

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting  
held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 at 5:30pm at the academy.**

<b>Governor name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Governor category</b>	<b>A = absence</b>
Mrs P Bryn-Jones	PBJ	Appointed Parent	
Mr G Gadie <b>Vice Chair of Governors</b>	GG	Appointed	
Mr A Knight <b>Chair of Governors</b>	AK	Appointed	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	A
Miss Natalie Ward	NW	Appointed	A
Mr Saul Farrell	SF	Appointed	
1 x Appointed governor vacancy			
1 x Appointed governor vacancy			
1 x Parent governor vacancy			

<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	
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Observing	

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/when</b>
<b>AC/43/2122</b>	<p><b>Local response following central training on;</b></p> <p><b>How Effective is the Quality of Education/Curriculum in Academies</b> Mr Knight attended the training and advised the curriculum had been looked at as it runs through everything the academy does. It is paramount that the governors are aware of the curriculum intent so Clerk to add to agendas moving forward.</p> <p>Other areas for discussion within the training was;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looking at the number of lessons in a week and how the lessons are distributed.</li> <li>2. The numbers of students not in employment or training after finishing at the academy.</li> </ol> <p>Governors were reminded that the training is on SharePoint and to let the Clerk know when completed.</p> <p>The next training event is on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May on LGBTQ+ / Diversity and Inclusion.</p> <p>The curriculum intent;  <i>"Retford Oaks is determined that no matter what a student's starting point or background they are entitled to follow an ambitious and challenging curriculum, focussing on a strong academic core which broadens their horizons, provides opportunities to enhance cultural capital and prepares them effectively for their next stage of education, training or employment."</i> </p>	<b>Clerk</b>

Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/44/2122	<p><b>Update on LGBTQ+ and diversity</b> Mrs West attended the meeting to discuss diversity with the governors. It was advised that the academy has decided they have gone as far as they could with the Stonewall award so are no longer pursuing the gold award. The Trust is still signed up for the scheme so the resources are available to be used but the academy are now looking into a diversity award.</p> <p>Governors were advised that Mrs Clough-Watson has produced a document on tackling discrimination and promoting equality which helps to give teachers the confidence to tackle anything they hear. The document includes both illegal and unacceptable issues as teachers and professionals need to guard against it. The staff have had training on this document and are being asked on how useful it has been and how much they have used it. The document is also available in Teacher Toolkit which helps staff get advice on how to deal with any issues at any point throughout the day. The document also includes words that students say although sometimes they do not know it is wrong or what the word means. Mrs West added that this is a live document and is constantly updated when new words are heard.</p> <p>Governors were advised that the next PD day is about racism and a student has offered to help the team of teachers in the planning of this day.</p> <p>The academy is working closely with Paul Simpson from DAT and the document of which Mrs Clough-Watson has created is going to be rolled out across the Trust. Mrs Widdup added that it is being rolled into Holgate Academy before the Easter holidays and is another piece of best practice from Retford Oaks.</p> <p><b><u>The governors added</u></b> it was good to see the staff not only challenging the language but challenging the understanding too.</p> <p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> what the next PD day topics are to which Mrs West advised the April one is on racism and the June one is on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Mrs West was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 17.46.</i></p>	
AC/45/2122	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received in advance from Mr Spooner due to personal commitments. Miss Ward had not sent through her apologies but it was understood her absence may be due to work commitments. Clerk to speak to Miss Ward.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>
AC/46/2122	<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>	
AC/47/2122	<b>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022.</b>	

