

# Swift Academies

*Success will inspire future triumphs*

The Rydal Academy  
Local Governing Body  
Monday 1 March 2021

a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

## MINUTES

Present (Governors)	John Armitage (Head Teacher), Mark Gray (Chair), Michael Jeffries, Mark Emerson, Katie Turnbull, Melanie Chapman, Ewa Kaszuba, Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer)
in attendance	Sarah Jones (Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies) Glen Hart (Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies) Chris Carr (Infrastructure & Development Manager, Swift Academies) Beth Wright (Swift Academies) Derek Bell (Director, Swift Academies) Tracey Curtis (Governance Partner, Avec Partnership)

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
1	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present</b></p> <p>The Chair asked Governors and those present to take a moment to pay their condolences following the death of Bhup Singh in December 2020. The Chair reflected on the contributions Bhup had made to the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer highlighted simple housekeeping arrangements to ensure the smooth flow of the meeting, including</p>	

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ensuring microphones remained on mute when not speaking, the use of the chat facility to ask questions and the raising of a hand to gain attention.

The Governance Partner 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*. Eight (8) Governors were present.

## 2 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

It was reported that apologies for absence had been received from Kelly-Ann Lyle and Sara Clough.

Governors RESOLVED that the apologies for absence were accepted and noted the absence of Troy Turner.

It was reported that Chris Carr (Trust Infrastructure & Development Manager) would present the Trust ICT Update including ICT Development Plan to Governors (agenda item 9).

Governors RESOLVED that the absence of Andy Hutton was noted.

## 3 Notification of items of urgent other business

- items that the local governing body of The Rydal Academy regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

One item of urgent other business was notified for consideration at the end of the agenda: update in respect of re-opening of school to all pupils.

Governors were informed that Derek Bell (Chair of the Board of Directors) had joined this meeting. Beth Wright had also joined the meeting to from the Trust team.

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

## 4 Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests

- a) complete / review the Register of Interest for the 2020-2021 academic year

Governors and those present were reminded that they should complete the Register of Interest annually to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members and / or other trustees and / or employees. The Register should be updated during the academic year should circumstances change.

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The Governance Partner had e-mailed Members, Directors and Trustees with a link to complete the Register of Interest electronically. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that all Governors of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy had completed the Register of Interest for the current academic year.

Governors present confirmed that the content of their respective Register of Interest continued to be accurate and up to date. Governors were reminded that any change of circumstance would require an updated Register of Interest to be completed during the academic year.

- b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting  
Governors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting. No declarations of interest were received.
- c) Code of Conduct  
Governors were reminded of the Code of Conduct for Swift Academies. It was confirmed that a Code of Conduct was retained for all Governors of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy.

**5 Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising**

Draft minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of The Rydal Academy held on Monday 5 October 2020 had been shared with Governors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Governors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy held on Monday 5 October 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Governance Partner would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.

Governance Partner / Chair

**6 Chair's Report**

- a) action taken
- b) correspondence
- c) local authority briefing paper: spring term 2021

The Chair reported that no action had been taken or correspondence handled since the last meeting of The Rydal Academy Local Governing Body meeting held in Autumn Term 2020.

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**7 Head Teacher's report including Chief Finance Officer and Trust Business Manager Report**

- a) SEF/Action Plan
- b) Education Development Partner Report (Autumn 2020)
- c) Education Development Partner Report (Spring 2021)
- d) Risk Register
- e) Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) 2019-2020
- f) Admissions Criteria 2022-2023

The Head Teacher's Report, SEF / Action Plan, Education Development Partner Reports, Risk Register and Inspection Data Summary Report 2019-2020 had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher, Chief Finance Officer and Trust Business Manager presented to Governors the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, drawing Governors' attention to the summary of change within each section as follows:

**Pupil Numbers / attendance and exclusions**

The Head Teacher reported that the number of pupils on roll (Reception to Year 6) was 574 at the end of Autumn Term 2020, which is in line with previous years rolls, despite numbers on roll initially being down in September 2020. Nursery places were reported as significantly lower for 2020/21 than the two previous years due to Covid-19.

**In-year mobility**

Despite current restrictions and guidance in respect of Covid-19, Governors were advised that 37 pupils had left The Rydal Academy during the 2020-2021 academic year and 59 pupils had been admitted in-year which represented an overall increase of 22 pupils.

Governors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head Teacher Report for information in respect of the mobility breakdown with Year 3 reported to be most significantly affected (10 leavers, 2 CME, 8 in-year transfer): 14 pupils joined the Year 3 cohort with an overall change of 4 additional pupils to the year group.

**Leavers destinations**

The Governors were advised that of the 29 pupil leavers:

15 pupils moving to other Darlington schools. 14 pupils had moved out of the Local Authority area.

**Point of entry: cohort breakdown by year of entry**

The Head Teacher drew Governors' attention to the number of pupils commencing their education at The Rydal Academy by year of entry. 73% of the current Year 6 cohort had attended The Rydal Academy since nursery and reception.

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### **Year 6 / Year 7 Transition**

Updated secondary school destination information for pupils of The Rydal Academy had been included in the Head Teacher's Report following appeals processes and whether pupils physically arrived at secondary school following the Summer 2020 break.

*During this item Melanie Chapman joined the meeting.*

### **Pupil absence levels**

The Head Teacher explained that the pupil absence information when compared 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were very different due to the disruption of self-isolation and the impact of national lockdown. Attendance for Autumn Term 2020 was reported as 91.8% (94.1% with T code applied).

A summary of change was reported to Governors as follows:  
Attendance in the Autumn Term was 91.8% which is down on the same time frame in the previous year by 3.3%

The latest national figures around school's attendance during Autumn Term and Covid state that:

- attendance in state-funded schools steadily increased from 87% in early September, to a period of stability at between 89% to 90% from 1 October 2020 to 15 October 2020 (Rydal 92.7%: 95.14% with T code applied)
- immediately after half-term, this period of stability continued, with attendance at approximately 89% on 5 November 2020 (Rydal 92.3%: 94.72% with T code applied)
- Attendance then decreased for two consecutive weeks, down to approximately 83% on 19 November 2020, and remained at this level for the following week. Attendance had now increased to 86% on 3 December 2020 (Rydal 92.2%: 94.6% with T code applied)
- Attendance at The Rydal Academy was better than national figures at all these points.

Of the 98 children on the persistent absentee list from Summer 2020, 68% of those still on roll have improved their attendance, 54% are no longer persistent absentees and 32% have improved to above the national average. 12% increased their attendance to 100%.

Nursery and Reception pupils who are not statutory school age will continue to be targeted in order to develop good habits and our key focus year groups are Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.

Previous target groups were persistent absentees, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils whose attendance had decreased by 13.8% and EHC pupils which had increased by 1.06%.

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Current target groups continue to be persistent absentees and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils alongside SEN support.

A Governor commented positively on attendance during Autumn Term 2020: the Chair sought clarification whether pupils identified as persistent absentees, continued to be persistent absentees or whether circumstances had exacerbated the situation?

The Head Teacher confirmed that the statistics contained in the Head Teacher report indicated success in getting pupils previously identified as persistent absentees, back into school. The Head Teacher reported that Autumn Term 2020 had been unique: there were a number of pupils, who for a range of reasons, were not in school and would not normally be considered as a persistent absentee. However, there continued to be a minority of families who continue to have high levels of pupil absence over time. Of the persistent absentees, 70% had improved their attendance when compared to the same period in the previous year.

#### **Pupil exclusion levels**

It was reported that there had been no permanent exclusions to date in the current academic year. There had been nine fixed term exclusions during 2020-2021 which related to seven pupils to date and equated to 19 sessions lost. This level of fixed term exclusions was reported to be high when compared to a similar period in 2019-2020. The number of fixed term exclusions represented 1% of the total pupil roll.

One pupil had received repeated fixed-term exclusions: five of the exclusions related to physical assault of staff. Three other fixed term exclusions were in respect of a group of pupils who had deliberately set off the school fire alarm. One fixed term exclusion was given to a pupil in respect of dangerous behavior.

It was reported that there had been ten internal exclusions, involving eight different pupils, to date in the current academic year which was tracking at a similar level when compared to the same timeframe in previous years. The internal exclusions related to a number of incidents, including assault of an adult, threatening other pupils or adults, persistent disruptive behaviour and racist / homophobic incident.

A summary of change was reported to Governors as follows:

The majority of the fixed term exclusions were before the October half-term and provision was adapted to provide a pastoral base to tailor the curriculum around the individual needs of targeted pupils which has proven successful.

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### Attainment and progress

The Head Teacher advised Governors that data remained unchanged from the previous Head Teacher Report, as national Early Years Foundation Stage assessments were cancelled due to Covid-19.

- Phonics

Year 1 phonics projections for the current year have not been completed as the initial screen was due to take place in January 2021.

Due to the cancellation of Year 1 phonics testing in 2019/20 children had taken the test in Autumn term of Year 2. Year 2 Autumn Term outcomes were reported to be in-line with previous national averages, 82%. Disadvantaged pupils outperform other pupils by 8%. Stability pupils outperform mobility pupils by 23%.

- Key Stage 1

National data remained unchanged from the previous report as national Key Stage 1 assessments were cancelled due to Covid-19.

- Key Stage 2

Data remains unchanged from the previous report as national Key Stage 2 assessments were cancelled due to Covid-19. It was reported that the algorithm to calculate Key Stage 2 progress was due to be changed in Summer 2020: details of the calculation have not been shared by the Department for Education.

- Cohort projections

Projected attainment against national averages continues to be a key focus for all year groups. Year 1 and Year 2 projected growth was reported to be treble the national rate. Reading and Writing continue to have the largest gaps to national. Reading remains the key intervention focus for the school as improved comprehension and vocabulary will also support areas for development in pupils' writing such as spelling, grammar and breadth of language.

Governors sought clarification of information in respect of the Early Years Foundation Stage early adopter pilot. Governors wondered whether there had been any indication the introduction of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework would be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and partial closure of schools to pupils considered to be vulnerable or those children of key workers. Governors queried whether The Rydal Academy would be disadvantaged by being one of the early adopters?

The Head Teacher reported that, no plans to postpone the introduction of the new Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework had been shared to date: it was expected however that the curriculum would be moved forward. The Head Teacher confirmed that being one of the early adopter schools had been beneficial to the staff, although little

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training information had been shared to date, much of the development work and modelling prepared by the staff at The Rydal Academy had been shared by the Local Authority with other schools in the area who were also early adopters of the framework.

The Deputy Head Teacher commented that nationally there would be no submission of Early Years Foundation Stage data either on the previous or proposed framework. Governors were advised of the huge benefits to the staff of being involved in the pilot scheme, staff continued to become familiar with the framework. It was reported that the old framework was felt to be out of date and that although the proposed framework was significantly different, it was also significantly improved in many ways.

#### **Curriculum planning (integrated with financial planning)**

The Chief Finance Officer reported that curriculum planning is co-ordinated as a joint exercise with the budget to produce a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and was affordable.

The review into the financial efficiency of the Trust had identified that reserve levels remain at a reasonable level for the size of the Trust, although further financial savings would be welcome.

The Department for Education had recently created a tool: *View my Financial Insights* (VMFI), which would enable the Trust to review income and expenditure with similar size schools / trusts. Information would be shared with Governors during summer term 2021.

- **Curriculum Offer**

The Head Teacher reported that this section of the Head Teacher's Report had been updated to reflect the school website in respect of Covid-19 and the Catch-up curriculum, and the support for pupils of The Rydal Academy for the most recent period of national lockdown (January 2021).

The Head Teacher commented that the Education Development Partner had confirmed that staff had been able to articulate why changes to the curriculum had been made.

The Head Teacher advised Governors that curriculum recovery planning and analysis data gathered during Autumn Term 2020 had identified that pupils were almost back to where they would have been expected to be by Christmas 2020. Teaching staff had managed to close gap of disrupted learning in 2019-2020. Unfortunately, a further eight weeks had been lost since Christmas 2020 with two thirds of pupils not being on site, although the vast majority are accessing remote learning. It was hoped that any identified curriculum gaps can be addressed quickly.

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- Extended curriculum

Governors were informed that due to Covid-19 restrictions, enrichment activities, trips, workshops and free extra-curricular clubs had not taken place for the pupils since March 2020, although, where possible these had been replaced by virtual visits and virtual workshops.

- Remote Education

The Head Teacher confirmed that a remote education offer was in place for pupils of The Rydal Academy: a blended learning offer had been developed with pupils receiving communication from their class teacher each week. The communication directs pupils to appropriate on-line learning platforms which are focused on Reading, Writing, maths and science. Broader SAT's preparation is available for Year 6 pupils. Learning Grids are available for completion at home using pen and paper at home, with several work sheets and supporting documents which accompany the grids. Teachers record the input of pupils. The remote education offer does not offer 'live' teaching: Zoom play times take place each day to allow pupils to contact each other and their class teacher.

The Head Teacher confirmed that the remote education offer had been well received by families with good levels of engagement seen. Teachers continued to assess the work of the pupils.

- Remote Education: SEND

Governors' attention was drawn to the Head Teacher's Report for information in respect of remote education for pupils with Special Educational Needs. Information was also available on the school website.

A Governor commented that the report in respect of Remote Education contained in the Head Teacher's Report was useful information for Governors: the level of depth was helpful.

A summary of change was reported to Governors as follows: Implementation of our new curriculum offer began in September 2020, alongside adaptations in line with our Catch-up strategy and curriculum recovery plan. Subject leads have focused on monitoring and scrutinising their subject areas through collation of deep dive information including analysis of work in pupil books, pupil voice and teacher voice. They have continued to develop their Subject Leader Action Plans through populating the impact section following the collation of the Autumn Term data set and using this to inform their future actions. Subject Leads have also participated in professional development activities through both INSET training and work with our Education Development Partner to develop their deep dive conversation.

All subject deep dives were postponed during Autumn Term with a view to instigating them during Spring or Summer Term through

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external verification (EDP, Advisors or Trust Leads) once the Covid-19 Risk Assessment allows.

Since the partial closure of schools at the beginning of Spring Term due to the January 2021 lockdown, critical worker and vulnerable pupils on site offer has reflected our usual curriculum offer but with pupils working in groups of 16 or less, 35% of pupils on roll have continued to access onsite provision. For the remaining 66% of pupils, remote education has been offered. 53% of all pupils on roll are engaging in remote education with access supported by the distribution of 98 laptops via the Department for Education. 89% of pupils have continued to access their education during the national lockdown from January 2021, with 11% of pupils not currently evidencing any engagement in learning. Teachers are following up each individual case at least weekly via telephone and e-mail and where no contact is received a referral is made to the Welfare Team who are also following up with phone calls and home visits. Darlington Traveller Education and Achievement Service is also making regular phone calls to all Gypsy Roma, Traveller pupils to offer support.

#### **Financial management and governance**

The Chief Finance Officer reported that a brief summary of the budget position at The Rydal Academy was included in the Head Teacher's Report, from September 2020 to the end of January 2021.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the outturn report for The Rydal Academy was prepared at a time of uncertainty due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It was reported that a Trust claim had been submitted to the Education & Skills Funding Agency in July 2020 which reflected exceptional costs associated with Covid-19. £30k had been received. A second claim window has opened, however where reserves had increased during the 2019-2020 academic year, it had not been possible to make a further claim. Swift Academies had increased their reserves position in 2019-2020 and therefore were unable to make a second claim. The Trust had however, expected the exceptional costs incurred as a result of Covid-19 to be fully reimbursed.

Governors were informed that further guidance was expected from the government regarding the Covid workforce fund. It was understood this would be backdated to 1 November 2020 and would cover the costs of high levels of staff absence which exceeded a minimum threshold.

Governors' attention was drawn to the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report for information in respect of the management accounts position for The Rydal Academy at 31 January 2021. A surplus of £9k was predicted against a balanced budget position. The prediction is however, based on assumptions which could change due

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to exceptional costs in respect of Covid-19. To date, £6k has been spent which would not be reimbursed.

- Long and short-term financial / budget planning

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that offers of funding for 2021-2022 had been received (£2,532,764), which is an additional £50k more than received in 2020-2021. This also exceeds the budgeted figure of circa £43k for 2021-2022.

Financial stability of all the academies in the Trust is key for the years ahead. The retention of existing pupils and ensuring new intake exceeds the published admission number is key to financial planning. However, work continues to explore the opportunities to improve the financial efficiency of the Trust.

- Schedule of Contracts

The Trust Business Manager reported that all contracts / service level agreements continue to be reviewed individually as they expire and best value and quality sought for each agreement.

Bullough's Cleaning Services had been appointed with effect from 1 November 2020 following a tender process. All staff have transferred to Bullough's via TUPE. This had resulted in a replenishment of vacancies at The Rydal Academy. The Trust Manager has weekly meetings with cleaning company and a six-monthly review meeting scheduled to take place shortly.

- Estate management

Governors were reminded that the Trust had been awarded two Condition Improvement Fund applications for 2020-2021. The projects were to replace various flat roofs on site and replacement of the fire alarm and emergency lighting. The roofing project had commenced and would be on-going for approximately eight to ten weeks. It was reported that the project would be achieved within the budget.

The fire alarm replacement project had gone out to tender: it had not been possible to commence the project earlier as the project was quite intrusive with work taking place in every classroom and corridor, which was difficult to organise given the guidance in respect of the coronavirus pandemic and social-distancing arrangements. It was hoped the majority of the project would take place over the Easter break, which would also incur as little disruption as possible to the school. Arrangements were in place to open the tender documents in the coming weeks.

Further Condition Improvement Fund applications had been submitted for 2021-2022, with the outcome reported to be 1 April 2021. However, this was likely to be delayed. The Trust Business Manager had submitted two applications to maximise the opportunity for The Rydal

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Academy. The two bids submitted were in respect of piping / heating control improvements and a fire safety bid which would further enhance the current project to replace equipment.

Governors were informed that two insurance claims had been made, one in respect of flooding in below the Key Stage 2 boiler room and the second claim was currently being investigated by the insurance provider in respect of damp in or under a classroom floor.

The Lead Governor in respect of finance, commented that whilst the central team worked to consolidate costs trust wide, sought clarification whether there were other areas that better value for money could be achieved, specifically for The Rydal Academy?

The Chief Finance Officer responded by stating that this was very much at the forefront of Trust wide activities. Staffing costs were reported as 80% of expenditure, with the next largest spend on utility costs, where three-year contracts had been negotiated for all schools across the Trust. Efficiencies were now starting to be seen of reduced IT expenditure across the Trust as we are sharing more resources, including broadband, licenses and equipment. It has been possible to cancel several Service Level Agreements due to the expertise of the in-house IT team. Work regularly takes place to identify savings when contracts come up for renewal.

It was also noted that there was a budget announcement intended shortly, and whether there were any early indications what impact this could have on schools? For example, if national insurance contributions were increased, the headlines would be reported positively in the press, but that the actual impact on schools could be negative.

The Chief Finance Officer commented that it was very much wait and see, the timing of the budget would assist in the planning of the 2021-2022 budget that would be presented to Directors in July 2021.

*During this item Katie Turnbull left the meeting. .*

- Financial Governance

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Academies Financial Handbook (published annually) was a key document which sets out the financial framework for academy trusts, and reflects their status as companies, charities and public bodies. Governors' attention was drawn to the Head Teacher's Report for information regarding the requirements of the 2020 handbook.

- Remuneration

Governors were informed that the Board of Directors had approved the recommendations contained in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (2020).

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Agreement had been reached between the National Joint Council Trade Unions and National Employers in August 2020 for pay awards on the NJC pay scale and allowances.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that all pay awards had been contained in the 2020-2021 budget.

#### **Quality Assurance: audit ratings**

The Head Teacher reported that there had been no changes made to the judgements contained in the Self-Evaluation Form for The Rydal Academy against the Ofsted grade descriptor framework. Overall effectiveness was judged to be good. 100% of teachers consistently demonstrate good or better practice (97% in 2020-2021).(100% in 2019-2020).

#### **Education Development Partner (Autumn 2020)**

The Head Teacher reported that the focus of the Autumn Term visit by the Education Development Partner was to meet with subject leads and conduct interviews around PSHRE, RE, PE and MFL. The majority of these staff had previously had little chance to participate in similar activities and required the development opportunity. There was some variation of responses across subject leads with additional support identified as necessary. The Education Development Partner had confirmed that subject leads' knowledge was strong but there was still some variation in terms of articulation of monitoring and scrutiny processes between subject leaders.

- Internal review activities

The annual wraparound audit had taken place in October 2020, with a focus on breakfast club, youth club and nursery lunch

- Personal Development Audit

The annual personal development audit had been completed in November 2020. Actions identified included a review of the model of the school council / house teams and to review the impact of the new curriculum and provision model on outcomes over the next three years.

- Remote Education Audit

An audit of the remote education offer against the Department for Education Framework was completed in January 2021. The audit scored 12 areas as 4/5 (embed) and further 10 areas 5/5 (sustain).

#### **SEND**

A summary of change was reported to Governors as follows:  
During Autumn Term 2020, the total number of SEN support pupils appeared to have reduced slightly, whilst the number of pupils with EHCP's and One Plans had increased incrementally.

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The number of pupils with Education, Health, Care Plans continues to rise, despite some pupils transitioning in Year 6 to secondary provision, while the number of pupils receiving SEN support as a proportion of school has remained in line with previous years. During the first national lockdown as a result of Covid-19, and restrictions on professional involvement, only one EHCP assessment request was made by The Rydal Academy. However, The Rydal Academy continues to have the highest level of EHCP's within a mainstream primary school setting

Governors queried whether Covid-19 had impacted on the timeline of pupils being assessed for Education, Health, Care Plans, particularly on the pupils where staff may have identified an assessment was required prior to either national lockdown?

The Head Teacher responded that timelines had been delayed, although the Local Authority had indicated this would improve going forward. The Head Teacher stated that the impact was demonstrated in the fact that only one EHCP assessment had been requested during Autumn Term 2020. Normally three to six assessments are submitted in a term. Due to the partial closure of the school, pupils had not had the opportunity to see Education Psychologists, reports from other agencies were taking more time, and it was not possible to build a pupil's case when they were not in school.

Governors requested an update from the SENCO at a future Local Governing Body meeting.

### **Safeguarding**

Welfare monitoring was in place for 48 pupils not in school, from 128 children identified. 80 children identified as vulnerable are currently in school. Procedures are in place where no communication had taken place between families and the school staff across a week.

There continues to be a high number of families accessing early help support over the year, and in particular during school closure where parents are struggling to manage their children's behaviour at home. 90% of children with an allocated social worker are accessing a school place during lockdown and those not attending have a Risk Assessment in place with the Local Authority and reasons validated.

- **Health and Safety**

The Trust Business Manger confirmed that arrangements, during the periods of national lockdown, mandatory checks and maintenance continuing to ensure the premises are safe to all staff and pupils in school.

Site staff from other sites across the Trust were reported to have been providing additional capacity at The Rydal Academy, with a reduction in

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the need for contractors. It was intended that site staff at The Rydal Academy would be upskilled to provide a similar level of support across the Trust sites.

Mid-year Health & Safety Committee meetings, Health & Safety Audits and Premises audits were postponed from May 2020 due to partial school closure: these were conducted in October 2020 with a review planned for February 2021.

#### **Accidents**

Reduced number of staff and pupils on site since 20 March 2020 as a result of Covid-19, have significantly reduced the number of accidents.

#### **School Community – staff, pupils and parents**

The Head Teacher reported that questionnaires would not be sent out at this time: evidence gathered at this time would not be comparable to previous questionnaires completed at a similar time.

#### **HR**

Governors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head Teacher Report for information in respect of staff absence: leadership absence was reported to be low for the current year. Teaching absence was low when compared to the same time period in the previous year. Although support staff absence was high when compared to leadership and teaching staff, support staff were reported to be a larger group of staff.

In terms of Covid-related absence, for this year to date, information had been gathered to demonstrate the impact across the staff. Leadership 0%, teaching staff 3.5%, support staff 58.5%. The Head Teacher reminded Governors that a number of staff had been required to work from home during the partial closure of schools due to the coronavirus pandemic.

- **Performance management**

Governors were informed that targets had been set for the 2020-2021 academic year in September 2020. Previous targets had been reviewed with outcomes modified so that no individuals were disadvantaged by the partial closure of schools from 20 March 2020.

A summary of change was provided for Governors as follows:

From September 2019, five staff reduced hours following the approval of flexible working requests.

Since September 2019, there had been 16 long-term absences, three transitional periods between staff leaving and recruitment, six maternity leaves, and one suspension which had a significant impact on continuity and capacity during the academic year. Support staff absence is high against teacher absence with leadership absence low.

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A staffing restructure consultation commenced on 9 March 2020 and was paused due to Covid-19 partial closure of the school on 20 March 2020. The restructure process was re-started with staff on 8 January 2021.

#### **Pupil views**

The Head Teacher reported no change during the reporting period.

#### **Ofsted Parent view**

Governors were informed that there were insufficient responses to generate a report since 2019-20 and prior to that the 2015-2016 academic year, the years of the schools previous Ofsted inspection.

#### **Education Development Partner Report (Spring 2021)**

The Head Teacher drew Governors' attention to the content of the circulated Education Development Partner Report (Spring 2021) for information in respect of recommendations from the Spring Term visit of the Education Development Partner.

The Head Teacher reported that two members of the Senior Leadership Team (Angela Galey & Libby Truby) had been interviewed by the Education Development Partner during the Spring Term. The interviews had focused on developments across The Rydal Academy during Autumn Term 2020. Reading and Writing team members were also interviewed: these are key areas of the school for development.

#### **Risk Register**

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Risk Register remained unchanged since the last meeting of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy. Governors were informed that the indicated level of risk was appropriate to the area of risk. The Head Teacher had been in regular contact with Governors in respect of Risk Assessments and *schools response to the pandemic and development of potential expansion of partial opening and ultimately 'full opening' of Trust Schools* (Level of Gross Risk, 25).

The Chair commented that the content of the circulated Risk Register appeared robust. There were no questions raised by Governors in respect of the content of the Risk Register.

#### **Primary Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)**

Governors were reminded that the IDSR was shared with school by Ofsted. There had been no update in the circulated report to attainment progress.

Governors' attention was drawn to the content of the report, where updates had been included for 2108-2019, as follows: absence (whole school), exclusions (whole school), pupil groups, school workforce,

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ethnicity of the school community, local area context, finance, MAT/LA level information, year group context (2019) and SEND characteristics.

### **Admissions Criteria 2022-2023**

The Head Teacher explained that the Admissions Criteria 2022-2023 had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting: there were no proposed changes to the historical criteria. The Admissions Criteria had also been shared with the Directors of Swift Academies for approval. Formal ratification of the Admissions Criteria 2022-2023 would take place during the Standards Committee meeting of Swift Academies planned to take place on Wednesday 3 March 2021. The determined admission arrangements would be shared with the Local Authority not later than Monday 15 March 2021.

However, Governors were reminded that an application had been submitted to the Department for Education to extend the age range of pupils at The Rydal Academy. If the application was successful, a slight amendment would be required to the Admissions Criteria 2022-2023 in respect of nursery admission to reflect the intake of pupils from two year old (currently three year old).

The Chair commented positively on the huge amount of information shared by the Head Teacher, both prior to and during this meeting of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, SEF/Action Plan, Education Development Partner Report (Autumn 2020), Education Development Partner Report (Spring 2021, Risk Register, Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) 2019-2020 and information reported, including the Admissions Criteria 2022-2023 were noted.

## **8 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- a) Scheme of Delegation
- b) Trust Development Plan

The Chief Executive Officer's Report, Scheme of Delegation and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive advised Governors that the Writing of the Chief Executive Officer's Report had taken place as announcements were expected from the Prime Minister on the 'road map out of Covid'. The fuller re-opening of schools with effect from 8 March 2021 had been confirmed.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that since March 2020 that the responses from all staff across the Trust since March 2020 were reported

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to be nothing short of amazing and had been built upon in each subsequent period of lockdown.

The Chief Executive Officer commented that The Rydal Academy, Longfield Academy, Hurworth School and the Trust had all moved forward during exceptional times and this was evidenced in the respective Head of School / Head Teacher Reports and the Education Development Partner Reports.

#### **Scheme of Delegation**

It was reported that there were no changes to the circulated Scheme of Delegation.

#### **Trust Development Plan**

Governors were advised that the Trust Development Plan had been reviewed and updated by the Executive Leadership Team and reflected the partnership working across Swift Academies. The Chief Executive Officer stated that the Trust had moved forward significantly: virtual arrangements had facilitated the coming together of staff across the Trust to work collectively.

#### **MAT Development Session**

The Spring Term 2021 MAT Development Session also took place virtually on Thursday 11 February 2021 and focused on *what Governors and Directors can expect during an Ofsted visit*. This was the second of three MAT Development sessions focusing on Ofsted requirements and provided another example of collaborative working across the Trust with staff, governor and director involvement.

The Chief Executive Officer thanked Governors for their support and achievements during exceptional times. The Chair echoed the sentiments of the Chief Executive Officer.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Chief Executive Officer's Report, Scheme of Delegation, Trust Development Plan and information reported, was noted.

### **9 Trust ICT Update including IT Development Plan**

The Trust ICT Development Plan had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

Chris Carr (Infrastructure & Development Manager, Swift Academies) discussed with Governors the content of the circulated ICT Development Plan and drew Governors' attention to the following aspects of the plan in respect of The Rydal Academy.

Governors were informed that the team had been utilising the partial closure of the schools across the Trust to undertake projects that would

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normally take place during the summer term break. These projects were being finalised in preparation for the re-opening of schools in March 2020.

### **IT Development Plan**

Governors' attention was drawn to the content of the circulated IT Development Plan which identified short term, medium term and long term IT projects.

The team had been part of the Remote Learning task group, established to implement a trust wide Remote Learning Policy. The team were reported to be enjoying the opportunity. Work for the IT Team had involved the provision and configuration of Microsoft Teams and the creation of hundreds of classes linked to SIMS and the creation of some inhouse procedures to assist with blended learning assessments. Additional hardware had been installed in classrooms to facilitate Remote Education, including webcams, visualisers and headphones for staff and pupils.

### **Swift Academies Brand**

Governors were informed that a new member to the IT Team had been appointed and was standardising and improving Trust school identities, including logos and websites.

### **Marketing Materials**

Any material that was previously outsourced would now be completed in-house. This was expected to save the Trust a significant amount of expenditure going forward.

### **Website Compliance**

A monthly check of websites across the Trust continues to take place to ensure that all Trust websites are compliant with all legal requirements. Remote Education guidance has been published for each school in the Trust in accordance with the government's direction.

### **Centralised IT Asset Register**

Governors were advised that an in-house asset system was being developed that automatically catalogues all Trust computers, laptops and tablets. On top of this, devices like touch screens and projectors are also recorded. This allows the Trust to have a holistic view of assets and supports decision making regarding replacement items.

### **Laptop Review**

Over the last twelve months, around 120 laptops have been replaced at The Rydal Academy with newer devices. An additional 60 laptops have been ordered which would help future proof The Rydal Academy and ensure pupils can access resources where required.

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**ICT contracts / Service Level Agreements**

IT are populating a list of existing contracts to ensure the best value for money is being achieved.

**MAT-wide SIMS**

Initial work has started on a replacement for SIMS. Modern MIS software are cloud based and offer more functionality than traditional SIMS

**Whiteboards / projectors**

Six interactive screens have been installed at The Rydal Academy, to replace faulty or aging hardware.

