: Who will be submitting the form?

A: Would either be the Chair or School Business Manager.

ACTION: School to confirm who will submit the self assessment form.

7. COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

7.1 Student Numbers

7.1.1 The student numbers after the October census, were lower than previous years. The following figures were highlighted:

	2021	2020
Year 7	224	241
Year 8	242	243
Year 9	240	238
Year 10	233	239
Year 11	235	234
Year 12	175	213
Year 13	187	153

7.1.2 The Year 7 numbers were below the 240 PAN. The school was trying hard to raise numbers. One of the reasons for the low numbers could be due to a low birth rate year. First confirmation of allocations for the next academic year placed Highams Park as one of the schools with full allocated places for Year 7.

7.1.3 This year was an anomaly, joiners and leavers were looked at closely. The movement of students in the first term was noted:

- 12 joined from local schools
- 10 moved into the local area
- 11 from abroad

The reasons for leaving were highlighted:

- 6 emigrated
- 1 home educated
- 5 moved out of the area
- 6 moved school either more local or first preference
- 1 attending the PRU
- 1 attending an emotional difficulty special school

7.1.4 There was a growth in the diversity of ethnicity, including new categories. White British remained the largest single category. However there was a noticeable decline in the number of White British (drop of 39 students by 2.1% between 2020-2021 compared to the figure of 483 in 2019. Numbers were decreasing year on year.

7.2 Report on fixed term exclusions

7.2.1 Tom Capewell advised Trustees that a detailed and accurate data report on referrals to the Inclusion Room (based on a full academic year), will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: Report to made available for next meeting.

7.2.2 Information presented at the meeting was from 1 September 2021 to 1 February 2022. There had not been much change in the level of fixed term exclusions compared to the last two comparable years, due to the pandemic and students being placed in bubbles. Last year's numbers were lower and student behaviour was easier to manage.

7.2.3 Comparable statistics from previous years pre-pandemic:
70 fixed term exclusions from 1-9-2018 to 1-2-2019

53 fixed term exclusions from 1-9-2019 to 1-2-2020
20 fixed term exclusions from 1-9-2020 to 1-2-2021
55 fixed term exclusions from 1-9-2021 to 1-2-2022

7.2.4 The school continued to find the major reasons for the fixed term exclusions were verbal abuse to staff, persistent disruptive behaviour and fights/physical assaults between students. The school consistently reminded students about the Behaviour Policy, the respect agenda, the three core value and maintained a tough line on verbal abuse to staff, along with persistent disruptive behaviour.

7.2.5 There were 17 SEND students who were excluded, this was proportionally high. Some of the offences were verbal abuse and disruptive behaviour.

Q1: Re. the exclusions of the SEND students, could some of the verbal abuse and disruptive behaviour be due to them not coping with school, frustration of not being able to articulate their feelings and having barriers to learning?

A1: It was suspected that this could be the case. Five of those students had EHCPs. The school would do everything it could to avoid excluding EHCP students. There was a high proportion who were struggling with behaviour post pandemic and needed to get back into routines and manage their emotions. Those students were finding it hard to deal with the pressures of being back in school. Without the raw statistics, there were 14 verbal abuse exclusions of students on the SEND register, this figure could be checked.

ACTION: Confirmation of verbal abuse exclusions of SEND students.

Q2: What was put in place to help the students manage the change from the pandemic?

A2: The school tried from October 2021 onwards to make sure they engaged with all parents, especially asking them to come into school. This had been a barrier before. The school was trying to get them to understand what they were asking of their children. This was an effective way of engaging in consistent messaging and expectations of the family.

Q3: How was the school addressing Pupil Premium students?

A3: This was over represented but was not the same level as SEND support. There was nothing specific in place for Pupil Premium students. They had other support structures including meetings with parents, reporting and behaviour monitoring if relevant.

Q4: Did the school find parents of Pupil Premium students less engaged with the process or the same across the board?

A4: The same, it was rare for parents not to attend return to school meetings. There was one family that found it hard to attend meetings, but on the whole parents engaged at the same level as non Pupil Premium families.

Q5: There was a high proportion of students from Any Other Black background. Going back to attainment and the FFT data, certain grouping of Black Caribbean or Black African were lower attaining groups. What was given in terms of support and parent engagement for those students?

A5: Apart from gender, students from Any Other Black background did not fully fit the profile. The school looked at every single exclusion, both Tom Capewell and Mr Jolly had reviewed five in the last couple of weeks and took a view as to whether the school had any unconscious bias in the processes. The school continued to take on board and challenge themselves as to whether that was the case. That figure was high, but the school will look at external processes to support the students. Those

students who are disadvantaged and those with SEN were disproportionately from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Q6: Was that the case across Waltham Forest and where a student had persistently breached, or there was a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy or if a permanent exclusion was used as a last resort

A6: This was a statistic that needed to be addressed. This national picture was demonstrated in the school. There had been a proactive measure in the school with the appointment of a Behaviour Mentor. The postholder was from a similar ethnic background to the highest proportion of students. The mentor was able to speak to students with a different context. It would be helpful to employ external mentors of a similar profile to potentially extend support to the students. It was also noted that most excluded students were males.

