

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting  
held on Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 5:30pm – 7:30pm  
Via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Governor name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Governor category</b>	A = absence
Mrs P Bryn-Jones	PBJ	Appointed	
Mr G Gadie <b>Vice Chair of Governors</b>	GD	Appointed	A
Mr A Knight <b>Chair of Governors</b>	AK	Appointed	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	
Mrs V Hobson-Maxwell	VHM	Appointed Parent	
Miss Natalie Ward	NW	Appointed	
1 x parent vacancies 2 x appointed vacancies			

<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Position</b>	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr C West	CW	Principal	
Mrs R Chambers	RC	Clerk and Advisor	
Mr Saul Farrell	SF	Observing	

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<b>AC/29/2021</b>	<p><b>Update following central training</b> Governors were informed that the Data training video recording and slideshows were on SharePoint for anyone who missed the training to watch back. Mrs Widdup welcomed any questions from the governors since she had led the training.</p> <p><b>The governors queried</b> with no starting point for the Progress 8 score has the government provided any further guidance on how to move forward. Mrs Widdup confirmed there has been no further updates so the academy is using their own systems to estimate the Progress 8 score. Mr Farrell further added that in his employment, the guidance they have received is that the update will take a while. Mrs Widdup highlighted to governors that there is certainty with the Attainment 8 score as it does not take into consideration the starting point.</p>	
<b>AC/30/2021</b>	<p><b>Declaration of interest</b> There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda.</p>	
<b>AC/31/2021</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received and approved from Mr Geoff Gadie due to illness.</p>	
<b>AC/32/2021</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020</b> The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p> <p>The governors were updated that following the appointment of Mr Farrell in agenda item AC/34/2021 there are vacancies for 1 parent governor</p>	

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	and 1 appointed governor. The clerk informed the committee that recruitment is ongoing and will provide a further update at the next meeting.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>AC/33/2021</b>	<p><b>Matters arising:</b> Ac/16/2021 – to note the governors were sent statistics on the Pupil Premium within the academy on 16/12/20.</p> <p>AC/18/2021 – A letter was sent to Mr Trickett on 07/12/20. Mr Trickett has since resigned from the committee – see agenda item AC/34/2021.</p> <p>AC/21/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note Mrs Hobson-Maxwell was linked to Mr Tomkins on 1/12/20</li> <li>• A list of the governor roles was emailed out on 15/12/20 – see agenda item AC/34/2021.</li> </ul> <p>AC/23/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A copy of the SEF was sent to Mr Farrell on 8/12/20</li> <li>• Additional external agency information was sent to Mr West on 2/12/20</li> <li>• The safeguarding audit was approved on 18/01/20</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/34/2021</b>	<p><b>Governor admin</b> The governors were informed that Mr Trickett has resigned from the committee on 2/2/21 due to family commitments. The committee asked the Clerk to send on their regards.</p> <p>Mr Farrell’s CV information had been circulated prior to the meeting after he had observed the governor meeting in December. Governors voted unanimously for Mr Farrell to join the Academy Committee for a four-year term from 02/02/2021 to 01/02/2025.</p> <p>The Clerk advised the governors that Mr Knight’s term of office was due for renewal. The governors voted unanimously to reappoint Mr Knight to the committee for a four-year term of office from 02/02/2021 to 01/02/2025.</p> <p>Governors discussed the link governor roles and for the benefit of the minutes the link governors are; Safeguarding – Victoria Hobson-Maxwell Health and Safety – Andrew Silcock SEND – Victoria Hobson-Maxwell Pupil Premium – Victoria Hobson-Maxwell Complaints – Andrew Knight Career Provision / Post 16 – Geoff Gadie EVC – Wayne Spooner</p> <p>It was agreed that the GDPR link governor would be recruited at the next meeting.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>          <b>Clerk</b>
<b>AC/35/2021</b>	<p><b>Report from Principal</b></p> <p><b>Mid-year review of progress made in AIP</b> Mr West informed governors that the academy is still running to the 3 main objectives within the AIP and the first half term has been RAG (red, amber, green) rated.</p>	

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	<p><u>Objective 1</u> Mr West highlighted to the committee that term 1 attendance has been strong at 91% in comparison to the National average however COVID-19 has had a significant impact. Students are also showing good punctuality which is positive when considering the irregular timings and other difficulties which are being overcome.</p> <p>The key elements and badges of the reward system has also been revamped and will be relaunched by 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 with the first badges being handed prior to half term, with 6 x year 7 and 3 x year 10's obtaining the Bronze badge.</p> <p>Governors were also informed that within the academy there has been under 20 cases of COVID-19 and each case has had limited impact on other students so there hasn't been a need to shield more students.</p> <p><u>Objective 2</u> The students are really pushing themselves in every lesson and are achieving the desired outcome that students do work hard over time. The academy has also noticed that the students are developing a strong passion for the subjects.</p> <p>Mr West informed governors that the staff have been surveyed twice throughout this academic year on how they are pushing students and from this there has been a big shift in the way that students are working. Some students are reluctant to turn their microphones on and to talk which can make it hard to 'challenge, support and add' however the students are becoming more confident.</p> <p>The optional homework has had a really positive response; however, the academy is currently making a conscious choice to hold back on this at the minute due to the amount of screen time of which the students are currently doing. The students have also been given optional activities which can be completed online e.g., first aid courses.</p> <p><b>The governors inquired</b> if all of the lessons are interactive or are the students given a project and asked to complete. Mr West confirmed that during the first lockdown work was accessed remotely however in this lockdown there is a variety of lessons like there would be if the students were in the academy. The teacher is always present so there is a live element to every lesson. Mrs Bryn-Jones added that she has been present in a lot of the lessons and there is a wide variety of activities for the students to do including 'Cahoot' quizzes and 'Dr Frost' for maths. <b>It was queried</b> whether drama could be more involved due to the students currently being left to learn practice lines. Mr West informed governors that the performing arts subjects are the most challenging as naturally they centre around group work and developing towards an end project. The team in the academy are trying to find ways around this but there is a challenge to try and keep it practical.</p>	

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	<p><b>Mr Farrell asked which</b> external organisations the academy is working with to help the academy develop. Mr West confirmed the academy are in contact with the National Literacy Trust and are trying to use this platform to bring the students in from different directions. Every day there is a dedicated 20 minutes for a “drop everything and read” scheme. This is being encouraged especially for the students to have time off screens too.</p> <p><u>Objective 3</u> Work is continuing to develop the new SLT (senior leadership team) and MLT (middle leadership team). Mrs Widdup ran a session with the current middle leaders and any aspiring middle leaders to inform them of the wider responsibilities within the role and has since triggered some staff to start to think about their progression. Governors were also informed that the SLT were now established in their roles and clear in their responsibilities and the MLT are working together as a strong team of leaders and working collaboratively to solve problems rather than going up the chain.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding; culture &amp; compliance</b> Mrs Widdup informed governors that the academy has had some positive news around the academies safeguarding procedures. The academy had been tracking a particular safeguarding case for approximately 18 months due to significant concerns, however there was never a satisfactory conclusion, so they kept pushing. As a result of this, Ofsted became involved due to their own investigation and the academy was asked to submit evidence. Ofsted said the evidence provided was ‘beyond exemplary’ and they had never received that level of information when previously requested. As a result, Ofsted came to a conclusion and due to the work the academy had done, they received the outcome that was desired.</p> <p><b>The governors wanted to ensure</b> that those involved had been made aware and praised for their hard work. Mrs Widdup confirmed that the relevant staff had been made aware and highlighted the importance of the detail that goes into file gathering. Mr West further added that safeguarding procedures are still at the forefront of everything that is happening. The safeguarding team are making calls and home visits were necessary and My Concern is still being used.</p> <p><b>Integrated risk management</b> The biggest risk for the academy is currently COVID-19 and the governors were informed that the academy had had an external audit on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020. The audit reviewed everything the academy are doing and ran through all the processes from before the students arrived until after they had left. Throughout the day the academy was constantly questioned on ‘how, why and what’ to ensure everything had been considered and that everything they could do is being done. The overall assessment came back in green which is a positive.</p> <p><b>Risk register –</b> Discussed in the confidential minutes.</p>	

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	<p><b>Review development plans</b> The governors had no questions on the development plan.</p> <p><b>Admission arrangements</b> The governors determined the admissions policy for the 22/23 academic year and Mr West will ensure it is sent to the LA for inclusion on their website.</p> <p>The governors were informed that there are currently 368 applications for 240 places. Of these, 157 are first choice which is slightly lower than last year, but this is reflected from a slightly smaller year group. These numbers are represented from 62 primary schools. There will be the final figures on 01/03/2021.</p> <p><b>PDBA</b> Attainment at end of half term was at 91.4. Because of the impact of self-isolation, students have stayed very low on the Persistent Absence boundary, whereas usually they would move. Attainment is above the national figures which is promising.</p> <p>The PE faculty have volunteered some of their curriculum time to teach other areas e.g., week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 the theme is mental health. The academy has also booked an external theatre company to do some work on car / passenger safety for year 8 and year 9 students. In March, the students are going to be learning about the census following some educational resources that have been created of which the academy are working on ways to embed this into the curriculum to help with wider learning.</p> <p><b>Quality assurance</b> The academy is looking at a range of ways of assuring quality and currently the range of activities the students are doing is much wider than what the academy thought it would be. For example, the students have been talking about their rooms and the items in them in foreign languages.</p> <p>Due to the quality assurance that is in place, the academy has been able to focus on the students who really struggled in previous lockdowns. There has been a lot of work on understanding what parents / students have got equipment wise and the academy have a priority list for when they receive more equipment including sim cards, data packs and laptops. Students can also access Microsoft Teams through an Xbox or ps4 and the academy have also handed our keyboards for students to connect to their games console so they can type.</p> <p>Mr West shared with governors some views from stakeholders. In the first couple of weeks of lockdown, there had been over 20 pages of positive feedback. Any concerns were easily resolved and were mostly around access and passwords. The consensus is that stakeholders understand what the academy are trying to achieve and are happy with the support being given. Mrs Bryn-Jones added that everyone is really</p>	<p><b>CW</b></p>

