

**Minutes of the Local Academy Committee Meeting
held on the 17 March 2025 at 5.00pm
at Hillocks Primary Academy**

Name	Title	A=Apologies
Mrs Susan Beasley (Chair)	Appointed Academy Committee governor	A
Mrs Michelle Barksby	Appointed Academy Committee Parent governor	
Mr Henry Reader	Appointed Academy Committee governor	
Mrs Jemma Mee	Academy Committee Parent governor	
Miss Lucy Murungi	Appointed Academy Committee governor	

In attendance:-

Mrs Claire Gledhill	Principal	
Mr Gareth Letton	Executive Principal	
Mrs Rhianne Chambers	Governance Professional	
Mrs Lynsey Parker	Observing Governance Professional	
Ms Lesley Dolben	Observer – External Review of Governance	
Quorum: 3	Governors Present:	4

Responses, **challenge, support**

Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
HPA/036/ 2425	<p>Welcome and Apologies for absence</p> <p>It was acknowledged that Mrs Beasley had sent her apologies due to work commitments, these were accepted by the committee. Therefore, Mr Reader was appointed as Chair for this meeting.</p> <p>It was then explained that Diverse Academies Trust are undergoing an external review of governance and therefore Ms Dolben was welcomed to the meeting as part of this process.</p>	
HPA/037/ 2424	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. The Academy Committee governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.</p>	
HPA/038/ 2425	<p>Governance report by GP & CoC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local response following central training: Building confidence in reviewing Suspensions and Exclusions <p>The governors discussed the recent central training on building confidence in reviewing suspensions and exclusions. It was acknowledged</p>	

	<p>that the training did go in depth into the subject and therefore had added additional concern about sitting on future panels. The Governance Professional advised that governors are welcomed to observe a panel before committing to a panel should they wish to ease the worry about sitting on the panel. The Executive Principal added that the decision is around the balance of probability and answering the 3 key questions. Governors who had sat on panels previously noted that the training had been interested in understanding more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Link governor role, visits, and reports</p> <p>Prior to the meeting, the reports for 3 link visits were shared with the committee. There were no questions from these reports and the governors confirmed there were no key issues from the visits. Mr Reader to share his link visit report on Pupil Premium for the next meeting.</p> <p>Governor conference 12.06.25</p> <p>Governors were reminded of the governor conference which is taking place on the 12 June at Diverse Academies HQ. It was requested for as many governors as possible to attend and the agenda for the conference was included in the GP report which was distributed in advance of the meeting.</p> 	HR
<p>HPA/039/ 2425</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 20 January 2025</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair.</p>	
<p>HPA/040/ 2425</p>	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>HPA/027/2425 – To note, Mrs Mee has completed the cyber security training.</p>	
<p>HPA/041/ 2425</p>	<p>Principals ERM Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Standards</p> <p>The governors asked if there are any concerns around the actions set within the ERM on the early years provision. The Executive Principal advised that since the academy have offered a continuous provision that is more clinically matched to the children’s needs the progress the children are making is evident. The academy has also been getting the Early Years teachers visiting other settings to help see best practice. The Principal explained that the academy has also started using Launchpad as a pre-phonics assessment tool to help the children be ready for phonics in FS2. By the team visiting other settings they are seeing how to incorporate this into their phonics sessions, through the activities that are on offer throughout the day and by ensuring that the adults in the room are aware of the enhancements being made to help meet the</p> 	

objective. Both the EY teachers went and came back enthusiastic. The Executive Principal noted that Launchpad is a way of being rather than something to do and needs to be embedded into every element of the day. By doing this it helps to ensure the building blocks are in place to aid the transition into FS2.

The governors questioned if the budgetary numbers within the rapid improvement plan are budgeted or unexpected spends. The Executive Principal confirmed they were unexpected spends so therefore the academy is making economies and reprioritising future spends. Governors were advised that the commitment to the reading and writing scheme did cost a lot of money but that the academy completed the necessary jiggling to make it work. It was added that the Executive Principal can talk to the Trust if there is a need to go over budget because of a particular reason. **The governors commented** that there are no concerns on money for SEND. The Executive Principal advised that the academy have been in receipt of a lot of additional SEN funds due to Mrs Adams' work with the HLN panels.

The Principal advised that the support received from the Strategic Development Leads within the Trust as part of the rapid improvement plan has been a huge asset to the academy. The Executive Principal agreed and highlighted that the urgency around it is helpful too.

- **Autumn term evaluation of AIP**

There were no questions on the autumn term evaluation of the AIP.

- **Progress against targeted outcomes**

The governors praised the academy for the progress in reading and writing. The Executive Principal advised that the data shared is for the children who have already achieved the standard for the end of the year which is higher than in previous years at Hillocks. Due to the structured pathways in reading and writing, the progress the Y6 children are making is phenomenal and is setting them up well for secondary school. It was added that there is a lag in the Maths scores as the Y6's was badly hit by the pandemic which has resulted in gaps in their mathematical understanding. Governors were advised that the combined score for reading, writing and maths is currently at 10% but the academy are predicting this will rise to 50% which is an increase from 37% last year. The academy is putting everything they can into Maths at the moment whilst ensuring the children are still getting a balanced fun curriculum. **The governors asked** if the academy is running booster sessions and interventions. The Principal explained that for the children on the cusp of hitting the next boundary, targeted intervention is being used. This

	<p>happens throughout the school day and then Maths clubs are being offered after school.</p> <p>The Executive Principal advised that the Y1 target for phonics will be closer to 80% and that all children are getting interventions. With the Y2 children, there were 11 who did not make the standard in Y1, and the academy are predicting that 3 of these will get the standard this year. It was acknowledged that the other children who will not meet the standard may be down to phonics not being suited to them and therefore the academy are investigating other approaches that could be used to support. The governors noted that some of these children are new to English as a language. The Executive Principal agreed and that some have significant special educational needs, so the priority currently is on these children enjoying stories.</p> <p>The governors asked about the Maths outcomes in the other year groups. The Principal confirmed that the outcomes are similar across the academy and that it is the weaker subject in terms of attainment and progress. The Executive Principal added that the academy is restructuring the curriculum and implementing Number Sense to help support Y4 – Y6. The governors queried if this has been well received by parents to which the Executive Principal highlighted a need for all stakeholders to encourage children that maths is fun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil number projections <p>The governors noted that the numbers for September are low in comparison to the PAN before asking if there is a reason for this. The Principal explained that nationally the birth rate is low but that there is expected to be a rise in the next 3 – 4 years. Whilst the PAN is 45, there are currently 27 due to start so the academy is carefully considering the budget for next year. It was added that there are 48 leaving in Y6. The governors asked if the 27 children have all accepted the places yet to which the Principal advised that the national offer day is the 16 April so this may still change right up until the first day in September.</p> <p>The governors acknowledged that the academy have had a net gain of 25 children since the start of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusions and suspension data <p>The governors had been recently made aware of suspensions that had been made within the academy before asking what is in place to support these children. The Principal confirmed that the academy is working with North Ashfield Partnerships on reducing suspensions. The collective meet termly and offer surgeries for staff to gain advise on strategies that could be used as well as social, emotional and mental</p>	
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health interventions. They also offer observations and provide feedback. Hillocks Primary Academy also work with the district and family SENCo as well as social services and key workers for those children with EHAFs. With the support from the external agencies, the package offered is fully bespoke dependant on the child. Internally, the inclusion team are still meeting weekly to discuss individual cases.

The governors asked if the increase in suspensions is because of the behaviour policy being applied more robustly. The Executive Principal advised that it is important to understand suspensions are not a punishment and are an opportunity for the academy to change something whether this be the child's routine or the provision they are returning too.

