

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 23rd January 2023 at 5:30pm at the Academy.**

Governor name	Initials	Governor category	A = absence
Mr A Knight Chair of Governors	AK	Appointed	
Mr D Cartwright Vice Chair of Governors	DC	Appointed	
Mrs P Bryn-Jones	PBJ	Appointed Parent	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	
Miss N Ward	NW	Appointed	
Mr S Farrell	SF	Appointed	A
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	A
Mr C Kemp	CK	Appointed	
1 x Parent governor vacancy 1 x Appointed governor vacancy			

In attendance	Initials	Position	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mr A Cooper	AC	Vice Principal	A
Mrs R Chambers	RC	Governance Professional	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Governor's present</i>	<i>7</i>
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AC/27/2223	<p>Congratulations were extended to Mr Dickinson on his appointment to Principal.</p> <p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Governors were notified that Mr Farrell had resigned from the post of appointed governor due to other commitments.</p> <p>Mr Knight and the Governance Professional met with Mr Beckett, a potential new appointed governor, in advance of the meeting. Mr Beckett was unable to stay on to observe the meeting but has been invited to attend the March meeting.</p> <p><i>Mr Knight agreed to arrange a site visit of the academy with Mr Beckett prior to the next governor meeting and will extend an invitation to Mr Cartwright and Mrs Bennett.</i></p>	AK
AC/28/2223	<p>Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that there were no amends to their declarations which were made at the start of the year.</p>	

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AC/29/2223	<p>Training It was acknowledged that Mr Knight and Mr Silcock have now completed the bi-annual safeguarding certificate and the training record has been updated accordingly.</p> <p>SEND Mr Silcock confirmed that he attended the recent SEND training held on 05/01/23.</p> <p>A further session covering diversity is planned for 02/02/23.</p> <p><i>All governors were reminded that they can watch the training retrospectively and should let the Governance Professional know when they have done so in order that the central training record can be updated.</i></p> <p>Actions from link governor visits It was acknowledged that there have been no link reports since the last meeting. Discussions were held with regards to current link governor vacancies. Mr Cartwright agreed to become the new safeguarding link governor and Mr Knight confirmed that he will be the SEND link governor. It was noted that a GDPR link governor is now required, and Mr Knight suggested that Mrs Bennett might be a good fit for this role. Governance Professional to speak to Mrs Bennett about the role.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there are any other vacancies in terms of link governors. Mrs Chambers confirmed that all of the statutory roles have been covered in this discussion. It was reminded that governors can create link roles should there be an area of interest or focus for the committee.</p> <p><i>All governors agreed to carry out their link visits this term and to feed back to the Governance Professional.</i></p> <p>Mr Kemp has made contact with Mrs Ward, the Alternative Provision Lead and is hoping to arrange a visit in the near future.</p>	<p>Governors</p> <p>Governors</p>
AC/30/2223	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 21st November 2022 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/31/2223	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC/15/2223 –All governor safeguarding certificates are now up to date up until Easter. AC/15/2223 – To note the link to all training sessions has been distributed. AC/02/2223 – To note, a letter has been sent to Mr Farrell regarding non-attendance, Mr Farrell subsequently resigned from the committee. AC/18/2223 – All governors to have completed a link visit - carried forward to March 2023 AC/19/2223 – Mr Cartwright has confirmed that he will become the safeguarding link governor. Mr Cartwright to schedule a 	Governors