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	The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.	
<b>AC/48/2122</b>	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AC/28/2122 – To note the Clerk has updated the Ofsted crib sheet and it is now in SharePoint.</li> <li>AC/28/2122 – To note a second session on risk identification will be arranged for later in the year.</li> <li>AC/30/2122 – To note the website has been updated to reflect Mr Farrell's change in job.</li> <li>AC/32/2122 – To note, Mrs Bennett has decided to observe her first meeting. Mr Knight to be in contact after the meeting.</li> <li>AC/32/2122 – To note, Mr Silcock has completed the GDPR certificate</li> <li>AC/34/2122 – Mr Knight has completed a safeguarding visit on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> with the report to follow.</li> <li>AC/34/2122 – All governors to visit the academy</li> </ul> <p>Mr Knight advised the governors that as a committee they were lacking in visits and now the governors can be in the academy, visits must be happening. Mr Gadie had a Careers link visit on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March and Mrs Bryn-Jones has a SEND visit planned for 29<sup>th</sup> March. Both reports will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Clerk and Mr Farrell to have a discussion around the safeguarding link governor role.</p> <p>Mr Knight also advised that the committee need to be more challenging of the leadership team and all governors were asked to have at least 1 question that is submitted to the clerk in advance of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AC/35/2122 – To note the admissions policy for 23/24 has been submitted to NCC.</li> <li>AC/39/2122 – To note the governance action plan has been updated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clerk / SF</b></p> <p><b>All governors</b></p>
<b>AC/49/2122</b>	<p><b>Governor admin</b></p> <p>Governors were advised that Mr Jones had resigned from the committee due to work commitments. The Clerk will go back to parent elections and will continue with the recruitment drive for appointed governors.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>AC/50/2122</b>	<p><b>Report from Principal</b></p> <p>Governors were given a copy of the Principal report in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p><b>Compliance to inc. SCR, safer recruitment, policy, KCSIE</b></p> <p>Governors were advised that the SCR is checked regularly with all gaps now completed. <u>The governors asked</u> if this document was something that they should see to which Mr West confirmed that the DSL and Principals are responsible for ensuring all checks are in place. The</p>	

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	<p>safeguarding link governor will also run through it with the academy to ensure it is checked from the committee point of view. The document does also include confidential information which is why it is not shared. Mr West added that there had been 2 gaps on the electronic file for staff however, the paper files showed they were for established members of staff so the files were scanned and sent to HR, resulting in this now being completed. As part of the SCR check it was also flagged there are some staff who are yet to complete their safeguarding certificate renewal however these are invigilators and it is yet to be confirmed if they will return to help out with the exam season. If they choose to come back then they will need to complete the refresher certificate before doing so.</p> <p>Mr West explained that the academy has just had a review of safer recruitment which compromised of reviewing 3 random appointments and checking the entire process. Some of these checks included if at least one of the panel members were safer recruitment trained and if all gaps in employment were looked at and reviewed. This was flagged as was only partly in place due to the way it was reported to HR, so the form has been adapted so each gap in employment is now logged. The only other area flagged was around references particularly for non-teaching roles. This has also resulted in a change in procedure to ensure all references come back to the academy even if there is no concern. <b>The governors asked</b> for reassurance that no references had been missed. Mr West confirmed he was comfortable they had all been checked off. Governors were advised there was one where a disciplinary note had not come to the academy however this would not have changed the appointment so with the change in procedure all references will come to the academy.</p> <p><b>Culture to inc. peer on peer, sexual harassment and violence, mental health, bullying and racism, online safety.</b></p> <p>Mr West advised the committee that the emerging threats to the academy are with peer-on-peer abuse, vaping and threats of self-harm and actual self-harm cases. The academy responds to these with referrals into MASH and Early Help where required as well as the school counselling service. There has been a survey conducted recently on peer-on-peer abuse with students from Retford Oaks making up 75% of responses which highlights their engagement as well as their understanding of the topic. <b>The governors questioned</b> if this means there is more cause for concern to which Mrs Widdup advised that Retford Oaks had sent the survey to more students as some academies had just sent it to one class. DAT are planning to redo the survey with a minimum percentage of the school body being asked to complete.</p> <p>Governors were advised that Retford Oaks now have a mental health lead within the SLT team who is supported by the school counsellor and other members of staff. This is supported by external agencies and groups who continue to work with the student body.</p> <p>There are no active cases of whistleblowing with all staff having the policy reaffirmed in the twilight session on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March.</p>	

