

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 22nd May 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	
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	
Mr C Kemp	CK	Appointed	
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed	

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

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	5	<i>Governor's present</i>	9
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/48/2223	Apologies for absence There were no apologies for absence	
AC/49/2223	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. Mr Knight informed the committee that he has been mentoring with the vice chair at Walton Academy to help out while numbers are low.	
AC/50/2223	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> Actions from link governor visits <i>All governors were reminded to carry out their link visits this term and to feed back to the Governance Professional.</i> Mr Knight confirmed that his link visit report was circulated earlier today and is available to view via SharePoint. Mr Knight stated that there had been nothing contentious for discussion.	Governors Governors

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AC/51/2223	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 13th March 2023 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/52/2223	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC/40/2223 All governors should let the Governance Professional know when they have attended or reviewed training in order that the central training record can be updated. • AC/40/2223 To note - Mr Knight has completed a link visit and the report has been shared. No other link visits have been held. • AC/40/2223 To note - Mr Knight has provided the link visit report. • AC/40/2223 Mr Knight to review the website content with regards SEND. To note – this is ongoing, Mrs Widdup confirmed that we are waiting on central work to be completed. • AC/42/2223 Governors to review the governance action plan. • AC/44/2223 To note, letters were sent to Mr Purle and Mr Beckett • AC/44/2223 To note, Leadership and Governance conference to be held on 5th July 2023 – agenda circulated to all governors. All governors to let NB know if they intend to attend. Mr Knight and Mr Cartwright confirmed that they will be attending. 	AK/ Governors /NB
AC/53/2223	<p>Principal's report / AIP Mr Dickinson provided an overview of the content of the AIP term 2 update.</p> <p>1.1 Social behaviours, the academy is still facing challenges with regards verbal abuse to adults and physical assaults. There was a spate over the last term and as a result a number of students have been placed on managed moves. Mentoring and additional work is ongoing with SEND students with regards verbal abuse. Mr McGuinness has been appointed to work on student voice. There is now better engagement with LA following the appointment of Mrs Ward.</p> <p><i>The governors asked</i> how the numbers of sanctions for verbal abuse given to SEND students compares with the rest of cohort. Mr Dickinson confirmed that SEND students being sanctioned for verbal abuse is around 3 to 4 times higher proportionally. <i>The governors wanted to know</i> how this aligns with the rest of the Trust. Both Mr Dickinson and Mrs Widdup confirmed that the pattern is the same across the Trust with refusal to follow instructions / defiance being the largest issue.</p> <p>1.2 Enrichment. Badges and rewards are being redesigned for autumn term to encourage greater attendance at enrichment events. Trip day this term will be promoted to end the term on a high. Mr Dickinson noted that the proportion on PP students not attending trips compared to the rest of the cohort is in line with the comparison of those attending. There has been the reintroduction of 'Toast Morning' on a Friday with heads of year for the best attended tutor group, Year 9 are going to Sherwood pines to play frisbee golf and other heads of year are also looking at rewards such as this too.</p> <p>1.3 Student survey. Feedback from students received via Ofsted regarding the state of toilets resulted in the use of toilets being restricted to prevent damage and the significant cost of repairs and maintenance. Recent feedback revealed that students are now unhappy about the</p>	

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	<p>limited access to toilets however the amount of damage and cost involved has reduced significantly.</p> <p>2.1 SEND Mr Dickinson acknowledged that there is still a gap between SEND and non-SEND students within the academy but the subtle changes being made is enabling students to integrate better with their peers.</p> <p>2.2 Current SEN attendance is below where it needs to be and there have been issues with the unexpected absence of the SENDCO who is currently on leave with a personal matter. A number of other staff members have been helping out. Mrs Widdup added that a contingency plan is now in place with additional staff being trained.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the challenges are to achieving better attendance. Mr Dickinson explained that making contact with students and their parents, understanding the students' specific needs, and developing a strategy for each child can be challenging. <u>The governors then asked</u> if this needs to be on the risk register to which Mr Dickinson stated that it shouldn't be on the risk register as it is an issue rather than a risk. <u>The governors suggested that</u> this could be a reputational risk and again Mr Dickinson explained that it is more of an issue now rather than a potential risk as it's already happening. He went on to say that there has been improvement in terms of perceptions, but he is hopeful that on the SENDCO's return it will improve further.</p> <p><u>The Governors asked</u> if the SEND team can come to the next academy committee meeting to give a brief presentation to the committee on the plan for improving SEND going forwards. Mr Dickinson, Mr Knight and the governance professional will ensure that this is added as an agenda item for the next meeting.</p> <p><u>The governors wondered</u> how long training is likely to take for the additional staff members. Mrs Widdup confirmed that Mrs Karina Austerberry (Teacher of English) will do the training over 2 years with the trust but can be a SENDCO in training and can therefore provide a service alongside the training. <u>The governors queried</u> how long the SENDCO was likely to be on leave. Mr Dickinson confirmed that they have a been signed off until the end of the week, but he was unsure what will happen following half term. Ultimately the succession plan put in place for this year has worked but it was not possible to foresee the recent circumstances and a contingency will be in place going forwards. In terms of behaviours and suspensions, a more specialised input is needed from the SEND department to work with students and offer a more supportive restorative process rather than suspension.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if it continues to be the same year groups displaying challenging behaviours. Mr Dickinson summarised that there are pockets of Y9 girls being sanctioned for defiance and truancy, many of the challenges with Y8 have now settled down, as have Y10. There have been some physical assaults centred around social media, but the biggest issues are around failure to follow instructions and verbal abuse.</p>	<p>LD/AK/NB</p>

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	<p><u>The governors wondered</u> if something might be done to prevent social media use. Mr Dickinson explained that the WIFI can be turned off, but this has much wider implications. Mr Spooner added that often, social media issues occurring outside of school are brought into school by children and parents so access to social media during school time is not the issue.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if PSHE taught in school is flexible and able to respond to issues that occur within school / outside school in a timely manner. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the curriculum for PSHE is flexible and is often adapted to suit the specific issues in school, for example the fire service delivering assemblies to tackle fire alarms being set off, Lucy Gascoigne talking to students about issues specifically impacting girls etc.</p> <p>Accelerating learning - P8 figures show that the academy is where it should be within the Trust. KS5 has not moved forward in the same way however there have been challenges with 6th form is that some students have dropped out recently and the levels of anxiety amongst the year 13 students is significant. <u>The governors wanted to know</u> if this pattern is reciprocated across the trust. Mr Dickinson and Mrs Widdup confirmed that there is a pattern across the trust and unfortunately there have been many parents contacting schools to state that their children are too stressed to sit their exams on the day of the exam itself. The year 13 students did not sit GCSE exams due to the pandemic and anxiety at A Level is a significant result of this.</p> <p>There has been a staff departure in engineering design, and this has resulted in a change to the DT course. The careers advisor hasn't been in post for a long time due to absence and now retirement. The academy has been able to continue to move forward using other services.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if external services are invited in to school to offer alternatives to students. Mr Dickinson replied that they have a variety of external options presented to students and all careers advice offered is impartial. <u>The governors were keen to understand better</u> the academy's link with the NHS and if that means that additional careers advice can be offered. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the NHS partners will be holding an event, governors will be informed of the dates and are welcome to attend.</p> <p>Invitations have been extended to all year 11 students for a careers interview with outside providers and the majority of students have responded positively.</p> <p>Safeguarding: Most recent SCR review was held after the last bank holiday.</p> <p>Compliance: to inc. Single Central Record (SCR), safer recruitment, policy, Keeping Children Safe (KCSIE) All new staff are up to date.</p>	