7.2.6 Trustees were assured that panel members on the Trustees' Disciplinary Committee scrutinised the presentations put before them. They provided an extra layer of robustness and challenge on the decision-making process to exclude. It was highlighted that those members of staff charged with the decision making process (the Principal who was the only staff member who could exclude, Tom Capewell and Tim Jolly) challenged each other. It was suggested that they needed to educate and train themselves along with other staff members to challenge unconscious bias.

Q: In terms of reasons for exclusion, was there much variation of categories, for example there were 14 cases of verbal abuse of adults?

A: This had not changed much. As stated earlier, the most frequent categories for exclusion were verbal abuse to adults, persistent/disruptive behaviour and physical assault between students.

7.2.7 Trustees noted that there was a sense of entitlement amongst students. This had been acute since they returned from lockdown. Some refused to listen to instructions and would verbally abuse their teachers. The school was maintaining a firm line against students swearing at adults.

7.3 Attendance

7.3.1 The pandemic impacted on student attendance figures. Trustees noted the in-depth summary of what was happening in the school. Compared to national figures, the school was doing well and tracking was in place for attendance below and just above the national figures. There was a total of 211 positive covid 19 cases in the school.

Q1: Did lateness continue to be an issue and was the percentage known?

A1: Information was not available at the meeting.

Q2: It had been mentioned that the late form was making things smoother? Were there any teething problems?

A2: It seemed to be working smoothly. A small number of parents had refused to complete the form. Parents were more honest with the reason their children were not attending school.

7.3.2 Richard Palmer stated that the system used to track attendance made it quicker to collect data.

Q1: Were there any students reporting sickness absence without parental knowledge?

A1: There could be a possibility of that. It might be useful to know if information was sent from a non-approved email account.

7.3.3 It was noted that previously when parents contacted the school re student absence, they would speak to an answering machine and not a person. If follow up was needed, there would be interaction with the parent.

8. **TEACHING AND LEARNING OVERVIEW**

8.1 Feedback from Academy Effectiveness Committee meeting held on 9 December 2021

The following points were highlighted:

- The committee looked at the data drop for Years 12 and 13, who were both in good positions. There was a focus on the underperforming Year 13 students. Additional support was given to the Year 12 students and Year 11 English and Science.
- A discussion was held about the recovery and the school led tutoring funding.

9. **SAFEGUARDING**

The Chair reported that a link meeting with the Safeguarding school lead will take place after half term.

ACTION: Report to next meeting.

10. **LINK TRUSTEE VISIT REPORTS**

10.1 It was noted that Ginette Hogan (Link with Nigel Armsby) had submitted a link report on SEF (quality education) on the portal.

10.2 Sophie Boyack met with Danielle Stephens earlier in the day and will provide feedback to the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda item.

10.3 All Trustees were encouraged to carry out link visits.

11. **TRUSTEE TRAINING**

Trustees were asked to send updated information of their attendance at training sessions to the Chair.

ACTION: Trustees.

12. **CHAIR'S ACTION AND REPORT**

12.1 No actions had been taken since the last Trust Board meeting.

12.2 The Chair and Alan Benton sat on staff interview panels

13. **STATUTORY GUIDANCE TO NOTE, POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS FO APPROVAL**

13.1 Statutory Guidance re cost of uniform

The guidance was published in November 2021. The purpose of the guidance was to ensure that the cost of school uniform was affordable for all. Branded items were to be limited. The school would also need to provide access to second-hand uniforms.

Parents were previously consulted on the policy via parent discussion groups.

13.2 Initial Teacher Training Policy

13.3 Early Career Teacher Policy. It was noted the school had 5 ECT's

13.4 Careers Policy and Statement and Provision

13.5 Careers Education Policy

13.6 Supporting Students with Medical Conditions

Nick Hyde spoke to Cally Halkes prior to the meeting. A Trustee had asked about the inclusion of a named staff member in case of a complaint. Rather than have a named member of staff, Trustees agreed that it should include the Vice-Principal responsible for student support.

13.7 Equality Statement

- 13.8 Equality Policy
- 13.9 Public Sector Equalities Objectives
- 13.10 Vexatious Complaints

- 13.11 School Uniform and Equipment List
It was whether jewellery was removed for PE lessons as there was no reference to jewellery in a health and safety aspect. The school rules stated what pieces of jewellery could be worn, it did not appear in the policy.

- 13.12 Home School Agreement
- 13.13 Reserves Policy
These documents were recommended for approval by the Resources Committee

- 13.14 Lettings Rates 2021/2022
The rates will be incorporated into the existing Lettings Policy for approval.

Trustees formally approved the above policies and documents.

14. DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETING

Dates were noted as follows:

- Resources Committee – 10 March 2022 at 10.15am
- Audit Committee – 10 March 2022 – to follow the Resources Committee
- Trust Board – currently 31 March 2022, a new date to be arranged
- Academy Effectiveness Committee (as above to follow the Trust Board meeting)

ACTION: Company Secretary to inform Trustees of the new date for the Trust Board and Academy Effectiveness Committee meetings

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 15.1 Appreciation was extended to the Trustees who sat on the two exclusion panel meetings in the last week.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.

Chair: (print)

..... (sign)

Date:

Chair's Initials:
