

Swift Academies

Success will inspire future triumphs

Longfield Academy

Local Governing Body

Monday 5 December 2022

MINUTES

Present (Governors)	Nicola Bales (Chair), Dean Judson (CEO), Angela Sweeten (Head Teacher), Nick Rees, Vicky Maddison, Deborah Hindson, Sarah Kelly
in attendance	Glen Hart: Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies Sarah Jones: Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies Caroline Jennings: Trust Governance and Policy Officer (Clerk)

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present It was confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that the quorum for meetings of the Governors will be three voting Governors. 7 (seven) Governors were present.</p> <p>New governors appointed by Directors this term; Sarah Kelly, Vicky Maddison and Deb Hindson welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors informed that Robert Bell had been appointed as a Member for Swift Academies.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged Governors to seek clarification where discussions or information were not understood.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for absence and their acceptance It was reported that apologies had been received from Laura Snowdon, Sarah Glover and Liam McCavanagh</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the apologies for absence were accepted.</p>	
3.	<p>Notification of items of urgent other business Governors informed that The Rydal Academy (part of Swift Academies) had received notice of an Ofsted visit tomorrow.</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests. All Governors present completed submitted the annual Declaration of Interest form for the current academic year. The Clerk will contact absent Governors, and collate all responses to be published on the website.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received for this agenda.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Chair's Report The Chair explained that in view of Longfield Academies Ofsted grading and the level of monitoring required it had been decided to trial two LGB meetings a term during the current academic year. One would focus on Finance and General Purposes and the other on Quality of Education.</p> <p>The meeting schedule will be updated and circulated.</p> <p>It was also suggested that three governors form an 'Ofsted Focus Group' in order to feel fully prepared in explaining the school priorities and looking at progress in preparation for Ofsted monitoring meetings. The Ofsted Focus Group meetings would take place every 3-4 weeks, and the participants would need to be readily available for Ofsted meetings.</p> <p>A Governor commented that the Ofsted report noted that "governors do not effectively challenge leaders to improve the school's performance They are not aware of the systems and processes used to monitor the school's effectiveness" so it is imperative that this is addressed.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED to set up an Ofsted Focus Group and dates would be agreed with participants.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer added that Governors were required to know that internal and external quality assurance processes were in place to ensure school improvement was taking place and the school's priorities were been actioned.</p> <p>Governor Question: The new Governor Link forms are very detailed in terms of suggested questions. Response: The suggested questions are there as an aide memoire and to help aid dialogue and focus in the meetings. Governors are not expected to go through all the questions in one visit. The observations will build up over time, so Governors should just pick one or two questions to focus on each time they visit. There is no substitute for school visits in terms of getting to know the school.</p> <p>A Governor asked staff to be mindful when using educational acronyms.</p> <p>The Head Teacher strongly urged Governors to walk and talk to pupils and staff during their visits. The template forms will evidence Governors are triangulating what they have been informed of in meetings.</p> <p>The new Governors were asked what areas they are interested in looking at: Vicky Maddison – Special Needs, LAC and Personal Development, Deborah Hindson; Behaviour and Attitudes and Premises, Sarah Kelly; Early Teachers' Careers.</p> <p>The Link Governor table to be updated and reissued.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Clerk</p>

The Head Teacher will ask staff links to contact link Governors and book dates to visit the school in the near future.

Governor Question: On a recent visit to the school, free school meals data could have been presented in an more accessible format. However, the Head Teacher was able to explain the interventions in place and a learning walk was undertaken.

Response: The Head Teacher recognised there were issues with easily accessing data as it is saved in different formats. She added that there is now a new pupil tracker in place which tracks centrally what interventions and strategies are in place for every student.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the IT team had a vacancy within their team and the Trust was actively trying to recruit another technician but had received no applications so far.

Governors advised that the school had received quotes to upgrade the Wifi, and were also considering leasing equipment in a similar way to the photocopiers.

Governor Question: The IT equipment in some areas could benefit from an upgrade, what are we doing about it?

Response: The ICT Manager is reviewing the infrastructure and is in the process of preparing a summary document to outline a phased approach of replacement and renewal.

A Governor commented that on a recent visit to the school he had visited the Choices Room; he commented that the room was well resourced and students were on task and absolutely compliant.

