

Minutes of the Holgate Local Academy Committee Meeting

Monday 30th Jun 2025 at 5.00pm

The Holgate Academy

Present:

| Governor name | Initials | Governor type | A = Absence |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Kate Turner | KT | Chair | |
| Margaret Newcombe | MN | Vice Chair | A |
| Mr Philip Bailey | PB | Appointed staff AC governor | |
| Emma Paine | EPn | Appointed AC governor | |
| Emma Paling | EPI | Appointed Parent AC governor | |
| Emma Redgate | ER | Parent AC governor | |
| Scott Comer | SC | Parent AC governor | A |

In attendance:

| Staff name | Initial | Role | |
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| Heather Widdup | HP | Executive Principal | |
| Henry Diamond | HD | Principal | |
| Lynsey Parker | LP | Clerk | |
| Paul Simpson | PS | Trustee | |

| Item no. | Item | Action / by whom / by when |
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| | Prior to the main meeting, academy committee governors visited the new 6 th form site to see how this is progressing, and had the opportunity to ask the Principal any questions. | |
| THA/060/2425 | <p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence:</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr Paul Simpson was welcomed, who was attending the academy committee meeting to give an update on the work of the trustees.</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted by the academy committee from Ms Newcombe and Mr Comer.</p> | |
| THA/061/2425 | <p>Declarations of interest:</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda and governors confirmed that the declarations given at the start of the academic year were correct.</p> | |

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| <p>THA/062/2425</p> | <p>Update from Trustees – Mr Paul Simpson</p> <p>Mr Simpson introduced himself as a member of the Board of Trustees and explained his background at schools in the Trust and particularly Holgate where he has led post-16 and the HSFC. He advised that following his retirement he still wanted to make a contribution and he explained that he is personally aligned with the vision and values of Diverse Academies Trust and so became a Trustee.</p> <p>The Chair requested feedback on How the Holgate academy is represented at Trust level meetings, and if the feedback received from the academy committee is useful for the Trust or if anything else could be reported upwards.</p> <p>Mr Simpson explained that he feels Holgate is in a strong place and has much to be proud of regarding what has been achieved in recent years taking account of the local demographic context and the ongoing challenges and limitations with the current site. He expressed that the academy and the academy committee should continue to find ways of expressing this pride, celebrating achievements and events taking place in collaboration with the wider community. He noted that the overall vision and values and desire to secure the best learning outcomes for all students is evident.</p> <p>The Chair asked if this was evident from the academy committee’s reporting, or if this is gleaned through on site visits and personal knowledge of the school. Mr Simpson explained that it is both and that trustees definitely feel this when they come on to site.</p> <p>Mr Simpson explained that a priority for the Trust is for local academy committees to develop and improve links to stakeholders, parents and the local community, and explained that trustees are keen to hear staff and student voice and to receive examples of activities that have taken place in the academy or in partnership with others. Mr Simpson also noted that student feedback is key and that the academies need to need to understand the student voice and use their feedback to inform decisions.</p> <p>After confirming there were no further questions, the Chair thanked Mr Simpson for his update and insights.</p> | |
| <p>THA/063/2425</p> | <p>Governance report: Self-evaluation of action plan and review of governors skills survey results</p> <p>The Chair explained that an assessment and RAG rating of the academy committee action plan had been carried out and shared before the meeting, as had results of the governors skills survey. Governors acknowledged receipt of these.</p> | |

