

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHAMS PARK ACADEMY TRUST BOARD  
HELD ON THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5PM AT THE SCHOOL AND VIRTUALLY**

Present: Tracy Penfold (Chair)  
**Trustee Attendees:**  
 Nigel Armsby-Principal  
 Alan Benton  
 Dave Brown  
 Claudine Crossley  
 Ginette Hogan  
 Erik Mesel  
 Richard Palmer

Clerk to the Trustees: Caroline Russell

Also present: Tim Morris, Company Secretary  
 Jacob Adeshina, Business Manager  
 Neil Tobias, Assistant Principal Attendance  
 Jaz Syed (Assistant Principal) Behaviour

**Summary of agreements and actions:**

	<b>Formal agreements and/or actions identified</b>	<b>Named person(s) for action(s) identified</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
3.1.	Chairing of Permanent Exclusion Panels: Post meeting discussion to be held.	Chair/Trustees.	Ongoing
12.	Dates and Times of Future Meetings: To be confirmed.	TP	As soon as possible.

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** All were welcomed to the meeting by the chair. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mark Balaam, Maria Eze and Nick Hyde. The meeting was quorate with 8 trustees present.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no declarations of interest in the current agenda items. Standing declarations of interest were noted per website entries.
3. **TRUST BOARD MEMBERSHIP:**
  - 3.1. Trust Board membership was confirmed it being unanimously **AGREED** that Dave Brown's term of office be renewed for the present but that he would step down at the end of the academic year.  
**ACTION:** Post meeting discussion needed re chairing of permanent exclusion panels.
  - 3.2. It was confirmed that details about Trustees held on GIAS and at Companies House are up to date.
  - 3.3. Section 128 Check: A list is on the portal.
4. **MINUTES**
  - 4.1. Minutes of the Full Board Meeting Held on 07-12-2024:  
 These were received for content and accuracy considered e-signed.

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#### 4.2. Matters Arising:

Minutes	Action	Status update
3	Companies House Details: These are up to date and have been published.	Completed
8	Risk Register: Updated.	Completed
13	Pupil Premium Statement: This has been published on the website	Completed
14	School Monitoring Letter: TP will liaise with GK re the category allocated.	Ongoing
17	Training Dates: Maria E to advise.	Ongoing

### 5. **COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT**

#### 5.1. Behaviour Update-Screenshared Presentation: This included that

-School Development Plan3: A new behaviour policy was launched at the start of the School year, staff training was held, there is a daily sanction meeting by the behaviour team, use of provision, reflection zone and reintegration meetings. About 98 students are seen regularly with a number of repeat offenders.

**Q.** Double last year in consequence of the new policy? **A.** Yes but also because some poor behaviour was not logged. Since the new behaviour policy was introduced there were difficulties in the autumn term which have significantly reduced as students understand the system with particularly positive results in Years 10 and 11. There has been a spike in exclusions with Year 10s now the higher numbers.

**Q.** Males and females? **A.** Predominantly males. Students are taken to the reflection zone if removed from class, they continue their class work and are counselled by the behaviour officer. There are a high number of repeat offers but this protects the learning of the majority as a respite. There are some internal suspensions and some in other schools up to 5 days.

**Q.** Is it a reciprocal arrangement? **A.** Yes, it works very well but needs to be appropriate. **Q.** Similar times? **A.** Yes, it limits the risk of a clash. Our teachers set work on laptops. **Q.** Duration? **A.** Average 3 days. **Q.** Always repeat offenders?

**A.** Yes, have usually been suspended before, not 1<sup>st</sup> timers.

**Q.** Do you ask them what they think of this? **A.** They don't like it but it works. It's a new experience. If expectations are not followed they are returned to us. If they don't go we have a power to direct/fine.

**Q.** What's their SEND status e.g. ADHD/SEMH (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder/social emotional mental health) if they're not regulating here? Are they helped with that? **A.** Yes, receiving school informed support.

**Q.** Repeaters? **A.** 2 maximum, part of the core group.

#### 5.1.2. Suspension-Comparison for Term 1 22/23 and 23/4: This is re gender, SEND, ethnicity.

**Q.** Re SEND and EHCP these are the same students? **A.** Mostly.

Permanent exclusion 23/4: Data was noted re the same incident.

**Q.** So respite etc moves children around? **A.** They may have to go to a PRU first. Permanent exclusions now have to go to a hearing. The School may recommend another mainstream school but cases go the Fair Access Panel where documentation is reviewed and a decision made. There is discussion re review and rescind (now removed). Re the permanent exclusions 4 were for 1 off incidents with little likelihood of repetition. Documentation is reviewed for quality assurance before a decision is made for the best possible setting.