*During this item Katie Turnbull rejoined the meeting.*

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Trust IT Development Plan and information reported was noted.

**10 Single Central Record: signature by the Head Teacher and Chair**

The Trust Business Manager agreed to arrange a virtual meeting with the Head Teacher and Chair of the Local Governing Body (The Rydal Academy) in order to review the Single Central Record.

Trust Business Manager

**11 Disadvantaged Pupils (Pupil Premium) Strategy**

The Disadvantaged Pupil (Pupil Premium) strategy / self-evaluation had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher drew Governors' attention to the overview in respect of the Disadvantaged Pupils (Pupil Premium) strategy / self-evaluation contained in the circulated Head Teacher's Report.

The Disadvantaged Pupils (Pupil Premium) Strategy for 2020-2021 was published on the school website in July 2020, including a review of 2019-2020 actions and planned expenditure for 2020-2021. In 2020-2021, £466,160 is expected to support 279 pupils.

The Pupil Premium Strategy focuses on the following barriers to learning:

- Academic barriers: the attainment gap to age related expectation from nursery entry and reception baseline: low level of oral language skills, breadth of vocabulary and use of the written word; access to enrichment activities and experiences to enhance learning and increase knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Additional barriers: family capacity to support development due to financial or environmental factors: low school attendance and persistent absenteeism: access to childcare, to provide family support, and extend social / learning opportunities.

Planned expenditure focuses on:

- Quality of education: for all pupils to access school trips and enrichment activities during the academic year, including on OAA residential: extensive extra-curricular programme in place to extend pupils' learning and progress covering all areas of the curriculum for Reception to Year 6 pupils: intervention or in-class support for any children not making expected progress and Looked after Children mentoring.
- Targeted support: provide in house Speech, Language and Communication Advisory support: provide in house pastoral and family wellbeing support including therapies, intervention and parent support programmes: designated Safeguarding Lead is released to deal with CP issues and support vulnerable families.
- Other approaches: attendance tracking of pupils with attendance below 95% and support families to improve attendance: free access to school bus service to provide support for vulnerable families to access schooling: free wraparound care through breakfast club and youth club.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Pupil Premium Strategy and information reported was noted. The Strategy was approved and adopted with immediate effect.

## 12 Primary PE & Sports Premium Strategy

Evidencing the Impact of the Primary PE and Sport Premium had been shared with Governors prior to this meeting. A copy of the report would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher confirmed that the Primary PE and Sports Premium Strategy for 2020-2021 was published on the school website in July 2020, alongside a review of the 2019-2020 actions. In 2020-2021 £21,020 is expected which will be allocated across key indicators as follows:

- Key indicator 1: the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity: extended swimming – number of allocated swimming sessions doubled so all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 receive eight hours swimming time per year: extra curricular sports clubs provision altered to cover a range of sports, including football, dance, netball, basketball, multi-sports: reception outdoor play: provision of sports kit including clothing, footwear and technical equipment.
- Key Indicator 2: The profile of PESSPA being raised across the school as a tool for whole school improvement: promotion of quality assured community sports clubs through the Facebook page, parent app, flyer drops and sign posting.
- Key Indicator 3: increased confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport: access to Tees Valley School Sports Partnership PE network, CPD and regional PE conference: PE budget allocated for training and / or resources

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- Key Indicator 4: broader experience of a range of sports activities offered to all pupils: provision of cycling (Year 5) and scooter (reception) training as part of PE curriculum
- Key Indicator 5: increased participation in competitive sport: to access inter-school competition as part of Tees Valley School Sports Partnership including entry to competitions and festivals and transport

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Primary PE and Sports Premium Strategy was noted. The Strategy was approved and adopted with immediate effect.

### 13 Catch-up Funding Strategy

The Catch-up funding strategy for The Rydal Academy had been circulated to Governors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Governors were advised the Covid-19 Catch-up Funding Strategy for 2020-2021 was published on the school website in September 2020. £45,840 is expected to support pupils due to the impact of Covid-19. The strategy focusses on the following intended outcomes: to minimise the impact of school closures on academic progress: to support pupils on their transition back into school and with any trauma experienced during lockdown.

Planned expenditure focusses on quality of teaching for all: costs of additional teacher to allow TAL3's to support the most vulnerable SEND pupils. Targeted support: joint commissioning of Primary Welfare Practitioner. Other approaches: IT infrastructure development – staff PC and webcam upgrade to support remote learning and extension of pupil laptops and wifi coverage to allow access to individualised intervention.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Catch-up Funding Strategy was noted. The Strategy was approved and adopted with immediate effect.

### 14 Remote Education

Refer to Head Teacher's Report, agenda item 10 for information.

