



**Notes and Action Record of the Hillocks Primary Academy
Local Academy Committee Spring 1 meeting
Held on Monday 16th March at 17:00 at Hillocks**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Susan Beasley (Chair of Governors)	SBea	Appointed AC governor	
Henry Reader	HR	Appointed AC governor	
Jemma Mee	JM	Appointed Parent AC governor	
Lucy Murungi	LM	Appointed AC governor	
Simon Bennett	SBen	Appointed AC governor	

In attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Gareth Letton	GL	Executive Principal	A
Claire Gledhill	CG	Principal	
Lynsey Parker	LP	Governance Professional / Clerk to Governors	

Quorum Required	3	Governors present	5
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Action Record

Agenda / action ref	Meeting Ref	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline	Update	Complete / Carried Forward / Incomplete

Notes of meeting

Blue text = academy committee governor check and challenge

Green text = academy committee governor decision-making / approval

Q= Question from governors
A=Answer from senior leaders

Agenda item	Key points /summary of discussion	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline
HPA/26/2526 Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.			
HPA/27/2526 Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest for any items on the agenda.			
HPA/28/2526 Notes of last meeting / action log	Notes of the previous meeting were received and agreed. Action log was reviewed and it was confirmed that there were no actions outstanding from the previous meeting.			
HPA/29/2526 Governance Report	Monitoring visit reports from the previous half-term were received in respect of: • Leadership and management • Health and Safety • Pupil Premium • Early Years Academy Committee governors had no further questions.			
HPA/30/2526 Safeguarding Report	Governors received the updated academy safeguarding report and safeguarding survey results for staff and pupils and noted that: Safeguarding staff and pupil voice was extremely positive overall Slightly more negative responses from staff relate to a small number of staff, governors received assurance that this position is not reflective of the current academy staffing Areas to develop include online safety being a strong focus during lessons, educating parents Discussion took place around reporting / addressing low level concerns. Governors acknowledged that safeguarding issues will be ever present and received assurance that staff confidence, and inclusion team practice has hugely improved			

	and that all staff have confidence that concerns will be acted upon. Governors commented that it was clear that staff at all levels advocate for the children. Q – Can you provide governors with an update on the online safety work discussed at the last LAC meeting? A - Began at start of this calendar year – online safety work now takes place at the start of every computing lesson Additional QA and staff coaching is now needed It has been difficult to reach and engage parents on this – the academy has put on workshops, and shared resources with parents Discussion took place on parental responsibility and phone usage amongst children. Academy Committee governors praised the huge change in the culture of the school. They passed their thanks to CG and all academy staff.			
HPA/31/2526 Governor training and development	The Chair provided some background and context on why this term’s training and development topic had been chosen through discussion between CoG, CG and GL on the academy’s short and long term priorities. The new Ofsted inspection framework was discussed and it was noted that its focus on inclusivity suits the school and its context, and that this fits together with revamp of the Pupil Premium strategy that the Principal has recently worked on and would be shared with governors today in order to enhance understanding of priorities and approaches in this area. CG feedback that AIR visit from senior Trust colleagues last week mirrored the new Ofsted inspection approach – ie followed 6 vulnerable children’s ‘diet’. Positive feedback on direction and distance already travelled was received, along with some areas for development on adaptations. AIR report will be shared with governors in due course and considered at a future LAC meeting. RISE review has also recognised successes that have been achieved at pace.			