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	<p>meeting with Mr Knight from the Trust and Mr Richardson from Retford Oaks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC/20/2223 – Mr Knight to conduct a SCR check and complete Safer Recruitment training - To note, this is ongoing. • AC/21/2223 – To note the NCC safeguarding audit has been sent to NCC and receipt has been confirmed. • AC/22/2223 – To note Mr Dickinson has sent the admissions appendix to NCC – to be determined at this meeting. 	
AC/32/2223	<p>Principal's report / ERM report Mr Dickinson discussed the contents of the ERM report:</p> <p><u>Ongoing projects</u> School led tutoring - The Academy has an English school led tutor working alongside Mr Spooner supporting the Year 11 students who are on alternative provision packages or bespoke timetables. The Academy have had difficulty recruiting a maths school led tutor and as a result of this Mr Spooner has been delivering maths intervention for a couple of hours a day.</p> <p>A personal development day was held last week which focused on NHS careers, the academy has been accredited with the first Young Carers award in Bassetlaw and are looking to develop the team further.</p> <p>Y11 have received the outsourced 'Positively You intensive 1 day revision training' in advance of the mock exams. Mock results show that the Academy is where it is expected to be within the trust and there is more work ongoing in this area. The SENCO team are looking at exam access arrangements to ensure that students are trained to be able to use the additional support available to them effectively.</p> <p>The main focus of the next DAT inset day, on the 20th February will be looking at how to reduce teacher dependency in lessons and encourage more independent work from students.</p> <p>The careers lead has been off long term and the deputy has been working with vulnerable students. The careers lead is expected back in school on 02/02/23.</p> <p>UCAS applications have been sent off for Y13 students, there has been an increase in applications this year. However, there are some students that have potential to go to university however they are not looking to pursue this Work is ongoing to encourage aspirations amongst students.</p> <p>DTL scores are above 3 as an average which is very pleasing.</p> <p><u>Suspensions</u> – the academy has been experiencing challenging behaviours in some areas, with verbal abuse being the main challenge and is being dealt with by suspensions and interventions as noted within the behaviour policy. Refusal to follow instructions and persistent disruption are also areas of concern and the academy are looking at methods to improve behaviour in this area.</p>	

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	<p>There have been 2 permanent exclusions this year to date. Another student was due to be excluded this term, however in order to support the student and their parent and to avoid permanent exclusion, assistance was sought from the Local Authority.</p> <p><u>The governors questioned</u> if this number of permanent exclusions at ROA is in line with the average.</p> <p>Mrs Widdup explained that as a result of the resetting of standards it is likely that most schools will see an increase. As a whole the trust are noticing more defiance across all of the academies.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if other alternative provisions are available following the closure of Good Apple to which Mr Dickinson explained that the school have links to numerous 'step out' options as well as alternative provision for students however they have been unable to sustain the costs of taxis to transport children to some alternative provision, in particular Pollyteach at Blidworth so that option has recently been removed for all but one student, whose transport is funded by the Local Authority.</p> <p><u>The governors further asked</u> if there is any cohort, in particular, that appears to be more troublesome. Mr Dickinson went on to explain that Year 10 boys, are causing concern, there is some challenge in Year 9 mostly with the girls and Year 8 contains a group of children who have challenging personal circumstances or parents who have not been engaging with school.</p> <p>There is a higher proportion of disadvantaged students and pupil premium students being suspended for verbal abuse. In terms of tackling poor social behaviour pointed out by Ofsted the use of school toilets has been limited in order to stop students congregating in the area. Staff are now monitoring access to the toilets due to the cost of damage to the toilets (approximately £8000 per term). A corridor patrol is also currently in place in order to show a greater presence over breaks and lunchtimes to help manage the behaviour issues.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> whether the schools' presence on social media is an issue and Mr Dickinson confirmed that any areas of concern identified on the schools social media platforms are tackled with the source directly wherever possible rather than responding via social media.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if current concerns relating to some students' behaviour potentially leading to involvement in county lines should be identified as a risk on the risk register to which Mrs Widdup explained that whilst there is a problem it is amongst a very significant minority and Mr Dickinson added that it is a concern but not a risk at the moment because much of the activity tends to happen outside of school jurisdiction. Mr Dickinson went on to express that it would be useful to have a visit from recent alumni who have been through a similar experience and can engage the students.</p>	