**Q.** If the same incident occurs tomorrow and there is no rescind could they not return? **A.** Now the permanent exclusion has to stand with an alternative

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recommended. More appeals are likely but numbers should fall with consequences made clear. Am hopeful that suspension will fall.

**Q.** Did the 4 students go to the same school? **A.** 2 at PRU, others recommended for mainstream (1 home educated, 1 PRU).

- 5.1.3. Data Mining: All incidents are now logged on ARBOR. Can identify trends and offer support to staff if needed. There is a targeted approach with parent involvement. There is an offer of support through the pastoral inclusion team (educational Psychologist, counsellor, behaviour mentor and external mentors). There is a weekly meeting re students in need of support.

**Q.** Is that having an effect? **A.** Yes, the Educational Psychologist and counsellor have commented positively re communication.

**Q.** Re parent representation under 5 days can write to the Governing Body? **A.** There were 5 letters last term. TP/NA consider them to check the process. There has been no negative feedback. NA noted that it is important to show clear evidence and follow process to anticipate likely challenge.

**Q.** Mentors? **A.** Come from BACME and local charities. The approach is commended with positive results for school students and staff.

**Q.** There is enough capacity in the pastoral team? **A.** Yes, also consider safeguarding issues. Can redeploy staff from other departments if needed.

**Q.** Is there enough capacity re data? **A.** Mostly logged by the class teacher.

**Thanks, were recorded for the update.**

- 5.2. Pupil Attendance-Neil Tobias: Re attendance and punctuality this is 1% improved compared to last year for Years 7-11. Further work is needed. national data was noted, also London averages and school data for this academic year.

London schools are generally good, coastal schools less so.

Persistent absence is much improved but aim to keep all attending above 90%.

The gap for children with SEN and disadvantage is too wide. Attendance last year was poor and difficult to remedy as may date back to primary school.

**Q.** Same students or generally? **A.** There are about 22 pupils who are dual rolled including for extreme anxiety, school refusal and therapeutic provision. There is not much that can be done to affect attendance but work with families is possible. It's not as extreme in Year 9 as 11.

**Q.** There is a similar issue in other schools? **A.** Yes, it goes to the LA. (The process was described re parental contact, education welfare officer warning and monitoring then a fine). Ideally, it's more about support than sanction to avoid absence if possible. There is a national debate. It's back to the attendance level wanted but it's taking time. There may be poor sibling attendance.

It was noted that the London average was below 90% before Christmas due to holidays. The Attendance Action Alliance support the school to reduce absence but it needs to fit the School context.

Areas for Development: SEND is a significant focus. Generally, EHCP students attend well. There is also identification of disadvantaged students and Year 11 with fines only issued if likely to improve attendance and support the family. The effort is targeted and focused. Monitoring is via daily contact with parents, weekly attendance monitoring meetings, an EWO focus on students attending below 90%, the school track attendance at 90-92% at which point a meeting is likely with the education welfare officer and deputy head of year.

Next steps are to maximise attendance across the school.

- 5.3. Punctuality: This is monitored including doors/gates shut. There are meetings with parents. The data used is FFT and then sent to the DFE as becoming mandatory.



The LA also have an attendance forum to discuss context and effective approaches.

- 5.4. High Prior Attainers: A meeting with each Head of Year is held to identify under achievement, learning walks to focus on individuals. There is work also with individuals' students predicted for E/S grades. Targets are based on progression from Year 6.

Thanks, were recorded for all presentations.

**6. STRATEGIC SCHOOL ITEMS-NA:**

- 6.1. Number on Roll September-December 2023: There has been some fluctuation in numbers with a net loss of 10 students for different reasons.

**Q.** With the rescinds/returns did you get a similar number back? **A.** Depends when joined. It's not usually exactly the same number. Some students returned abroad e.g. Ukraine. There have been joiners and leavers since 21/09/2023. OFSTED will check for off-rolling. Several are now home educated. **Q.** Is that an increasing trend? **A.** Yes, it's an option, difficult track. Also, mental health issues. The process was noted for children missing in education (WF register internally and they can then be taken off roll. It's not a tight system, education is dependent on the parent. If they are disadvantaged they avoid fines but there is no structure for exam entry although there are tutoring and online centres. There is a provision at Epping Forest College. Schools are not allowed to advocate home education. Expectations of schools were noted.

**Q.** This reflects the growth of online education? **A.** Yes.

- 6.2. 6<sup>th</sup> Form Numbers: There has been little movement but 2 students have moved to technical/apprenticeship courses. 6<sup>th</sup> form evening for next year and admission of a significant number of external students was noted. An event's log and careers guidance was noted.