	Q - How many other schools are being supported by RISE? A – One other school within the Trust based on previous Ofsted judgements, others are accessing support via our regional Hub e.g. CPD opportunities. Our RISE partners at Transform Trust have been working collaboratively with us and have also learned from us regarding good practice. Pupil Premium Strategy in depth CG shared the new Hillocks Pupil Premium strategy which has been published on the academy website and advised that: Overall intention is to close the gap in outcomes between PP and non-PP pupils. >50% of school cohort currently PP eligible. PP strategy is a 3 year plan, iterated annually. This was becoming cumbersome, so this year have carried out a full review, stripped out and have re-focused overall priorities and intended outcomes. Strongly data-driven and evidence-based. Education Endowment Fund (EEF) evidence/research is included that backs up why we are taking the approach we are and what impact different interventions have. Context: At age 5, 80% of PP children at Hillocks are below age-related expectations. EEF findings shows average cohort is 4 months behind on entry to school, gaps typically then widen as children progress through school. Crucial that we work relentlessly to close these gaps and give all children equal chance to succeed. PP priorities: EYFS Year 1 Phonics outcomes SEMH Key Stage 2 attainment Attendance Closing the EYFS Good level of development (GLD) gap. Last year overall achievement and achievement of PP cohort significantly improved and was above national and district averages. However the gap between PP and non-PP cohorts widened.			
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	Each new cohort comes in to school below the expected level of development and so needs a continual focus. Q – Do more children choose to come here because of the support on offer? A – Yes, anecdotal evidence from parents suggests that external agencies recommend Hillocks as they know that children will be supported to develop and achieve in line with their peers. CG went through examples of activity and issues to be addressed in relation to each priority: Early reading: Phonics underperformance Achieving F1, F2, Year 1 and Year 2 milestones Pre-phonics (EYFS), phonics (F2) Fluency and comprehension to lead to improved outcomes at KS2. SEMH: Removing to barriers to accessing learning. KS2 attainment gap: Maths, reading and writing RISE working with us to improve in these areas. Attendance: Previous poor attendance rates have historically led to extensive gaps in children's learning Investment has been made in our attendance team Change in culture, measured by staff, pupil and parent/carers surveys Huge improvements made but more to be done. These priorities link directly with AIP priorities. Tiered approach:			
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	Quality First teaching – this is most impactful area and is where most of the academy’s PP funding allocation is invested. Targeted academic support e.g. oracy (NELI), IDL software, etc Wider academic strategies e.g. Nuture provision, behaviour mentor, FSA, ELSA, mental health first aider, Thrive. Underpinning all of this is a contingency for individual funding eg for trips, emergency food vouchers, etc. Continuous monitoring of provision and interventions takes place within school. For summative / external reporting purposes, we are required to report annually to the DfE against intended outcomes on the PP plan. At end of each year, the academy assess impact against each area. CG explained the forms this could take and the types of data available to assess progress and impact e.g. benchmarking GLD, Phonics Y2 to district, county and national averages, KS2 maths and writing attainment; improvement in SEMH (more qualitative) and attendance. Q – How is the academy benefiting from wider RISE funding e.g. Thrive? Would we have to fund this through PP funding? A - Possibly – but would link to AIP, RISE are bolstering what we would already be doing, so we would likely fund from other areas. PP funding largely goes to TA and other staffing. RISE approach is providing us with additional expertise – legacy will be improved staff and leadership knowledge. So we are upskilling internally to then be able to deliver and improve without support. Early reading approaches Read Write Inc (RWI) (including staff CPD). Staff knowing their children, seating plans, marking and feedback, all ensures they understand and focus on development of the PP cohort.			
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	Staff understanding the point at which children come off RWI at the end of term 1 in Year 2 and to other pathway programmes, so they can they increase oral fluency and close any gaps. Q - Are you aware of any other schools in the Trust that fill this gap well that we can learn lessons from? A – Not within the Trust; Our RISE partners Transform Trust have put us in touch with a school that we can learn from. Q – Is this the age (Year 2 – 6/7) where children lose a love of reading? A – Possibly. We know that we need to plug the gap between RWI being fun, games based, to more independent reading of appropriate texts. CG described some of the work and the programmes she is exploring . Fluency needs to be developed and practiced regularly before children can move on to comprehension eg in Years 3 and 4 the academy is using fluency at start of every lesson. Q – Does the academy use the Accelerated Reader programme? A - We use this, and it is excellent – but this is a comprehension tool, not fluency. <u>Evidence available to the LAC:</u> CG provided examples of various resources that are used for the governors to review e.g. NELI Writing curriculum New DfE writing framework (have benefitted from RISE Advisor sharing knowledge regarding the DfE approach early on in the framework development and implementation) PP strategy includes professional development e.g. handwriting, dictation. Foundational skills – building up spelling and sentence structure gradually e.g from first developing gross and fine motor skills, strengthening core, as a pre-requisite to holding a pencil in EYFS.			
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	<u>Evidence available to the LAC:</u> Governors were invited to look in writing books from F2 through to Year 6. Class teachers have also shared additional intervention handouts / resources. CG explained some small changes to approach e.g. yellow books for reading/ writing correspond to yellow displays in all classrooms Governors were encouraged to look for transcription, handwriting, spelling, etc CG described how the academy carry out book looks e.g. looking at starting point and then most recent work to show progress made over time. Books were evident in showing learning objectives for each child. CG explained that these are differentiated depending where children are on the writing pathway in some year groups especially in EYFS. In later years this is harder to do - but this is where adaptations and interventions come in, in order that all can achieve learning objectives. Governors commented that this is why it is crucial to get it right in Early Years and to close the gaps. During the book looks, governors saw clear examples of: • Lots of repetition and practice of same thing e.g. tenses • Daily handwriting practice at start of every lesson • Oral rehearsal and dictation • Books also showed regular feedback from teachers and children acting on feedback – it was clear that children are given time to check their work, act on feedback and self-asses. Governors commented that inclusive practice was also clearly evident – e.g. Widgets in books and classrooms. Q - How many school years does it typically take until gaps are closed? A - Year 2/3 cohort is currently the strongest it has ever been, intent is to keep these children progressing appropriately through the school.			