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	<p>The academy is looking to engage parents more with the school and will be sending out a form to launch a 'parent voice'. Mr Kemp has some previous experience in this area and offered his support.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson informed the committee of the plan to engage with the parents of future cohorts by visiting all of the primary feeder schools with a coffee morning "roadshow".</p> <p><u>Attendance</u> Attendance dipped below 90% before Christmas which is below the national average.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there were any specific cohorts where attendance appeared to be an issue and Mr Dickinson confirmed that attendance concerns are most significant amongst the SEND students.</p> <p>The academy is currently recruiting for an attendance team member. Another member recently recruited to the business team has had a change of heart but has been replaced.</p> <p><i>Mrs Widdup explained that the government are referring to a crisis in school attendance at a national level and agreed to forward links to recent articles released on the matter to the GP for the governors to read.</i></p> <p><u>The Governors asked</u> what the attendance target is set at and it was confirmed to be set at 95%. In the lead up to Christmas there was a lot of illness with covid, strep A and flu with some parents potentially keeping children at home to avoid illness or to assist in caring for younger siblings.</p> <p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance: to inc. Single Central Record (SCR), safer recruitment, policy, Keeping Children Safe (KCSIE) • Culture: to inc. peer on peer, sexual harassment and violence, mental health, bullying and racism, online safety <p>Governors were advised that a SCR check was completed again on the 23rd January 2023.</p> <p>Mr Knight noted that from a safeguarding point of view he was happy with the use of other academies for 'step out' placements rather than the use of alternative provision. Mr Dickinson explained that the lack of alternative provision in the area is an issue. The main two used by Retford Oaks are Focus and Prime8 and spaces are at a premium. There is some outreach work for an hour per day at Post 16 which is also being utilised.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the academy is happy with the safeguarding arrangements in place at both the outreach placements and alternative provision accessed and Mr Dickinson confirmed that the school complete all of the safeguarding paperwork and perform visits to ensure all requirements are met.</p>	<p>HW / GP</p>

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	<p><u>The governors further asked</u> if other academies send their students to the same provisions, Mr Dickinson explained that they have reciprocal arrangements with other academies. Mr Spooner stated that the feedback he has received is positive in terms of students wanting to return to Retford Oaks and he has seen a positive change in behaviour on their return.</p> <p><u>Risk reports</u> Mr Dickinson discussed the risk report:</p> <p>Viability of Post16 – on 02/02/23 the academy will be holding an extra open evening to encourage more students to consider Retford Oaks Academy at post 16.</p> <p>Maths – the advert for Head of Maths closed on 22/01/23. There were five applications, two from outside of the UK. The academy will be looking to make an appointment for the maths position on 31/01/23. There are currently staffing issues in the area with one member of staff on long term sickness and two supply staff due to be leaving soon.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the school have been able to identify where Post 16 places are being lost to and Mr Dickinson expressed his view that the ‘out of school’ offer and independence that it brings appeals to the students along with a more diverse selection of course options.</p> <p><u>The governors further asked</u> what the minimum figures required for Post 16 are in order for it to be viable. Mrs Widdup explained that the concern is more around how many courses can be run viably. The academy is looking at a number of solutions including; adapting the offer to students in line with numbers such as doubling up year groups, offering more free periods where class sizes are extremely small and potentially sharing staff between academies within the trust.</p> <p>Finance Mr Dickinson explained that the finance surplus has taken a hit of around £40,000 as a result of alternative provision costs, transport to the alternative provision and the use of agency staff. The current surplus figure is now £77,000.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the day rates for agency staff are increasing, and Mrs Widdup explained that the day rates are increasing, and quality is decreasing. <u>The governors further asked</u> if the academy tends to use the same agencies, to which Mr Dickinson confirmed that they do.</p> <p>Health & Safety, staff & pupil well-being, Data Protection (breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests), complaints, claims (no’s/overview) It was advised that there was nothing to report on health and safety, wellbeing, data protection and complaints. There has been no data breaches but the academy had received a request from the police for</p>	

