

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 13th March 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	A
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	A
Miss N Ward	NW	Appointed	A
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	
Mr C Kemp	CK	Appointed	A

In attendance	Initials	Position	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	A
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mr A Cooper	AC	Vice Principal	A
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	
Mr P Beckett	PB	<i>Observing pending appointment</i>	
Mr J Purle	JP	<i>Observing pending appointment</i>	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	4	<i>Governor's present</i>	4
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AC/38/2223	Apologies for absence Mr Spooner and Mrs Widdup sent apologies due to other commitments. Mr Kemp, and Mrs Ward sent apologies retrospectively.	
AC/39/2223	Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made. Governors confirmed that there were no amends to their declarations which were made at the start of the year.	
AC/40/2223	Training <i>All governors were reminded that they can watch all trust led 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> Mr Knight attended a trust led training session on SEND last Tuesday, the academy was mentioned as a good example at that session. Many of the items discussed are pending the green paper for 2025. <i>Mr Knight stated that he would like to review the website content with regards SEND and discuss whether it needs amending following the training session.</i>	Governors AK

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	<p>Mr Knight had a meeting earlier today with David Schwarz (Diverse Academies Trustee). The trustees are gathering feedback from chairs of governors across the trust around communications and the relationship between the trustees and governors.</p> <p>Actions from link governor visits <i>Mr Knight has completed a link visit and will provide his report to the governance professional for circulation to the committee.</i></p> <p><i>All governors were reminded to carry out their link visits this term and to feed back to the Governance Professional.</i></p>	<p>AK</p> <p>Governors</p>
AC/41/2223	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 23rd January 2023 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/42/2223	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC/20/2223 – Mr Knight to conduct a SCR check. To note that Safer Recruitment training had been completed and certificate will be sent to the governance professional. • AC/27/2223 – To note – Mr Cartwright and Mr Beckett have visited the academy for a tour of the site. • AC/29/2223 - All governors to inform Governance Professional of any trust led training reviewed retrospectively. • AC/29/2223 - All governors to have completed a link visit. To note that Mr Cartwright is planning a link visit prior to Easter. • AC/32/2223 - To note links have been circulated to articles about school attendance at a national level. • AC/32/2223 – To note Mr Spooner has contacted Mr Lambert at Holgate and provided feedback to the chair and principal. • AC/33/2223 – To note, Mr Knight and the governance professional have reviewed and updated the governor action plan. The updated plan was circulated prior to the meeting. Governors to review the plan. 	<p>AK/ Governors /DC</p>
AC/43/2223	<p>Principal’s report / ERM report / Autumn term evaluation of AIP Mr Dickinson provided an overview of the content of the ERM report.</p> <p><u>Objective 1 - Social Behaviours</u> There is a high number of pupils who have verbally abused staff. This was starting to decrease and at the time the report was written, physical assault was below target but there have been recent instances provoked by social media.</p> <p>Lucy Gascoyne will be coming in to talk to students about self-esteem and social media. Mr Hardeman will be working with students on improving social behaviours.</p> <p>The SLT will be working with individuals and parents to engage students and parents more.</p> <p>Some feedback received from students is that not all students have been on trips in recent years. A diverse offer of trips has been arranged for the end of the school year.</p>	

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	<p>Work is ongoing to look at rewards and greater promotion of positive behaviours. Ideas being considered are cost effective, simple rewards such as access to a VIP lunchroom and front of the queue dinner passes providing a more visible reward culture.</p> <p>Monitoring of toilet usage at lunchtimes continues to tackle the issues with regards damage.</p> <p><u>Objective 2 - SEND</u> Regular quality assurance and faculty deep dives are ongoing in relation to support for SEND students. Attendance has improved slightly for SEND this year, but this has been affected by the loss of a team member.</p> <p>Suspensions are high for SEND students, in lesson behaviour is generally good, however out of lesson behaviour continues to be more difficult.</p> <p>Mrs Deere is now back on a phased return. Mrs Gould will remain joint SENDCO whilst the long-term plan for Mrs Deere is considered.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the poor behaviour occurs in school or outside of school. Mr Dickinson confirmed that in school incidents of dangerous behaviour were high last term.</p> <p><u>The governors further asked</u> if these issues can be isolated to any particular year groups. Mr Dickinson stated that there are 'pockets' in year 8, year 9 and year 10. Year 11 have been extremely well behaved.</p> <p>The governors acknowledged that this makes it difficult to isolate and control behaviours.</p> <p>With regards the end of year day trips, <u>the governors questioned</u> if pupil premium students are able to attend. Mr Dickinson explained that each PP student is given 2 x £10 vouchers for trips, the school also hold back £21 per student. The most expensive trip is £49 which means that the largest contribution is £8 for a pupil premium student to access any of the trips and this cost can be spread. For those students not travelling, free activities provided in school are being funded by the academy and Mrs Lamb has been given a budget to be creative with.</p> <p><u>Objective 3 – lesson planning</u> The Progress 8 rating is lower than expected but this appears to be across the board and ROA sits where it is expected to. Projections for most likely outcomes are strong with the expectation that results will increase by half a grade per student per subject.</p> <p>Some students have been taken out of subjects where they are not expected to achieve to enable them to focus on achieving higher grades in their other option subjects. English, Maths and Science intervention has been running all year, self-directed revision and Geography is running alongside RE and PE.</p>	