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	Lots of gaps in Year 5 and 6 currently, with a challenging Year 5 cohort. Targeted interventions for this year group to close gaps are ongoing and will continue. Q – Is there still evidence of a covid impact? A – Current Year 5 cohort missed Foundation stage and do display high levels of need. Additional assessments for SEND have been carried out recently resulting in an increase from 21% to 31% of school population on SEND register – recognise that if children are 2 years behind where they are expected to be, they do have an educational/learning need. Q – In relation to targeted interventions, what does the academy sacrifice and what do the children miss in order to catch-up? A – Children are never taken out of morning core lessons in English and maths. We make sure children aren't out of lessons for a whole afternoon – they are typically taken out for 20/30 minutes. We also try to avoid taking children out of the start of lessons for interventions, as this is where modelling and expectations for learning are delivered. We rotate their timetable so children are not taken out of the same class and are missing the same parts of the curriculum e.g. science, RE each week. This is balanced against the need to get all children to expected standard so they can access the curriculum at secondary school and beyond. Maths: CG accessed different programmes so governors were able to see an overview of how the scheme work in practice e.g. • Number Sense for early years; • Number Facts fluency programme • Power Maths / White Rose Education • Magma Maths for Year 6, introduced to the academy through RISE Advisor Governors considered the positive impact on teacher workload and wellbeing from having well-designed, highly structured programmes in place.			
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	Additional TA support – initial focus has been Year 6 pupils needing to catch up in maths, will move to Year 5 after SATs. Mock SATs data much improved, showing impact already. <u>Evidence available to the LAC:</u> I pads loaded with Magma Maths were provided for governors to trial and see examples of what and how the children are learning. CG confirmed all children receive a Power Maths physical workbook, funded through PP, and a selection for each year group was provided for governors to review. Governors unanimously commented that the high expectations for presentation of work were clear. CG confirmed that all staff across the academy have worked hard on children taking pride in their work and that it was pleasing to see that this was evident. Q – Please can you explain Assessment for Learning (AfL)? A – Approach to checking for understanding and then adapting teaching in the moment. Can be delivered through asking hinge questions at key points in the lesson e.g. with mini whiteboards, talking partners, peer work, to get whole class feedback. Teachers then need to be prepared to put in place strategies for next steps for those children that have secure knowledge and for those who have not mastered yet - and decide what to do next for different groups of children. CG advised that AFL develops over years of teaching practice Q – Does implementing this approach demonstrate a change from the previous Ofsted Areas for improvement? A – Ofsted had found there was not sufficient checking understanding / learning. This is now checked robustly and is QAed, all teachers now need consistent strategies for ‘what next’. Q - How do the teachers do this? A -Need to do walkthrough of their lessons. Think about potential misconceptions in their lesson plan and put in place responses.			
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	Need to have examples ready and not come up within additional questions or adaptations on the spot. Requires skilled teaching. Q – Are teachers that demonstrate good practice sharing this with the rest of the staff? A - Yes – but this is more emerging, hasn't always happened consistently. CG gave examples of professional development and coaching ie looking in children's books during staff progress meetings; looking at the impact that feedback is having on the child's progress; considering how assessment for learning (AfL) approaches and strategies are being adopted. She confirmed that AIR feedback recognised that this is taking place and this and the distance travelled from last Ofsted areas for improvement. Targeted support: CG described each in further depth e.g: NELI Phonics interventions Reading and maths tutoring 1:1 / small group interventions Dyslexia screening <u>Evidence available to the LAC:</u> Governors were provided with example of an interventions tracker to show impact of all interventions for the children upon their attainment, and explained that the academy previously had no robust way of tracking / measuring the overall picture. Wider strategies: <u>Evidence available to the LAC:</u> Thrive data and qualitative feedback Suspensions data Attendance data			
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	Nurture provision report was not available on the evening but will be provided to governors in due course. Q – Do the academy understand numbers of children with multiple indicators examples? How many children are in school with no disadvantage / no barriers? A – We do not have this analysis available but likely that most children have multiple disadvantage. CG suggested numbers in school with no disadvantage are very small – approximately 5% of all children on roll. Governors commented that they recognise the skillset of teachers at Hillocks to deliver day in day out and thanked all staff for their hard work. A discussion on staff workload and wellbeing took place, as well as ways to recognise and reward the progress and impact that staff make, in the same way the children’s successes are celebrated. The Academy Committee governors thanked CG for the session and confirmed that they had a greater understanding the ‘why’ and the ‘what’ of the PP strategy, its aims and intended outcomes; and that this shows a clear links to the AIP and other complimentary plans. Governors agreed that if the academy get provision right and improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged children, it can improve outcomes for all.			
HPA/32/2526 Determination of Confidentiality	Governors determined that there were no confidential discussions			
HPA/33/2526 Report to / from Trustees	A report will be submitted to Trustees following the meeting.			
HPA/34/2526 Date and time of next meeting	Monday 18th May 2026 at 5.00pm The meeting closed at 19.06			

Signed by Chair: S Beasley	Date: 18/5/26
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