Governors were advised that there have been 43 suspensions made during this academic year, but these are for 10-15 children. All of which are following a graduated response due to their behaviour. It was added that the academy does have support from the local authority that each time a child has been suspended it has been appropriate.

- **SEND**

The governors noted that SEND had been discussed within other agenda items.

- **Stakeholders**

There were no questions on this agenda item.

- **Staff and pupil well-being**

The governors noted a concern for staff wellbeing following incidents recently where staff are being verbally attacked in the playground because of parent frustrations. The Principal explained that the parental conduct policy is being implemented where needed and the academy is receiving support from the Trust on advice for the best course of action to take where needed. This year there have been 3 bans, and 4-6 warning letters sent out to parents. In addition to this, when staff experience this, the academy supports and looks after staff. **The governors asked** if there was anything that could be added as a visual deterrent so that staff feel safe in their working environment. The Principal advised that it is not acceptable, and the academy follows the policy. It was added that it is also detailed in the academy newsletter but that perhaps parents are not reading this.

The governors acknowledged the staff leavers **before asking** if wellbeing is the reason behind this. The Executive Principal advised that the staff members are leaving due to personal reasons whilst acknowledging that the additional clarity and expectation from the academy SLT could have caused this. **The governors queried** if there

were any concerns about the high level of load and expectation of staff. The Principal confirmed that the academy SLT are mindful of staff wellbeing and the Mental Health lead is looking to build a team to look at ways to support staff from a well-being perspective. The Executive Principal added that when staff have experienced a hard situation with parents then they do have the opportunity to decompress with SLT and talk it through. **The governors further asked** if the staff would take advantage of this offer. It was confirmed by both the Principal and the Executive Principal that they do and the SLT do ensure staff are advised of the follow-up actions taken. **The governors questioned** if there are mental health first aiders that are not on the academy SLT. The Principal confirmed that Mrs Meeson, as the Family Support Advisor, is not a member of the SLT so is the best suited person to be the mental health lead. The academy is also looking at using Thrive, a well-being package around behaviour which will be rolled out across the academy. Governors were reassured that staff are aware of Mrs Meeson's role and that she is very approachable to all. **The governors asked** if the Diverse Academies benefit package is promoted to staff to which the Executive Principal confirmed that the Vivup package is promoted regularly.

The governors questioned if the recruitment is underway for the vacant positions. The Principal confirmed it is underway for the Teacher post and candidates have been visiting the academy. For the Teaching Assistant vacancy, the academy is holding back on advertising this position until the budget has been set with the knowledge that the academy will be losing some funding when some children leave Hillocks to go to a special school.

The governors queried the impact for the pupils with having Mr Tomlinson on board as the Behaviour Mentor. The Principal explained that Mr Tomlinson is having a very positive impact across the academy especially with developing relationships with the children who have complex needs. Work is also being done with families to write risk assessments and put in place behaviour plans where needed.

- **Data Protection (any breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests)**

Governors were advised that there are no GDPR breaches, SARs, FOIA, or police requests.

- **Complaints, claims (no's / overview)**

The governors noted that there are no new complaints or claims.