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	<p>Some students (2) on roll have high levels of anxiety and are not accessing school. Alternative provision has been provided to help these students. Following a recent review with Prime8 it has been recognised that there needs to be greater links between alternative provision and the SENDCO.</p> <p><u>The governors questioned</u> whether the students that aren't accessing school must be included in the attendance figures. Mr Dickinson confirmed that they are included, and this does impact upon the overall percentage, one of the students may be removed from figures due to their individual circumstances.</p> <p>Some of the students that had been accessing Good Apple (now closed) have been working with Mr Spooner and colleagues to focus on maths and English.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know</u> how many students are accessing alternative provision now. Mr Dickinson stated that there are currently 31 students in total on blended packages as well as full time alternative provision. <u>The governors asked</u> how this compares to last year. Mr Dickinson confirmed the number was 34 last year.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson went on to express that the increase in students accessing a part time timetable is a reflection of the numbers struggling to manage a full day in school and would otherwise result in behavioural issues and suspensions. <u>The governors were concerned</u> that students on a part time timetable would impact on attendance figures, but Mr Dickinson confirmed that these are authorised absences.</p> <p>All year 11 students are being given a careers interview, however as a result of absence of the careers lead (due back this week) priority has been given to alternative provision students and LAC students. 69% of students have applied to university this year. Work is ongoing with year 10 students to raise aspirations going forwards. The recent trip to Hull university for year 12 was well attended.</p> <p>It was noted by all that the cost of living away at university appears to be a significant factor in students' decisions to accept offers from universities more locally.</p> <p>Learning walks are ongoing, however there is concern that teaching is still within the 'covid' mode. This was addressed during the recent INSET day where numerous teaching strategies were promoted to encourage a less lecture style of teaching. For the last 3 weeks, videos have been produced and shared with staff as encouragement to get students more involved.</p> <p>Exclusions are at 6.6% which is higher than the academy would like but compared to challenges occurring countrywide the figures are more positive. The recent TikTok protest trend has not impacted ROA.</p> <p>There is one potential exclusion, the student has had numerous suspensions and returned from alternative provision at the start of the</p>	

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	<p>academic year but refuses to attend. Mr Dickinson is currently engaging with the Local Authority to arrange schooling.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> how many discipline panels have been held for this student and Mr Dickinson confirmed that, so far, other methods have been used to manage the issue and no panel has yet been required.</p> <p>It was noted that alternative provision is increasingly being utilised more for managing social issues as opposed to behaviours.</p> <p>Attendance has stabilised following the dip over the Christmas period. This is being addressed by new attendance procedures in school to communicate with parents. <u>The governors questioned</u> whether issues with attendance are more prevalent in a particular year group. Mr Dickinson stated that there is no clear pattern in terms of a year group and that it appears to be the result of a cultural change that will take some time to address.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> for the current attendance figures - 88.57%, <u>they further asked</u> if any improvements have been noted since Christmas to which Mr Dickinson confirmed, only slightly. <u>The governors then wanted to know</u> what the attendance target would be for next year. To which Mr Dickinson confirmed, the aspirational target is 95% however the national average is around 92%</p> <p><u>The governors queried</u> how much of an impact continual offenders affect the overall attendance figures. Mr Dickinson confirmed that there is an impact, it was also noted that the academy remained open last Friday (some schools locally closed due to snow in the morning) and attendance figures were significantly affected.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there is evidence to suggest that some students / parents take more of a liberty on bad weather and strike days. Mr Dickinson confirmed that attendance of year 11 was lower on the last strike day but the impact on this coming Friday following the first strike to be held on Thursday is yet to be seen.</p> <p>The governors asked how many staff are expected to be striking this week. Mr Dickinson stated that during the first strike there were 25 and the second strike there were 21 staff members striking.</p> <p>Safeguarding; culture & compliance inc. online safety</p> <p>Mr Dickinson confirmed that an SCR check was completed earlier today. The recent court case was resolved without any need for staff to testify.</p> <p>Health & Safety, staff & pupil well-being, Data Protection (breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests), complaints, claims</p> <p>Solvent abuse is an evolving threat with some students, and this is being monitored. The academy has been trialling 'say it, see it' with year 10 which enables students to raise concerns, this is done via a QR code posted around the site. It will be rolled out to the whole school.</p>	