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	<p><b><u>The governors</u></b> noted there is currently about 30 live safeguarding cases with behaviour being the main cause for concern, shortly followed by home issues. Mr West confirmed there is usually spikes in cases after the PD days, however these spikes show that the students do accept and understand the topics being delivered within these sessions.</p> <p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> if the academy is having any challenges with the referral process for agencies like Early Help and MASH. Mr West confirmed the academy does with some more than others. There is always waiting lists and there are often cases that get closed as they do not meet the threshold. The academy will appeal and take it to the next step if they know it is not right as it is important to carry on challenging if the academy is not happy.</p> <p><b><u>The governors also highlighted</u></b> that it had been discussed that succession planning within the safeguarding team is a risk to which Mr West advised it is something that he is aware of and within the DSL team there is a range of experience that will help.</p> <p><b>Identified academy risks inc. education, H&amp;S, staff &amp; pupil well-being, GDPR and complaints</b> Governors were advised that there had been no change to the mitigation scores that had been discussed in the previous meeting. The risk matrix is part of a constant review process and is reviewed by SLT on a half-termly basis.</p> <p><b><u>The governors noted</u></b> that behaviours &amp; attitudes are in red <b><u>before asking</u></b> what the academy are doing to improve this risk. Mr West advised that this risk is linked to the AIP and objective 4. Exclusions are higher than the academy would have liked but this reflects the changes which have been made to the behaviour system. The academy has also made changes to the structure of the day so now all students are on lunch together and there is also 2 equal length breaks which has enabled staffing around the academy to be spread thicker. This change has had an impact on behaviour and attitudes and the academy are also seeing it having a positive knock-on effect into lessons. Governors were advised that when the risk matrix is reviewed after Easter then it is expected for this risk to be reduced. Mr Knight added that within DAT, Retford Oaks are 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of the number of exclusions and all academies are seeing the same issues. <b><u>The committee agreed</u></b> they are comfortable with the steps the academy has put into place to mitigate this risk.</p> <p><b><u>The governors</u></b> noted there had been an FTE panel and that they had been satisfied in the range of alternative offers the academy can do to try to prevent permanent exclusions as well as everything the academy are doing to support the students.</p> <p><b>Behaviour &amp; attendance / PD update inc p/ex's, FTE's, persistent absence and alternative provision in place (no. of days / pupils)</b></p>	

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	<p>Governors were advised that the behaviour had peaked but has now started to fall. There has been a big spike in verbal abuse to staff and there is a particular challenge with children saying no. As a result of this, the academy is working on the students respecting one another and working in a supportive manner. This is also reflected across other academies too.</p> <p>With attendance, Mr West advised the governors that the academy is currently at 87.6% which if the impact of Covid is considered then it brings the total to 89.75% which is in line with the latest national average. It was confirmed that the academy is doing everything they can to encourage and push students to be in the academy. <b><u>The governors questioned</u></b> if there has been impact on attendance with the SENDco being out of the academy. Mr West confirmed that the team have been picking this up and the attendance team have been chasing all students. Governors were advised that if students have had 2 bouts of Covid but have had 100% attendance otherwise then their overall attendance will be low but this will increase as the year progresses.</p> <p><b><u>The governors queried</u></b> if students are still absent due to the fear of Covid to which Mr West advised this has now run its course.</p> <p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> if there are any more elected home education students. Mr West advised that if a student is accepted for home education, then they come off the academy's figures. There have been no applications for home education recently.</p> <p><b><u>The governors expressed a concern</u></b> with Yr13 attendance being at 77% when they have elected to be here. Mr West advised this is a small group so therefore the data is skewed quickly. Mrs Widdup added that the perception with some parents is that they do not need to give authorisation for illness with it being elective education however this is not the case.</p> <p>In advance of the meeting the governors were given the current number of students in alternative provision and the number who have successfully returned to the academy. It was advised the Focus Centre at Tuxford is the main provider with Retford Oaks having 3 permanent places there. <b><u>The governors asked</u></b> if these 3 places are continuously full, to which Mr West confirmed they do aim to fill those places before looking at others unless it is not suitable setting for that particular student. <b><u>The governors queried</u></b> the lengths of time in which the students go to the alternative provision for. Mr West confirmed that it varies dependent on the need. There is currently a Yr7 student there on a full-time basis as a hangover from primary however, others can be 1-day a week if it fits the need. <b><u>The governors questioned</u></b> who is responsible for getting the student to the setting and if this cost sits with the academy. Mr West verified that it is dependant on the chosen setting and where the student lives. When a child goes to an alternative provision, the academy is still responsible so keep involved throughout as well as reviewing the offer regularly. The review will involve the student, parents, provider and school.</p>	