The Chair reminded Governors to book their visits to the school as soon as possible.

Governor Question: Would be possible for link Governor Monitoring Forms to be shared with all the Longfield Governors for information?

Response: Clerk will circulate.

6. Head Teacher Update

a) Keeping Children Safe in Education Update

Governors were issued with a copy of the KCSIE prior to the meeting. Changes were highlighted by the Head Teacher. New Governors receive training on this as part of their induction. Safeguarding training/refresher session has been arranged for 11 January 2023; TEAMS invitations have been sent out.

Governors advised that CPOMS reporting is solely for safeguarding rather than behaviour issues.

Governor Question: What information is reported on; SIMs, Class Charts or CPOMS?

Response: The Head Teacher explained if a child had marks on their arm, this would be reported via CPOMS. If there was a conversation with a parent about punctuality, this would be recorded in SIMS. Class Charts are used for

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rewards, seating plans and behaviour analysis in terms of individuals, classes and year groups.

Governor Question: What happens if a pupil does not turn up for school?

Response: Attendance is tracked and analysis via SIMS. The Attendance Team will ring home and home visit if necessary. The DSL supports the Attendance Office with pupil welfare checks.

b) RSC/ESFA meeting feedback

The CEO reported that the Trust had been selected for a Financial Management and Governance review, as part of the EFSA's annual programme of assurance work. The focus of our review was to ensure that the trust had appropriate financial management, governance, and control arrangements in place, that supported the effective and efficient running of the trust.

Governors were informed the key focus was on adherence to the Academies Trust Handbook; the Trust came out of the process extremely well with the unofficial verbal feedback stating "that it was one of the one best they have seen". The official report would document four minor remedial actions that the Trust needed to take to build on the current good practice; deadline for response was by the end of 2022. .

The CEO reiterated that receiving a positive report from the Longfield Academy Ofsted monitoring visits was critical in removing the 'Minded to Terminate Notice'.

The CEO informed Governors that the Government expects all academy trusts to grow to the minimum number of 7,500 pupils by 2030. The Regional Director has asked all schools to have a plan in place to ensure all pupils will be taught in a strong MAT or planning to join one.

The Board of Directors will be considering the following three options:

- I. Stay as we are
- II. Have a growth plan with another trust/trusts
- III. Join an established trust and become part of their institution.

The Chief Executive Officer informed Governors that he and the Directors had been engaged in ongoing exploratory discussions with other Trust/s.

c) School Priorities/Progress to date

The Head Teacher explained the SEF and SIP were combined into one document which was circulated in advance of the meeting. She said the school priorities were based on the Ofsted 8 priorities set out in the inspection report. The progress of each section was reported to Governors.

Governor Question: What has been the response from staff regarding the '10 non-negotiables'?

Response: We initially shared it with Heads of Department then cascaded to the rest of the staff and there has been no negative feedback.

Governor Question: How often are pupil assessments verified?

Response: Standardisation and tracking takes place each term by the Head of Department. SLT will check through line management meetings.

Governor Question: Are all pupils assessed at the same time?

Response: The collation of data takes place at the same point. Then the Head of Department will look at evidence to verify the grades given by the teacher to ensure rigour.

Governor Question: Has the new behaviour strategy had an impact on reducing suspensions?

Response: Yes, suspensions have reduced by half compared to this period last year.

7. **Policies for approval / review / information**

a) **For approval**

Governors informed that the Quality of Education Policy was still under review and would be sent out for approval by the end of the week.

Assessment marking and feedback Policy – approved.

Safeguarding Policy – approved.

Attendance Policy – approved.

Relationship and Sexual Health Policy – approved.

Early Careers Teacher Policy – approved.

Equal Opportunities Policy – approved.

b) **For information –**

Appraisal Policy, Staff Health and Well-Being Policy, Menopause Policy, Accessibility Plan, Health and Safety Policy, Provider Access Policy.

Governors RESOLVED that the circulated policies, including any changes were noted. New policies were APPROVED and adopted with immediate effect.

8. **School Reputation and Brand Improvement**

The Chair asked what the school was doing to improve Longfield Academy's reputation within the local community.

Response: We have put out lots of good news stories to the press, but not all are picked up. The community seems to be very supportive following the Ofsted outcome.

Governor Question: Do we have capacity for staff to go out to primary schools to promote the school?