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	<p>Mr Dickinson explained that there had been 6 complaints up to November, 5 of which were SEND related. <i>The governors asked</i> if the 5 SEND complaints have now been resolved, to which Mr Dickinson confirmed that they have. There has been one new complaint in relation to a student being incorrectly reported absent from school, this was a valid complaint but easily resolved over the telephone.</p> <p>Pupil number projections The academy have agreed to accept an additional 30 students in September taking the maximum number to 270 (237 have currently been allocated so far for next year) and the funding for 270 has been secured.</p> <p>The Unity Coaches contract is up for renewal and other options are being considered for transporting students from Worksop as the cost is significant.</p> <p>The current building capacity is 1243 and funded capacity is 1295. A meeting has been arranged with the local authority to discuss a proposal as to how additional students are accepted. The academy currently receives a significant number of in year admissions from Worksop schools.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> if there is sufficient capacity in the dining hall to accommodate the additional students. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the academy is currently looking at provisional plans to have split break times of 20 mins and extending lunchtime to 40 mins to ensure all students have time to access the lunch service. Currently students are not allowed to take food outside as there is an issue with vermin however plans are under consideration to extend the dining hall, creating a conservatory space for eating. <i>The governors questioned</i> whether the dining space could be used more efficiently. Mr Dickinson explained that the current layout of the space is working as the architect had intended for the space and numbers. <i>The governors suggested</i> that vertical tables could be utilised in the outside/conservatory eating space to avoid the need for chairs, enable students to eat whilst standing and provide more space. <i>The governors wanted to know</i> how these potential changes would be funded. Mr Dickinson explained that the secured funding from LA will be used alongside considerations around staffing changes (including lunchtime supervisors).</p> <p>Exclusion and suspension data Discussed as part of the ERM review.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson noted that the makeup of the pastoral team has changed, Mr Spooner has vacated the role. Mr Summers has taken year 11 and PE teacher Mr Chesman has taken on year 9 and had a very positive impact in just 3 weeks.</p> <p>Our student voice feedback is being reviewed and challenged where appropriate. Teaching social behaviours is ongoing and whilst there were no student strikes instigated by the TikTok craze, there was an impact last half term with the fire alarms being set off. An assembly was held to explain</p>	

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	<p>to the students the impact and consequences of setting of the fire alarms and the disruption settled down soon after.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> if the risks that have been re-categorised as issues are still being reviewed now that they have been removed from the risk register. Mr Dickinson confirmed that they are continuously reviewed.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson stated that finances have improved with the surplus figure currently at £96K. <i>The governors were interested to know</i> if the cost of heating has been an issue for the finances. Mr Dickinson explained that the largest impact on finances continues to be the cost of supply staff and alternative provision.</p> <p><i>The governors questioned</i> where the responsibility lies for managing staff sickness absence. Mr Dickinson confirmed that sickness management has been visited in recent training. <i>The governors wanted to know further</i> at what point with long term absence does occupational health get involved with staff members and Mr Dickinson confirmed that all long-term sick staff have been referred for occupational health assessments and that the first round of formal meetings have taken place over the past few weeks with staff on high levels of absence. Mr Dickinson also noted that priority is given to time spent teaching over other staff responsibilities upon a phased return to work.</p>	
AC/44/2223	<p>Governor Recruitment</p> <p>Mr Beckett and Mr Purle were thanked for their attendance and asked to leave the meeting to enable the academy committee to discuss governor recruitment. See confidential minutes.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mr Purle would be invited to join the committee as a parent governor. <i>The governance professional will prepare letters to both Mr Beckett and Mr Purle for signature from Mr Knight.</i></p> <p><i>Mr Knight asked</i> if the small office next to the principals' office would be available for use by the governors and governance professional. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the room is available to book by governors to use if they want to be more present at the academy.</p> <p>The Governance professional informed the committee that the Leadership and Governance conference will be held on 5th July 2023 and asked the committee to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - topics/content the governors would like it to include - would governors be more likely to attend in person or virtually - what would be the best time and length of the event to achieve greater governor attendance. - are governors likely to attend. <p><i>Governors agreed to think about the above and feed back to the governance professional their thoughts.</i></p>	<p>NB</p> <p>Governors</p>

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AC/45/2223	<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/46/2223	<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/47/2223	<p>Complete report to trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The committee have extended an open invitation to trustees to attend AC meetings or other governor involved activities at the academy. - 	
	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidential discussion around governor recruitment has been minuted as a separate confidential item. - There had been no Equality Act implications. 	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 5.30pm at the academy. The meeting closed at 19:13pm</p>	
	<p>Signed..... (chair) Date..... Print.....</p>	