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	<p><b>Initial budget planning – CLFP/class planners/ benchmarking/ academy pupil number projections</b></p> <p>Mr West advised that the CLFP has been completed and has resulted in the academy having vacancies for 3 teachers in September. The applications for these positions closed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February and will be shortlisted over the coming days.</p> <p>Governors were made aware that the academy are currently sat on 215 student places with 15 on the waiting list and 10 that have not been processed yet. The academy is projecting that they will take in 220 students for September 2022 which will mean 1146 students on site which is another significant step forward for the academy.</p> <p><b>The governors asked</b> if there is a need to look at the PAN yet to which Mrs Widdup confirmed there is not currently.</p>	
AC/51/2122	<p><b>Link governor visits:</b></p> <p>Both Mr Gadie and Mr Knight have conducted link governor visits the week before the LAC meeting. Once approved, the reports will be sent to the Clerk ahead of the next governor meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Bryn-Jones also has a link governor meeting scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> of March and a visit report will be received afterwards.</p>	<p><b>GG / AK</b></p> <p><b>PBJ</b></p>
AC/52/2122	<p><b>February management accounts</b></p> <p><b>The governors asked</b> how far behind the academy is with the lagged funding to which Mr West confirmed it is not as big as it has been.</p> <p>Mr West advised the governors that the positive £80k in the total income is the increase in funding from both Pupil Premium and School Led Tutoring.</p> <p>With the expenditure, governors were reminded that some staff are paid through the agency staffing line but ultimately agency staffing is still high.</p> <p>The governors were advised that the budget currently shows £32k ahead of budget however the academy are now starting to look at departmental spending ahead of September which will bring this back in line.</p> <p>The academy still does not have the actual figures to be able to give benchmarking so this will be given to governors once received. <b>The governors noted</b> that this has been discussed for several years however they are still waiting for the information to catch up. Mrs Widdup suggested that given where the academy is in the year and given any potential staff movements it would be pointless to do now and would be best to wait until everything is settled in September.</p>	
AC/53/2122	<p><b>Any academy specific items including policy appendix ratification, audits, and Cat C trip approval.</b></p> <p>There were no Cat C trips for the committee to approve.</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other policy updates</b></li> <li>• Mental Health and Wellbeing principles</li> <li>• Accessibility Policy</li> <li>• Covid 19 appendix to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Risk Policy</li> <li>• Risk management operational guidance</li> <li>• Risk Management Policy Statement</li> </ul> <p>The above Diverse Academies policies were updated by the Trust on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 and are available on the Trust website. Governors were informed of these updates on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2022.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Trust Admissions Consultation has now been completed.</p>	
<b>AC/54/2122</b>	<b>How have governors held the school leaders to account?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safer recruitment process</li> <li>- Behaviour, attitudes and attendance</li> <li>- Safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Alternative provision.</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/55/2122</b>	<b>Determination of Confidentiality</b> <b>Equality Act consideration</b> <b>Nolan Principles</b> <b>Trust mission, vision, and values</b> Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There were no confidential items discussed</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications.</li> </ul> Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles and that the Trust mission, vision and values had been upheld.	
<b>AC/56/2122</b>	<b>Complete report to Trustees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governors were disappointed that they have still not had ISOT data.</li> <li>- The chair of governors spoke about more involvement in the academy and encouraged governors to ask a wider range of challenging questions.</li> <li>- Governors are mindful of lagged funding and pressure on PAN moving forward. They will return to this on a regular basis.</li> <li>- Governors were appreciative of the Diversity update from the assistant principal</li> </ul>	
	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> May at 5.30pm in the academy.  The meeting closed at 18.52pm	
	Signed..... (chair) Date.....  Print.....	