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| | <p>An area for improvement and development had been identified as a need for greater awareness amongst the academy committee of the student voice and an understanding how this informs priorities and decision-making.</p> <p>The Executive Principal advised that staff, student and parent/carer surveys were recently carried out by the Trust and received by the academy as part of the AIR, and it was agreed that these results would be shared with the governors.</p> <p>Governors asked how frequently such survey feedback is gathered. The Principal explained that there will be a calendar of feedback next year and that all surveys and areas/themes for which staff, student and parent/carer feedback is being sought will be planned in advance across the Trust. He noted that student surveys are usually administered during tutor time so that teaching time is not lost.</p> <p>It was noted that the Student Voice Forum had been embedded this year and that a recent link visit had been carried out to attend and observe this and a report circulated in advance of the meeting. The Principal confirmed that SLT receive and consider results of all student feedback obtained in school.</p> <p>Governors considered how else the governors can access the student voice and consider feedback and survey results that may need to be acted upon. It was agreed that student voice should be a feature of all link visits into the academy and governor attendance at events such as open evenings and parents evenings.</p> <p>Link governor roles and visits The Chair advised that link governor roles would be reviewed for the next academic year and asked all governors to consider which roles they may be interested in for allocation of roles at the first meeting of 2025/26.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged receipt of link visit reports in respect of: Post-16/6th form Student Voice Governor Conference</p> <p>6th form link visit report: The Chair asked if there were any questions on the 6th form link visit report. Ms Paine acknowledged that the visit to the 6th form prior to the meeting has answered many questions she had and had helped to bring this to life.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the suggestion / action in the report around sharing safeguarding information with parents of 6th form students, including</p> | <p>HW / LP</p> <p>Governors</p> <p>Governors</p> |
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| | <p>sending updates to parents and hints and tips on topics such as cyber security and use of social media. The Principal confirmed that the Personal Development faculty do send out half termly updates on the work they have carried out that half term and that the 6th form will be integrated into these communications in the future, as well as receiving messaging through the tutor programme and year leaders messages.</p> <p>Student Voice visit: Ms Redgate feedback to the academy committee on her visit to observe the Student Voice in action. Governors noted that feedback was provided from the students in relation to enrichment opportunities and issues with queues for toilets and at lunchtimes.</p> <p>Ideas for further feedback and how to integrate the student voice into all link visits was discussed. The Principal welcomed governors to go into classrooms and look at books, speak to the students, speak to prefects and student leaders at events and ask for their views.</p> <p>Governor conference: The Chair explained the Holgate academy committee was well represented at the annual governor and trustee conference, with 4 members of the committee attending.</p> <p>The Chair fed back on some of the sessions and advised that what struck her were the messages around rapid changes in technology and the need to hear and understand the student voice in the digital age; as well as the need to stop doing things that no longer added any value, just because they have always been done that way.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Trust is gathering and considering all feedback from the group sessions at the conference.</p> <p>Standards and Outcomes Committee visit: Mr Simpson had been part of a recent Trust Standards and Outcomes Committee visit to Holgate and provided feedback to the academy committee. He advised that the trustees saw a range of classes and had observed how teachers dealt with any incidences of poor behaviour and links with behaviour support. He noted that it was exemplary to see this in action and the really efficient and calm ways of dealing with this, which was a notable difference to previous years.</p> | |
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| | <p>Trustees had received useful feedback especially regarding the introduction of the My Academy App, and ongoing issues with replacement of the windows in Nabbs. He explained that the Trust need this granular level of detail on what is going well and what's not so that they can ask challenging questions and ensure the correct level of support is put in place.</p> <p>The Chair advised that from the Standards and Outcomes visit, the determination of the Principal and Executive Principal to get the best for Holgate and to think creatively to deliver solutions relevant to the needs of the academy e.g 6th form delivery, introduction of the AP safeguarding role, was evident. She explained there were lots of examples presented to the Trustees of how well the academy leads practice in a number of areas.</p> <p>Mr Simpson confirmed that Holgate is well thought of and innovative within the Trust. The Chair acknowledged this and thanked Mr Simpson for his feedback from the visit.</p> <p>The Standards and Outcomes Committee feedback report was shared with the academy committee governors following the meeting.</p> <p>Governance housekeeping – election of Chair and Vice Chair: The Chair explained that Chair and Vice Chair roles were subject to annual re-election from amongst the members of the local academy committee.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that she had submitted an expression of interest in continuing with the role of Chair and which outlined her experience, successes and future plans.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any other expressions of interest for the Chair role amongst the governors. There were no further expressions of interest.</p> <p>Mrs Turner left the meeting at 5.15pm.</p> <p>The Governance Professional confirmed that process had been followed with regard to Mrs Turner submitting an expression of interest in the role of Chair. It was explained that according to the current Trust Scheme of Delegation Mrs Turner was only permitted one more year as Chair of the academy committee, and so representations were being made to the Trust Governance and Partnerships committee to extend this timeframe as to retain dedicated and experiences Chairs.</p> | |
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| | <p>Governors discussed and unanimously voted for Mrs Turner to be re-elected as Chair for one year with effect from the autumn term.</p> <p>Mrs Turner returned to the meeting at 5.17pm</p> <p>The Chair advised that Mrs Newcombe had expressed an interest in remaining in the Vice Chair role. The Chair asked if there were any other expressions of interest amongst the governors. There were no further expressions of interest. In Mrs Newcombe's absence, governors discussed and unanimously voted to re-elect Mrs Newcombe as Vice Chair of the local academy committee for one year with effect from the autumn term.</p> | |
| THA/064/2425 | <p>Minutes of the meeting dated 12th May 2025: (attached/agreed by Chair, Principal, Executive Principal and circulated)</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair, Principal, and Executive Principal.</p> | |
| THA/065/2425 | <p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>Actioned:</p> <p>THA/040/2425 – governor training records have been updated</p> <p>THA/043/2425 – update on formal complaints will be provided under item THA/066/2425</p> <p>THA/043/2425 – a confidential update was provided for attendees of the meeting only.</p> <p>THA/051/2425 – update on governor training, skills audit and academy committee action plan was provided under item THA/063/2425</p> | |
| THA/066/2425 | <p>Principal's Report</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that in advance of the meeting they had received the end of year AIP and SEF documents as well as the documents to support the recent RISE visit to the academy.</p> <p>RISE: The Principal advised that schools are selected for RISE support based on previous Ofsted judgements and that Holgate along with one other academy had been</p> | |