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	<p>engaged and that teachers are doing a great job. Mr West further added that everyone is learning, even the staff. He had observed a lesson where a teacher was struggling with an element on Teams and a year 8 student guided them on how to do.</p> <p><i>Miss Ward joined at 18.31.</i></p> <p><b>The governors thanked</b> Mr West for always going above and beyond and for managing everything so effectively.</p> <p><b>The governors queried</b> if a family is struggling financially with their data package are there any schemes that can be applied to to ensure the students can continue with their work. Mr West informed governors that there are several ways in which the academy can help. In December, Vodafone gave academies an opportunity to apply for sim cards which were data only. Retford Oaks applied and received 70 which are being distributed when the staff get to the route of a problem. Since then, the government has offered a data update scheme with all the main mobile phone providers being involved. Dependant on the provider, there are opportunities for free upgrades or free unlimited data, but the academy must apply to the DfE on the student's behalf. The DfE will then liaise with the provider directly. Since the scheme has been available, Retford Oaks has completed 29 applications. If a child stops attending their classes, then the academy calls the family and find out any issues whether this is connectivity or data etc. From there the academy can liaise and apply. Unfortunately, the academy does not receive updates on if the application has been successful, they only know through the child attending. Mr West further added that in every lesson attendance is being monitored and should a student not be in attendance then the academy text the parents. The impact of the text message procedure is highly successful as students tend to then access their next lesson.</p> <p><b>In-year admissions – all year groups</b> There has been 19 leavers and 28 admissions since September with the admissions creating an even balance to all year groups with the exception of year 11 and year 13. The waiting list has another 13 students on it, and the academy are trying to bring these in to help the academy continue to grow in every way.</p> <p><b>CFLP</b> The academy has completed the first draft and governors were informed that there may be a need to recruit for a position in both science and humanities.</p> <p><b>Any academy specific items including policy appendix ratification &amp; any audit results;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Other policy updates (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Supporting students with Medical Conditions,</b></li> </ul>	

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Provider Access and Covid-19 appendix to Behaviour policy)</b></p> <p>The above Diverse Academies policies were updated by the Trust on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and are available on the Trust website. Governors were informed of these updates on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.</p> <p><b>Additional agenda item - Trips</b></p> <p>In advance of the meeting, governors received paperwork for 2 potential trips for the Easter holidays in 2022. Mr West explained that the procedure is usually to get governor approval a year in advance as well as Trust approval. Mr West is unsure whether the opportunity to book the trip will arise but wanted to seek governor approval in case this happens due to the time gaps in between meetings.</p> <p><b>The governors highlighted</b> a concern around the insurances due to COVID-19 and to ensure that the students deposits are covered. There was also cause for concern regarding the cost of the trips due to unemployment and furlough and a real need to stress that families do not feel pressured. Mr West confirmed that the long payment plans do help families to help pay for the trips however there is a strong awareness that the trips may not be able to go ahead but would like to keep them on the back burner. Mr Spooner further added he has been looking into a potential ski trip in that academic year too and tour providers are all very evident regarding deposits being safe. Mrs Widdup added that the Trust insurers will not allow the academies to book anything at the minute. <b>The governors further asked</b> what the other academies in the Trust are doing regarding trips in the 2022 academic year. Mrs Widdup re-emphasised that the Trust insurers will not underwrite any trips for the foreseeable, however, just because they are unable to book anything does not mean they will not be looking. Mr West added that by having the governor's approval then they are already pre-authorised if they do get the go ahead from the Trust and insurers. The governors approved the trips pending Trust and insurer approval.</p>	
<b>AC/36/2021</b>	<p><b>Link governor visit updates / reports</b></p> <p>Mrs Hobson-Maxwell met with Mr Tomkin and went through the safeguarding audit. From the questions in the document, it prompted a positive discussion. Mrs Hobson-Maxwell has requested to look at the systems in place in more detail but she was very pleased with the work going on and really heartening to see the professional curiosity.</p>	
<b>AC/37/2021</b>	<p><b>How have governors held the school leaders to account?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data following the central training</li> <li>- Risk register</li> <li>- Potential trips in 2022</li> <li>- Access to data for disadvantaged students</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/38/2021</b>	<p><b>Determination of Confidentiality</b> <b>Equality Act consideration</b> <b>Nolan Principles</b></p> <p>Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was Resolved:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minutes within AC/35/2021 was deemed confidential to governors in the meeting.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications</li> </ul> <p>Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles.</p>	
<b>AC/39/2021</b>	<p><b>Complete report to Trustees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Praise and acknowledgment for the hard work by Mr West and the rest of the team to ensure the best outcome for the students.</li> <li>- Praise on the feedback from Ofsted on the 'beyond exemplary' evidence the academy provided on a safeguarding case.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 March at 5.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18.50pm</p>	
	<p>Signed..... (chair) Date.....</p> <p>Print.....</p>	