- 6.3. Free School Meals: These are lower than last year. There is a link to the Waltham Forest site for parents to register which gives the school access to pupil premium funding. The likely effect of London Mayor's funding for FSM was discussed with the need noted to communicate carefully and widely with parents. Year 10 has the greatest number of pupil premium students.

- 6.4. Looked After Children: Data was noted. This fluctuates in year. Some students will move out of borough.

**Q.** Is the School aware of private fostering/guardianship arrangements? **A.** Yes, there is a good system to flag and record these.

- 6.5. Continuing Professional Development: This was noted including for National Professional Qualifications in various areas.

**Q.** Is there staff feedback about the value of these courses? **A.** Yes, surveys at the end of sessions and talking to people. There is good feedback from OFSTED inspection.

- 6.6. Teaching and Learning: Curriculum time for maths and English has increased. A review considered pros and cons but the overall impact has been limited though with less discussion in class time.

English: There has been increased drafting and redrafting of content.

Maths: More reinforcement work. NA considered that there will be potential benefits to English and maths results which will improve student progression to 16-18 courses which have higher expectations re English/maths results.

**Q.** If you identified the challenging curriculum areas e.g. RSHE would you

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run those differently? **A.** Yes, there have been fewer visiting speakers and enrichment. Will reconsider future provision once resources are available.

**Q.** Are there any topics not requiring an external provider but needing more time? **A.** A maths or English teacher would have to deliver the content, but could consider.

**Q.** Is there a gap re consideration of more complex topics-review after a year?

**A.** Yes, can discuss but considered successful. Some difficult topics such as knife crime could be taught in drama. There is a need to discuss democracy and why we should vote that could be delivered by a specialist.

**Q.** Does the Head of Citizenship have teaching hours? **A.** Yes.

**Q.** There's a carousel of arts/technology on reduced hours? **A.** Historically they've all been in the carousels which is inevitable to maintain our broad and balanced curriculum. It's working fine.

**Q.** There are peripatetic music teachers from local schools? **A.** Yes.

Will continue this model in a managed transition into Years 10 and 11 with increased maths and English time. The E-Bacc target is not considered appropriate for use at HPAT. Curriculum provision for GCSE Italian has been reconsidered due to the difficulty of guaranteeing a 3-year course. The best linguists are choosing, they sign up for 1 year and then possibly extend to GCSE in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Extra curricula opportunities are considered and will offer them if it can be justified.

NA was thanked for an interesting presentation.

## **7. FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

7.1. Resources Committee 25/01/2024: This committee had met with minutes and notes received.

7.2. December Monthly Finance Report: The December finance position was noted. JA noted that the predicted deficit forecast had been refined at a maximum of £168,000 (including savings). The February accounts which include back pay adjustments will give a more accurate view. The contingency identified for premises is to be reviewed. The need was agreed to minimise the deficit because this is funded from reserves which are not infinite. Teaching costs including on costs are now more accurately predicted (thanks recorded to the trustees involved).

7.3. School Rebuilding Programme-RP: This is still with LBWF planning following objections received from Highways re likely vehicle movements in a busy residential area. It was noted that a problem had been identified but no solution proposed. The School is very old but parts have been rebuilt recently. There is background work to expedite the contract once planning permission has been approved. Concern was expressed about the student experience of extended time spent in temporary buildings.

7.4. Schools' Resource Management Self-Assessment: This was approved following extended input by trustees.

7.5. Feedback from Academy Effectiveness Committee 25/01/2024-GH: This was noted as a productive meeting. Reading strategies and reading ages had been discussed also use of the Bedrock online reading scheme. Overall, the strategic policy reflects the importance of this area. There was also discussion about alternative provision with data reviewed and support for under achieving students considered. There as a presentation re 6<sup>th</sup>

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form data based on the outcomes of recent mocks. Work is ongoing to increase challenge and expectations.

8. **SAFEGUARDING:** TP noted that she had visited with reports to be presented to the next meeting.
  9. **LINK TRUSTEE VISIT REPORTS:** These will be presented to the next meeting.
  10. **CHAIR'S ACTION:** TP reported proposed attendance at the Waltham Forest Conference on 6 February 2024.
  11. **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL:** These were approved per the agenda relating to:
    - Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy.
    - Literacy Policy.
    - Supporting students with medical conditions.
    - Vexatious complaints.
    - Initial Teacher Training policy.
    - Reserves policy.
  12. **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:** To be confirmed.
  13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS:** There was none.
- THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15 P.M.**

Chair: ..... (print)

..... (sign)

Date: .....

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