Response: Yes we can do this next term, but we are concerned about capacity as we are hitting the peak time for staff absences.

9. **Finance**

At this point in time Longfield Academy has a predicted £30k deficit. There is a promise of extra funding of £1k per pupil from 1st April 2023, but this is not yet confirmed. The CFO explained that funding is driven by pupil numbers, and next September we are currently expecting 780 pupils to be on roll which is a slight reduction.

The formal budget report was issued to the LGB on 3rd October; a verbal update was provided re pupil numbers, energy costs and additional DFE funding, these figures however are not definitive at this stage, but will be during the Spring Term 2023; as soon as the figures are known a full budget highlighting any potential sensitivity analysis will be shared with the LGB

Governor Question: How much less revenue will the school receive in view of the reduced intake?

Response: Approximately £1/2 million. However, there are a number of unknowns; last year we picked up another 30 pupils between October and May so the numbers may improve.

Governor Question: Will this result in a reduction in staffing?

Response: Possibly, however we are hoping this will be done via natural wastage insofar as not replacing staff who leave; a decision on a restructure will be taken in January 2023.

Governor Question: What are the current reserves and can a financial breakdown be shared with Governors?

Response: We are awaiting the final auditors' report, but the reserves stand at £140k. A verbal breakdown was shared with Governors.

Governor Question: Do we receive any additional funding for alternative provisions?

Response: No.

Governors were asked to also be mindful of the surging energy costs, with increases of 295%. Energy costs have been capped until April, and there has been a suggestion of additional funding from the Government but await details.

Budget update for 2022/23 and 3 year projection

a) Headlines and short report on key changes/inflation/exceptions and risks

10.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the 2022/23 budget was prepared based on a 3% pay rise for teachers following recommendation. However, the Government awarded a 5% rise on the Upper Pay Scale. He added the support staff pay rise had not been funded by the DFE.

b) Pupil Premium report

The Chair reported that she had reviewed the Pupil Premium statement. Strategies and a breakdown of costs shared with Governors.

People

Governors informed that staff absences had reduced in comparison to the same period last year. A new HR Officer had been appointed to start in January 2023. This will be a job-share with the current HR Officer who has returned from retirement on a part-time basis.

11.

The Trust Business Manager reported that a number of Stage 1 absence letters had been sent out in line with the staff absence policy. It had been noted that staff are coming back from absences quicker than in previous years. Heads of Departments are scheduled to have 'return to work' training to support their staff.

Governor Question: Are there any staff well-being events planned and do staff feel supported?

Response: The staff forum is still in its infancy and not yet embedded. Action points from this meeting are minuted and shared with the Head Teacher.

<p>12.</p> <p>13.</p>	<p>a) Property/building update The Trust Business Manager advised Governors she was in the process of finalising CIF applications to improve warmth and energy efficiency. She reminded Governors about the successful bids received over the last few years for roofing, asbestos and fire safety.</p> <p>The link Governor was invited to come in next term to look at Health & Safety.</p> <p>b) Health and Safety The Trust Business Manager (TBM) informed Governors a new external Health & Safety consultant, Stuart McKenzie had been appointed. He had previously worked for the Trust and was familiar with the school. An audit of the documentation in line with legislation has taken place resulting in one recommendation. He will return in January to conduct a site visit.</p> <p>The TBM confirmed there had been no major accidents or Riddor reportable incidents this term.</p> <p>Governor Question: When the reports are received, can they be shared with Governors? Response: Yes, they can be shared at the next meeting.</p> <p>A.O.B. None.</p> <p>Date and time of future meetings Monday 30 January 2023 – Finance and General Purposes 4.30pm at Longfield Academy. Monday 13 March 2023 – LGB and Quality of Education 4.30pm at Longfield Academy. Monday 19 June 2023 - LGB and Quality of Education 4.30pm at Longfield Academy.</p> <p>These minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of Longfield Academy as follows: on: <u>30/1/23</u> date</p> <p>Signature: <u><i>N Bales</i></u> Print Name: <u><i>NBALES</i></u></p>	
	<p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGB meeting schedule will be updated and circulated. • Governors RESOLVED to set up an Ofsted Focus Group and dates would be agreed with participants. • Link Governor table to be updated and reissued. • Governor Monitoring Forms to be shared with all the Longfield Governors. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>