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| | <p>chosen from with Diverse Academies Trust. Schools can access funding of between £40,000 to £120,000 via improvement advisory support.</p> <p>A visit from a regional RISE Advisor took place earlier in June. Lots of work had gone into providing robust data based on the previously identified Ofsted areas for improvement. The Rise Advisor had commented positively on the rate of improvements around attendance at the academy, but otherwise the academy are awaiting feedback and next steps.</p> <p>The governors feedback to the Principal that the messaging within the RISE documents was familiar to them and so it is evident that the governors do know about success, challenges and overall direction of travel, and are receiving appropriate data in relation to this.</p> <p>AIP: Governors received and acknowledged the end of year position for the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP).</p> <p>The governors asked the Principal if there would be a new AIP for 2025/26. The Principal confirmed that the AIP is in the process of being updated and that priorities will be re-set. Reading will be the main objective for improvement across the whole academy.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Principal would share the 2025/26 AIP with the local academy committee governors once finalised.</p> <p>The Principal encouraged governors to reflect on the new priorities, particularly the focus on reading, in relation to their link roles, and to question and challenge leaders on this priority during any link governor visits during 2025/26, so that this is embedded in all governor visits into the academy and is a collective responsibility amongst staff and governors.</p> <p>Governors questioned the Principal on the process for determining the academy AIP objectives. It was explained that the Executive Principal, Principal and Vice Principal initially agree the objectives, but all actions assigned to members of the SLT to lead on. The finalised AIP will be shared with all staff at the first INSET in September, along with CPD on reading strategies. Thereafter, progress against the AIP objectives will be reviewed termly and reported back to SLT.</p> <p>Governors asked in AIP objectives flow through into individual PDPs? The Principal confirmed that individual objectives are currently being reviewed and that all staff</p> | <p>HD</p> <p>Governors</p> |
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| | <p>will have an objective relating to the academy-wide reading priority so that this becomes everyone’s responsibility. It was confirmed that the AIP feeds directly into faculty planning.</p> <p>Governors asked whether changing the focus of the AIP helps to inform staffing planning, such as determining any new or different roles required to deliver against the objectives? The Principal advised not for this year. He confirmed that staffing/resourcing issues are addressed during curriculum-led financial planning (CLFP) to ensure resource can be used in the most efficient and effective way - and gave an example of how this planning had revealed a pattern of over-resourcing TAs at certain times of day in areas of the academy where they are not required, and who can be deployed to support focus on the reading priority in tutor time at the start of each day for the next academic year; as well as other areas where they had considered if vacancies, maternity leave, etc needed to be replaced like with like. The governors praised this approach to maximising resource but noted the potential impacts on staff workloads and wellbeing if vacancies were not replaced over extended periods of time.</p> <p>Safeguarding report: The governors noted that this reporting has become embedded this year and thanked the Principal and AP for Safeguarding for providing them with a comprehensive overview.</p> <p>Governors asked the Principal to comment on any areas of challenge. The Principal advised that domestic abuse and mental health continue to be the most prevalent categories of concern. He advised that patterns and trends are shared and that this helps inform personal development planning and the wider pastoral support offer, and that issues are discussed in tutor time and assemblies.</p> <p>Governors noted that there appeared to be a spike in racial incidents and bullying and asked the Principal of the reasons why, and what was being done to address this. The Principal noted that the demographic of the local area is changing very quickly. It was felt that inappropriate language and local political discourse and news articles may be heard at home or in the community and are being repeated in school. The Principal advised that a mix of sanctions and education is used to prevent incidents re-occurring.</p> <p>In relation to bullying, the Principal explained that higher numbers shows an effective reporting and recording system is in place and that students have the confidence to report. Governors noted it was unclear from the figures if these were</p> | |