- **Safeguarding – compliance and culture**

	<p>In advance of the meeting, the governors received the updated LAC safeguarding checklist. The governors noted that there has been a reduction in looked after children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance data <p>The governors asked how the attendance data compares to local and national average including Pupil Premium, free school meals and SEND. The Principal confirmed that both PP and SEND are above national average, and the academy has made inroads into reducing persistent absence too which has seen this reduce from 35% to 22%. Governors were reassured that attendance continues to be a focus for the academy. As part of this, the academy is looking at the offer in place for students to help increase attendance e.g. the SEND adaptations to ensure SEND children feel that they are succeeding. Through the inclusion team, work is being done at family complexities to look at ways in which families can be supported through external agencies. All children’s attendance is investigated on an individual basis to ensure bespoke packages are in place. Whilst there is still a long way to go with attendance, the academy has made improvements.</p> <p>The governors queried if there are any identified groups that the governors should be concerned about. The Principal advised that it would be for all the children who are classed as disadvantaged. The Executive Principal added that the vulnerable groups are not attending as well as similar vulnerable groups nationally and that those with SEND or disabilities do have the poorest attendance. Albeit it must be acknowledged that there are often significant medical needs as to why they are not attending. Whilst the attendance is below national, it is much improved last year, and the academy is working hard to celebrate attendance including a weekly attendance reward. The new DfE attendance dashboard is new for primary schools and is already proving to be a useful tool. The Principal added that there have been 4 children moving out of persistent absence in the last month. The governors praised the academy for their efforts so far in increasing attendance.</p> <p>The governors questioned whether the academy shares best practice with the other Diverse Academies primary schools to which the Executive Principal confirmed they do. The Principal explained that Hillocks do work with the other primaries on sharing best practice. Governors were advised that the academy has seen a rise in unauthorized absences due to the academy following the policy but that there has been a cultural shift in the understanding, as well as the importance, of why the academy are imposing the policies as they are.</p> <p>The governors asked if there is support for the parents who are attending alternative provision. The Principal advised that the offer of</p>	
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alternative provision is the right provision for the children who are attending, their families and the other children within school. The decision to use the provision is taken in a graduated response with a range of external agencies, especially where mainstream school is not the right place for those children e.g. special school is named on a child's EHCP but there are no places.

- **Receive any surveys / audits / reviews**

Prior to the meeting, the governors had received a copy of the safeguarding audit report. The Principal explained that the audit is from the local authority and is seen as a best practice document. It is completed by Patrick Knight, the Strategic Development Lead for safeguarding within Diverse Academies, alongside Mrs Meeson.

The Executive Principal advised that the Trust safeguarding policies and procedures were audited and the feedback regarding Hillocks Primary Academy is positive.

- **Risk report**

In advance of the meeting, the governors received the updated risk register. The governors acknowledged that one risk had been removed due to being an issue rather than a risk. Governors confirmed they were happy with this.

The governors also noted the new risk regarding SEND funding. The Principal noted that with SEND funding there is always shortfall between what is needed and what is given. The Executive Principal added that there are 3 children at the academy with SEND funding and when they go to a special school, they will take their funding with them which adds to the risk.

- **Policy / local appendix to ratify / review**

It was confirmed there are no policies to review or ratify for this meeting.

- **Any Cat C trips / review**

The Principal advised that the academy is looking to plan a trip for Y3/Y4 to Rand Farm towards the end of the year. The academy has had visits to Rand Farm Park before and all staff who will be going on the trip have up to date visit leader training. It was added that this is in addition to the Cat C trip to London which has already been discussed. **The governors asked** if the academy is ensuring these trips are accessible to all. The Principal advised that there are 30 places available on the residential which are on a first come, first served basis but that it is open to all children who would like to go. It is also based on the risk assessment.

HPA/042/ 2425	How have the Academy Committee held senior leaders to account Challenge had taken place throughout the meeting in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Outcomes • Projected pupil numbers • Staff and pupil wellbeing • Exclusions and suspensions 	
HPA/043/ 2425	How have Vision, Mission and Values of Trust/Equality been upheld The Chair confirmed vision, mission and values and Equity remained at the forefront of discussions throughout the meeting.	
HPA/044/ 2425	Consider information to be advised to the Trust Board and complete the report Discussions took place and the document was populated with information required as discussed during the meeting. The document was submitted to the Trustees during the meeting.	
HPA/045/ 2425	Determination of confidentiality of business Academy Committee governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was Resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have been no confidential discussions. 	
HPA/046/ 2425	Date and time of next meeting: Monday 19 May 2025 Training Meeting at 5.00pm Main Meeting at 5.30pm	
	The meeting closed at 6.44pm Signed.....H. Reader (Chair) Date..... Agreed via email 19.03.25	