

**Standards Committee**  
**4:30pm, Wednesday 2 October 2019**  
Longfield School, Longfield Road, Darlington DL3 0HT

**MINUTES**

Present: (Directors)	Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Fisher, Keith Bernstone (Chair), Julie Cornelius, Derek Bell
In attendance:	Nichola Peaker, Head of School, Hurworth School Stuart Rawle, Assistant Head Teacher, Longfield Academy Rebecca Eldrington, Assistant Head Teacher, Longfield Academy John Armitage, Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Tracey Curtis, Governance Partner, Avec Partnership

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Discussion</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p><b>Election of Chair</b> Directors RESOLVED that Keith Bernstone was elected Chair of the Standards Committee of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies to the first meeting of the committee in Autumn Term 2020.</p> <p>Keith Bernstone in the Chair.</p>	
2	<p><b>Election of Vice-Chair</b> Directors RESOLVED that Tim Fisher was elected Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies to the first meeting of the committee in Autumn Term 2020.</p>	
3	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and confirmation that quorum present</b> The Governance Partner confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that <i>the quorum for each of the committees was three voting directors</i>. Five (5) Directors were present.</p> <p>Directors welcomed Rebecca Eldrington and Stuart Rawle (Assistant Head Teachers, Longfield Academy) to the meeting. It was explained that the Assistant Head Teachers were attending to represent Longfield Academy as the Head of School had a prior commitment in his diary and was unable to attend.</p>	

**4 Apologies for absence and their acceptance**

It was reported that apologies for absence had been received from Nick Lindsay (Head of School, Longfield Academy).

Directors RESOLVED that the apologies for absence were noted.

**5 Notification of items of urgent other business**

- items that the Standards Committee of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

Two items of urgent other business were notified:

- Flexible and Phased Retirement Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy

**6 Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests**

a) complete / review the Register of Interest

Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the Register of Interest to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members or Directors and/or members or Directors and employees. A register should be completed annually and updated during each academic year where circumstances change.

b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting

Directors 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

Directors were reminded that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies had approved a Code of Conduct for Directors in March 2018. The Code of Conduct should be signed by Directors to confirm they will undertake to abide by the Code of Conduct for Directors across Swift Academies.

Directors RESOLVED that the Register of Interest and Code of Conduct should be completed as soon as possible and returned to the Governance Partner or Chief Finance Officer.

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

• **Standards Committee, Wednesday 27 February 2019**

Draft minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of Swift Academies held on Wednesday 12 June 2019 had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of Swift Academies held on Wednesday 12 June 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Trust Business Manager would retain the approved signed minutes.

Chair / Trust  
Business  
Manager

8 **Longfield Academy**

- a) Head of School Report
- b) SEF / Action Plan
- c) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit report (Autumn Term 2019)

The Head of School Report (Longfield Academy), SEF / Action Plan and Education Development Partner visit report had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Assistant Head Teachers presented to Directors the content of the circulated Head of School Report, SEF / Action Plan and Education Development Partner visit report. Drawing particular attention to the following:

**Pupil Numbers**

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School Report for detailed information in respect of pupil numbers: Governors were reminded that the pupil admission number (PAN) for Longfield School was 180 per year group. The allocation for September 2019 was 187 pupils to be admitted to Year 7 which means the school was once again over-subscribed.

**Mobility**

Directors were informed that mobility was low and pupil stability high at Longfield Academy. There had been more pupils attending Longfield Academy in the current year than in the previous year. It was pleasing that in-year transfers had reduced. Five (5) pupils had moved to UTC: one pupil was now accessing specialist provision.

**Attendance**

It was confirmed that pupil attendance was improving and that the Welfare Team had worked hard to establish systems to ensure that pupil attendance improved. At July 2019, attendance had improved by 1.28% since the previous year. In May 2019, attendance had improved by 1.19% since the previous year and by 2.92% over two years.

Directors were informed that the school remains in a transitional phase of a new Discipline Policy which would lead to sustainable improvements over time.

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## **Exclusions**

It was reported that the school continues to implement the necessary developments in the behavior policy. Internal exclusions are served within the school community. Staff are developing a welfare workbox and teacher relationships in order to ensure that internal and exclusion rates are reduced and reflect realistic targets given the changing ethos in the community.

*During this item, Derek Bell and Julie Cornelius entered the meeting.*

Directors sought clarification regarding internal exclusion arrangements and whether pupils are removed from their learning during an internal exclusion. It was confirmed that internal exclusions take place with a tutor / teacher in a classroom environment and that work is identified for students who have been excluded internally. The Assistant Head Teachers confirmed that it was important that pupils continue to make academic progress and that the cause of a pupil receiving an internal exclusion was explored to prevent further incidents. It was further reported that whilst the internal exclusion may involve a different teacher supervising the internal exclusion of a pupil, quality checks have been undertaken to ensure a consistent approach. However, further quality checks would be completed to ensure that the quality of work completed by students was consistent to that completed during lessons.

Directors raised concerns that pupils who were isolated internally were seen to be rewarded with access to their 'favourite' teacher. It was explained that internal exclusions ensured that pupils worked with teachers who would ensure that the students worked to their optimum level; lunch and break times are also removed from pupils who are subject to internal exclusion. This prevents further continued unacceptable behavior until reasons are identified and addressed.

Directors queried the number of exclusions jump; it was reported that new strategies had been introduced and that it would take time to change the behavioral culture of the school, this has improved massively since November 2017 and is on an upward trajectory.

## **Attainment and Progress**

The Assistant Head Teachers reported a major improvement on last years validated data which may result in a Progress 8 score of "circa" minus 0.1.

Directors were informed that a major improvement model with the aim of achieving 'flat zero' and beyond by streamlining and improving Target Setting, Tracking and Assessment models across departments has been implemented.

Directors sought clarification whether, if an Ofsted inspection took place now what the anticipated outcome would be and how this compared to a similar time in the previous academic year. It was reported that a 'requires improvement' judgement would have been possible in the previous academic year; based on the unvalidated 2019 data it was believed that the school may be considered 'good'. It was reported that the Head of School wanted to ensure pupils were at the heart of the

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school and that a sustainable model was in place. Directors were informed that the curriculum had now been established and along with a culture shift amongst students, the direction of travel was positive.

#### **Quality Assurance**

The Assistant Head Teachers reported that the whole school SEF/Action Plan was a live document, and regularly updated during the course of a year. Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School Report for information in respect of audit ratings and a summary of progress in the action plan and where further development was required.

#### **Safeguarding and well-being**

It was reported that safeguarding groups continue to develop with a focus on embedding safeguarding into the school ethos. Whole school Continuous Professional Development (CPD) had commenced with positive feedback received from staff. A further CPD event was planned for 15 January 2020: this would ensure staff have an in-depth understanding of the Early Help offer and process.

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

Directors were informed that work would commence with the wider community to encourage parent and career participation with Longfield Academy.

#### **Education Development Partner Report**

The Assistant Head Teachers discussed with Directors the content of the Education Development Partner Report and drew Directors' attention to the report for information in respect of the Ofsted inspection framework (September 2019) and validation regarding the structure in place at Longfield Academy.

It was reported that the EDP had worked with Middle Leaders, teachers and students to explore the Ofsted inspection framework (September 2019) and explore what a 'deep dive' could look like for the Science department at Longfield Academy.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head of School's Report and information presented was noted in respect of Longfield Academy.

#### **9 The Rydal Academy**

- a) Head Teacher Report
- b) SEF / Action Plan
- c) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit report (Autumn Term 2019)

The Head Teacher Report (The Rydal Academy), SEF / Action Plan and EDP visit report (Autumn Term 2019) had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher presented to Directors the content of the circulated Head Teacher's report, drawing Directors' attention to the summary of change within each section:

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### **Pupil numbers / attendance and exclusions**

The number of pupils on roll continues to rise year on year and in-year. However, during the Summer, a large Year 6 cohort (80 pupils) left The Rydal Academy and a smaller cohort (65 pupils) joined, thus reducing the number of pupils on roll. Nursery places are significantly higher in September 2019 than in the previous two years.

### **Mobility**

Mobility remains one of the schools most limiting factors. The vast majority of pupils leaving the school are due to moving out of the area and the majority of pupils admitted are due to reputation or mobility into the local area.

### **Attendance**

It was reported that annual attendance remained low whilst closing the gap towards national averages had improved by 1.3% on the previous year. The percentage of persistent absentees had almost halved on the previous year to be in-line with national averages.

### **Pupil exclusion**

Directors were informed that of the 102 pupils on the persistent absentee list from Summer term 2018, 93% had improved their attendance, 40% were no longer considered persistent absentees and 12.5% had improved to above national average.

### **Attainment and progress**

#### **Early Years foundation stage**

Good level of Development (GLD) is back in line with 2016 and 2017. Growth is more than double the national average and had reduced the attainment gap by x4 from the reception baseline. Final GLD is 2% below projections due to outward mobility. Growth for disadvantaged pupils remains consistent over time significantly closing the attainment gap.

#### **Year 1 / Year 2 phonics**

Year 1 phonics outcomes continue to track just below national averages: no gap exists between disadvantaged and other pupils, stability pupils outperform Mobility pupils and are in-line with national averages. Year 2 phonics outcomes continue to track just below national averages, no gap exists between disadvantaged and other pupils, stability pupils outperform mobility pupils and are in-line with national averages.

#### **Key Stage 1**

Attainment continues to be below national averages for expectation+ and in-line for higher level. From starting points growth is more than double the national average. Stability pupils outperform mobility pupils. Stability pupil growth is three times the national average. Disadvantaged pupils performed in line with other pupils and growth from reception baseline is more than double the national average.

#### **Key Stage 2**

Key Stage 2 progress was below national average for Reading and Writing but better than national average for Maths. Progress in all areas

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was better than previous projections. Conversion rates of Prior Middle Ability Pupils have been a key focus.

Attainment is below national averages in Reading and Writing: no gap exists between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils: stability pupils significantly outperform mobility pupils. Maths outcomes are in-line with national averages for Maths and in-line for combined.

#### **Current cohort projections**

Attainment against national averages continues to be a key focus for all year groups. In Reception and Year 2, growth is more than double the national rate. In Year 1, growth is treble the national rate and the gap to national attainment is closing considerably from reception baselines. Writing continues to have the largest gap to national, but Reading remains the key intervention focus for the school as improved comprehension and vocabulary will also support areas for development in pupils such as spelling, grammar and breadth of language.

#### **Quality assurance: Ofsted judgements**

The Head Teacher drew Directors' attention to the content of the circulated Head Teacher Report for information in respect of audit ratings. It was reported that based on the SEF for The Rydal Academy, the Ofsted inspection grading would not change, based on the grade descriptor criteria in the current Ofsted inspection framework.

#### **Education Development Partner Report**

The Head Teacher discussed with Governors the content of the circulated Education Development Partner Report (12 September 2019).

Governors' attention was drawn to the recommendations contained in the circulated report from the Autumn Term 2019 visit.

#### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

The number of SEN support pupils had increased by 13 in the Summer Term. The number of pupils with Education, Health, Care Plans (EHCP) continues to rise while the number of pupils receiving SEN support as a proportion of school roll had increased on previous years.

#### **Safeguarding**

Directors were informed that over the last five years, there were between 15% and 20% of pupils working with Social Services in the Darlington area. This had now risen to 25% since 2018. The school also has 10% of Darlington's school age Looked after Children.

#### **The school community – staff, pupils and parents**

Directors were informed that staff understanding of the effectiveness of Governors / Directors perceptions on work-life balance, consistency of well managed pupil behaviour and Swift Academies increasing the schools capacity for further improvement are focus areas. Contribution to the process of self-evaluation had been affected by new staff coming into the school in support staff posts. Staff had also received a presentation regarding the Trust Dividend.

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### **School Improvement Plan**

The Head Teacher drew Directors' attention to the School Improvement Plan: progress in reading and writing continued to be a core priority for The Rydal Academy.

Directors sought clarification whether Key Stage 2 were equipped to deliver strategies to support the priorities contained in the School Improvement Plan. The Head Teacher confirmed that time had been spend developing strategies and initiatives, including accelerated reading for instance. It was reported that pupils joining the nursery at The Rydal Academy did not always have the breadth of speech when they arrived at school and therefore struggled with reading and writing. Cohesive programmes had been developed across the school to address this.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher Report (The Rydal Academy) and information presented were noted.

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### **Hurworth School**

- a) Head of School Report
- b) SEF / Action Plan
- c) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit report (Autumn Term 2019)

The Head of School Report (Hurworth School), SEF / Action Plan and EDP visit report (Autumn Term 2019) had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting.

The Head of School (Hurworth School) presented to Directors and those present the content of the circulated Head of School's report, drawing attention to the summary of change within each section, as follows:

#### **Pupil Numbers**

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school was reported as 127 per year group. Hurworth School was currently over-subscribed with the total number of pupils broadly the same over the last three years.

The Head of School reported that the secondary allocation day for September 2019 was 1 March 2019 and that after 35 appeals in May 2019, the final number of pupils to be admitted to Year 7 at Hurworth School in September 2019 was 136. This is above the Pupil Admission Number (PAN).

During the 2019-2020 admissions process, large number of Looked after Children and pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) applied to Hurworth School, all of which would require ongoing support implications in future years. For the first time ever, Hurworth School did not reach the distance criteria for admissions and not all applications from associated areas received a place. The Head of School expressed concerns at the transport arrangements for some pupils, with a number not able to afford the cost of transport to get to school. Whilst the public

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transport system was reported to be cheaper, the current timetable operated by Arriva did not support the start and end of the school day.

### **Attendance**

The Head of School commented that improved overall attendance to the school target of 95% was a key priority for the current academic year. An external consultant had supported the school to identify further improvements that could be made in this area. Case studies are prepared for individual students as well as overviews of year groups. The format for analysing attendance was highlighted as a strength in the recent Education Development Partner report.

### **Attainment**

Governors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School's report for information in respect of pupils' education outcomes.

It was reported that pupil's educational outcomes had dipped in some subject areas (in the main the aforementioned English results) in Summer 2019 and led to progress of the school to be negative. The performance of Science although improving still required support and monitoring. Geography and Business Studies had been identified as areas to monitor, as expectations had not been reached for two years. The recruitment to EBacc remains below national levels but there has been an upward trend again for the cohort in 2019-2020.

### **Quality Assurance**

The Head of School reported that in light of the Summer 2019 results, and the Ofsted inspection framework, Hurworth School was currently evaluating itself as 'good'.

Directors sought clarification when an Ofsted inspection might be expected: the Head of School reported that the "exemption criteria" for Outstanding schools had now been recently removed, and although the school had had a Safeguarding inspection in 2018, its last "full" inspection was in 2008, therefore the likelihood was that an inspection maybe imminent.

The Head of School reported serious concerns regarding the marking of the 2019 GCSE English exam papers, a significant number have been returned to the exam board and substantial proportion have already been returned to the school with improved grades; on return of the remaining papers the school is going to request a "centre review" of all papers; depending on the outcome of this request the school will decide upon its next course of action. The Head of School would provide Directors with an update in due course.

### **The school community – staff, pupils and parents**

It was reported that staff questionnaires completed in July 2019 indicate that 96% of staff strongly agree or agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at this school. The findings from the questionnaires are used to inform the school's strategic plan for the following academic year.

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### **Education Development Partner (EDP) Report**

The EDP report had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Head of School discussed with Directors the content of the circulated EDP Report. Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated EDP report for information in respect of school priorities.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head of School's Report and information presented was noted.

### **11 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 Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive Officer reported to Directors the content of the circulated Chief Executive Officer's report, drawing particular attention to the following:

#### **Internal Annual Trust Review**

It was reported that as part of the Trusts strategic governance support a self-evaluation review for Swift Academies to consider the effectiveness of governance arrangements across the Trust took place in the Summer Term 2019. The aim of the review was to provide a broad and balanced perception of the effectiveness of governance, improve awareness and self-awareness, encourage open and honest feedback and identify areas for development and promote continuous improvement in 2019-2020. Trustees, Governors, Members and Senior Leaders completed surveys and participated in interviews. Feedback was presented to the Board of Directors on Friday 12 July 2019 with feedback to local governing bodies during Autumn Term 2019. Actions identified from the review are contained in the Trust Development Plan.

#### **Governor Development / Chair and Vice-Chair**

Directors were reminded of the Governor Development Session planned to take place on Thursday 3 October 2019 and the termly Chair and Vice-Chair Session planned for Friday 4 October 2019.

#### **Resignation**

Directors were informed that Rita Rees had resigned with effect from 29 September 2019. Directors were asked to consider how vacancies on the Board of Directors should be filled.

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

### **Concluding items**

#### **12 Any urgent other business raised under item 5**

- Flexible and Phased Retirement Policy

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- Substance Abuse Policy  
The Flexible and Phased Retirement Policy and Substance Abuse Policy had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

Directors were informed that the policies were new policies and would be subject to ten day consultation with staff and trade unions.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated policies was noted and that they were approved for consultation with staff and trade unions. Directors would be required to approve the policies once consultation had concluded.

**13 Approval of documents for inspection**

Directors 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.

**14 Dates, times and venue of future meetings**

A schedule of meetings (2019-2020) across the governance structure of Swift Academies had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the 2019-2020 meeting schedule was noted. The next meeting of the Standards Committee would take place from 4:30pm on Wednesday 26 February 2020 at The Rydal Academy.

The meeting closed 6:30pm.

These minutes were approved by the Standards Committee of Swift Academies as follows:

26/2/20 (date)

signature (Chair):



name: IC BERNSTONE