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| | <p>one-off reports of unkindness or of bullying, but agreed with the Principal that they would rather this was over-reported than under-reported.</p> <p>Governors noted that there were relatively few concerns reported in Years 12 and 13, but that numbers in these years groups were small. The Principal advised he was confident that there was strong student voice in these year groups.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Principal would investigate whether the figures could be presented as a % of students in each year group as well as the raw numbers to provide additional context on where there may be the most prevalent issues and where further work may be needed.</p> <p>Complaints: The Principal gave the local academy committee a verbal update on complaints and advised that 4 formal complaints have made against the academy.</p> <p>It was confirmed that 2 complaints have been resolved satisfactorily and have now been closed.</p> <p>Another formal complaint has been investigated and resolutions and a way forward identified, and the academy are waiting to see if the parent is satisfied with the response. The governors acknowledged that parents are asked what they feel would resolve their complaint satisfactorily and that in this instance, the resolution they are seeking is not appropriate.</p> <p>1 complaint has been escalated to Stage 3 of the Trust concerns and complaints policy and has been referred to the Trust SEND lead, who has met with the parent and interviewed staff, and will be writing a report with the findings of her investigation and any recommendations for the academy to put in place.</p> <p>Local policies for ratification by the local academy committee governors: The Science faculty Health and Safety policy was tabled during the meeting. It was confirmed by the Assistant Business Manager that this policy requires an annual update. No material changes have been made, but there are updates to staff names and roles. The academy committee approved the policy update.</p> | HD |
| THA/067/2425 | <p>How has the Academy Committee held senior leaders to account: Governors challenged the Executive Principal throughout the meeting in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy priorities • Staffing and development planning • Standards | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Student and stakeholder voice | |
| THA/068/2425 | <p>How have Vision, Mission and Values of the Trust/Equality been upheld: These have been upheld through the agenda and discussions that have taken place. Equalities implications have been considered in all agenda items.</p> | |
| THA/069/2425 | <p>Complete Report to Trustees & Response from Trustees: Governors agreed to include more information on activities and events that have taken place and how the profile of Holgate has been raised within the community, rather than the work of the academy committee, following feedback from Mr Simpson, trustee.</p> <p>Following discussion by the governors, the annual report was completed, and was submitted to the Trust Head of Governance following the meeting.</p> | |
| THA/070/2425 | <p>Determination of Confidentiality & Equalities Act Consideration: Academy committee governors considered whether anything discussed should be deemed confidential and it was resolved that matters discussed under THA/065/2425 should be confidential to attendees of the meeting only.</p> <p>Governors considered and agreed that the Equality Act had been upheld throughout the agenda.</p> | |
| THA/071/2425 | <p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>TBC</p> | |
| <p>The meeting closed at 6.19pm</p> <p>Signed (agreed by email): K.Tuner (Chair of Governors) Date: 21/7/25</p> | | |