### 15 Policies for approval / review / information

- a) For information – Swift approved policies: Appraisal Policy; Pay Policy for Teachers & Support Staff; Complaints Procedure; Health and Safety Policy; Asbestos Statement of Intent and Action Plan; Equality Objectives; Disciplinary Policy and Procedures for Teachers and Support Staff; Grievance Policy and Procedures for Teachers

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and Support Staff; Biometric data policy; Finance Policy; Online Safety Policy; Data Retention and Destruction Policy; Treasury Management & Investment Policy; Staff Health & Wellbeing Policy; Risk Management Policy & Procedure; Redundancy and Redeployment Policy; Remote Education Policy

- b) For information - School reviewed policies: Accessibility Plan; Personal Social Health and Relationships (PSHRE) Policy; Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy; SEND information report; SEND information report pupil guide; Fire Emergency Plan; Fire Safety Risk Assessment; Health and Safety Risk Assessments; First Aid and Accident Policy; Newly Qualified Teacher Policy; Initial Teacher Education Policy; Calculations Policy; Homework Policy; Extended schools Activities Policy; Curriculum Statement; School Uniform Policy; Attendance policy; Sun protection policy; Collective worship policy; Lockdown procedure
- c) For approval – none

The Head Teacher informed Governors that there were no policies which required the approval of the Local Governing Body (The Rydal Academy) at this time.

## 16 Special interest governor update

- a) Premises / Health & Safety: Mark Emerson  
Mark Emerson confirmed that he had attended the Health & Safety review group during Autumn Term 2020.
- b) Safeguarding & Welfare, looked after children (LAC), e-safety: Sarah Clough  
The Head Teacher confirmed that Sarah Clough had met with Jo Thurland in respect of her Safeguarding lead governor role. A report on the meeting had been prepared and was shared with Governors.

The meeting between Sarah Clough and Jo Thurland had explored the current education picture in respect of Safeguarding and how The Rydal Academy are supporting families during the national lockdown and partial closure of schools: the volume of support being offered and how this is working during the national lockdown.

- c) Special Educational Needs (SEN), including SEMH: Kelly-Ann Lyle  
The Head Teacher reported that Kelly-Ann Lyle had met with Libby Truby (30 November 2020) to review the SEND and local offer provided by The Rydal Academy. A detailed report had been provided of the meeting and was shared with Governors. There were no specific actions identified as a result of the meeting.

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- d) Finance: Michael Jeffries  
Michael Jeffries reported that he had been in regular contact with the Chief Finance Officer in respect of The Rydal Academy budget 2020-2021. Any queries in respect of the budget would be raised with the Chief Finance Officer in due course.
- e) Values, Community & Equality: vacancy
- f) E-safety: Sarah Clough  
Refer to report prepared by Sarah Clough and referred to above in respect of Safeguarding & Welfare, e-safety and Looked after Children.
- g) Careers & Transition: Troy Turner  
A report was not provided: Troy Turner was not present.
- h) Standards (Teaching, Learning, Curriculum & Progress), Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT): Mark Gray  
Mark Gray confirmed that he had met with the Education Development Partner in respect of his curriculum lead governor role.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the Governor monitoring reports and information shared was noted.

Governors were reminded of the vacancy on the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy: HR, personnel, legal or education skill sets would be of particular interest. Governors to advise the Head Teacher or Chair of any prospective governors who have any of the skill sets mentioned.

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

### **Standing Items**

#### **17 Feedback from MAT Development Session held on Thursday 11 February 2021**

The Spring Term MAT Development Session had taken place on Thursday 11 February 2021 and had built on the previous MAT Development Session supported by Gabrielle Reddington, the Education Development Partner for Swift Academies. The Chief Executive Officer commented positively on the Spring Term session. Governors had received information to complement their respective roles across the Trust.

Staff would be contacting Governors to develop knowledge further, with a third MAT Development session in respect of Ofsted planned to take place during the Summer Term 2021.

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

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**18 Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting 1:30pm, Friday 12 March 2021**

The Chief Executive Officer advised Governors he would confirm the availability of the Chair and Vice Chair of each Local Governing Body via e-mail, to attend their termly meeting (1:30pm, Friday 12 March 2021). Where Chairs or Vice Chairs were not available, a representative of the respective Local Governing Body would be requested.

The Chair confirmed his availability for the termly Chair and Vice Chairs meeting.

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

Chief Executive Officer

**Concluding items**

**19 Any urgent other business raised under item 3**

No items of urgent other business had been notified.

The Head Teacher reminded Governors and those present of the return to school from Monday 8 March 2021 of all pupils. The Risk Assessment documentation had been shared with Governors, Directors and staff via e-mail on Friday 26 February 2021.

Whilst it was intended the school would return to arrangements in place during Autumn Term 2020: staff testing had been introduced. A large number of the population had also received covid-19 vaccinations, with direct access to families of primary school children to home testing. The Head Teacher had offered staff briefings prior to pupils return to school.

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

**20 Approval of documents for inspection**

Governors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.

The Chair of the Board of Directors (Derek Bell), thanked Governors for inviting him to attend this meeting of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy. The level and quality of information available to Governors, and the challenge of Governors during this meeting provided assurances to the Board.

Governors RESOLVED the information was noted.

21 **Date and time of future meetings**

**Local Governing Body**

(from 1pm)

- Monday 14 June 2021

**MAT Development Sessions**

(from 5pm)

- Thursday 8 July 2021

**Chairs / Vice Chairs of LGB and Executive Leadership Team**

(from 1:30pm)

- Friday 12 March 2021, Friday 25 June 2021

These minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy as follows:

on: Sep 1, 2021 date

signed by: (Chair)

  
Mark Gray (Sep 1, 2021 12:52 GMT+1)

printed name: Mark Gray

approved

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# Rydal LGB Minutes for Signature (1 March 2021)

Final Audit Report

2021-09-01

Created:	2021-06-14
By:	Sophie Bainbridge (sophie.bainbridge@avec-partnership.com)
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2021-09-01 - 11:51:44 GMT - IP address: 94.4.246.240

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