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	<p>information but this was resolved in school and was not taken any further.</p> <p>Confirm determined admission arrangements & approval of local appendix.</p> <p><u>The governors determined</u> the admissions policy for the 24/25 academic year and Mr Dickinson agreed to ensure they are sent to the LA for inclusion on their website.</p> <p>In-year admissions – all year groups Governors were advised that admissions are consistently coming in and the academy are attempting to do some investigation before accepting students. In some cases, this approach has been effective. <u>The governors noted</u> that the number of in admissions seems high and Mr Dickinson confirmed that this may be because the school is not at capacity.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the school are receiving paperwork from the outgoing schools in a timely fashion to which Mr Dickinson replied that sometimes the paperwork does not arrive in time, other students are coming via Fair Access.</p> <p>Behaviour and attendance/PD update inc. P/Ex, FPEs, persistent absence and alternative provision in place (number of days/pupils)</p> <p><u>Discussed out of turn see pages 19 to 21.</u></p> <p>Any academy specific items including policy appendix ratification, audits & any Cat C trip review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trip to Hull University – 24/01/23 ○ English trip is under consideration. ○ End of year activities will be communicated early to enable families to prepare for the cost. ○ Y11 reward trip will be on 23/06/23. ○ Y11 prom will be on 26/06/23 Governors were advised that the students' ability to attend will be based on their attendance and performance. ○ Ski trip 2024 – the week before Christmas break is under consideration. <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there are any lower cost trips under consideration as the school must be inclusive to all students. Mr Dickinson said that a trip to Europe is being considered for next year so that costs can be prepared for and parents can pay over a longer period of time. Mr Dickinson also said that there will be a Year 11 PE trip to The Mill Adventure base to complete a climbing GCSE event.</p> <p><u>The governors questioned</u> if there is money in the budget to provide a trip for the SEND cohort which might help to address attendance and following on Mrs Widdup suggested that Mr Spooner visit Mr Lambert at Holgate to see how he has managed to improve attendance in half a term.</p>	LD

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	<p><i>Mr Spooner agreed to take this forward and feedback at the next meeting.</i></p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> about the upcoming strikes and Mrs Widdup explained that there have been numerous meetings within the trust. The trust are unable to ascertain who will be striking so the numbers are unknown. The trust hope to be able to keep the schools open but it is difficult to ensure a safe provision without being aware of which staff will be striking. Surveys have been sent out to teachers but they are not obliged to complete or return them. The trust are not able to ask staff to cover striking staff or make provision for pupils of striking staff. A risk assessment is currently being drawn up for each academy.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> for details of when the strikes are taking place. Dates announced are: 01/02/23, 01/03/23, 15/03/23, 16/03/23.</p> <p><u>The governors further asked</u> if there will be any correspondence to parents and Mrs Widdup confirmed that the trust will be looking to publish guidance in advance.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the split between support staff and teaching staff is at Retford Oaks and Mr Dickinson confirmed that there are more teachers than support staff.</p> <p>Local policy updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-bullying appendix • Online safety appendix • Behaviour appendix <p>The above appendices have been updated by Retford Oaks and are available on the Academy website. Governors were informed of this update on the 12th of January 2023 and was ratified in the governor meeting.</p>	WS
AC/33/2223	<p>Review of governor action plan from self-evaluation</p> <p><i>It was agreed that with a change in Governance Professional, then this would be discussed with Mr Knight ahead of the next meeting and will be added to the next agenda</i></p>	AK / GP
AC/34/2223	<p>How have governors held the school leaders to account?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed that the governors held the school leaders to account. 	
AC/35/2223	<p>How have the VMV of Trust / Equality been upheld?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld. 	
AC/36/2223	<p>Complete report to trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost of agency staff is of concern - Governing body are pleased to see that there is a good variety of trips being planned. 	

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AC/37/2223	Determination of Confidentiality Equality Act consideration Nolan Principles Trust mission, vision, and values Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no confidential items discussed - There had been no Equality Act implications. 	
	Date and time of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday 13 th March 2023 at 5.30pm at the academy. The meeting closed at 19:07pm	
	Signed..... (chair) Date..... Print.....	