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	<p>Culture: to inc. peer on peer, sexual harassment and violence, mental health, bullying and racism, online safety Main themes coming out of 'my concern' were; behaviour, home issues, self-harm, emotional health, mental health, and low mood, with the latter four categories put together far outweighing the others. The school counsellor will be leaving at the end of the week. Mrs Devonshire (TA) is returning from maternity leave and will be focussing solely on mental health.</p> <p>Risk reports There has been an update to the risk report whereby the insufficient staffing and resources risk has been reduced. There is a vacancy in maths / science still to be filled. There are two contingencies that could go into the maths position.</p> <p>Health & Safety, staff & pupil well-being, Data Protection (breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests), complaints, claims (no's/overview) There have been some informal bullying complaints that have been dealt with and resolved. A complaint regarding the conduct of staff in SS3 was raised, a student felt uncomfortable/anxious, a meeting was held with the parent and an alternative plan put in place to make the student comfortable. <u>The governors asked</u> what the issues were in this case. Mr Dickinson explained that the student had felt judged by the staff member as opposed to supported by them.</p> <p>A complaint was made with regards the teaching of chemistry and lack of progress of the student. The pace of the course had been slowed to enable students to catch up and this complaint was resolved.</p> <p><u>The governors questioned</u> whether there is a need for training for staff to better identify and understand anxiety amongst students. Mr Dickinson agreed that anxiety is a growing issue and confirmed that there is a plan to hold additional training for staff to help students with anxiety.</p> <p>Any academy specific items including local policy appendix ratification, audits, and Cat C trip review. Mr Spooner presented his plan for a ski trip: 13th Dec 2024 to 20th 2024 in Austria using the same company as the last ski trip. This would be for Y7 to Y11 only. 5 nights / days Based on 40 students £1240 per student</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if parents would have the opportunity to pay in instalments. Mr Dickinson confirmed that if the trip can be advertised early then payments could be based at approximately £100 per month. <u>The governors wanted to know</u> what period of time would be lost in education and would the trip impact on attendance figures. They also <u>noted</u> that consideration would need to be given to the timing of mock exams for year 11 students. Mr Dickinson confirmed that students</p>	

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	<p>attending the trip would be registered as attending and consideration will be given to year 11 to allow time to prepare for mock exams.</p> <p><u>The Chair asked</u> if any of the governors had objections to the trip going ahead and there were none.</p> <p>Theatre trip to London (approx. 40 students) 1 night stay by coach - £281 per student <u>The governors asked</u> if the train had been considered as an alternative to the coach. Mr Spooner said that it had been looked at but the logistics of getting a large number of students across London on the tube would create additional risks and challenges.</p> <p><u>The Chair asked</u> if any of the governors had objections to the trip going ahead, it was confirmed that Year 11 would not be included in this trip and there were no objections from governors.</p> <p>Update on Business Continuity Plan Across the trust CBCP audits have been underway covering events such as intruders, fire alarms etc. The vast majority of actions for the academy were based on what the trust needed to do to support ROA. The academy has come out as the best in the trust.</p> <p>23/24 Admissions update As discussed at the last meeting. The academy has agreed to increase the PAN to 270 in year 7, 257 students have been offered places for the autumn term. <u>The governors asked</u> what the impact would be on capacity and Mr Dickinson stated that the current capacity of the school is 1295. Mr Widdup explained that the local authority has got significant issues this September and for the following 2 years in terms of pupil numbers and it is likely that ROA will be asked to take an extra 30 students in the coming two years as well. The local authority has had an additional 600+ applications for September, many from outside borders but also as a result of the development of a number of large housing estates in the area, however projections show that in 3 years, the numbers will plummet so they are looking to accommodate students without large capital investments.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson told the committee that the Unity bus from Worksop will be stopping in September and stagecoach are looking to provide the service going forwards, this has left a small pocket of students that would have to catch 2 buses to get to school and some of whom are looking at moving to schools closer to home. This change has been communicated in writing and 3 drop-in sessions have been offered to parents, the sessions were not well attended, therefore it is assumed that parents understand.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there was an option to consider sharing buses with the Elizabethan Academy for those students travelling from further afield. Mr Dickinson explained that this was not feasible and that those areas affected by the Unity bus ceasing do not attend the Elizabethan.</p>	

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	<p><u>The governors requested that</u> the SENDCO email address be publicised on the website. This is an ongoing action and will be addressed, see AC/52/2223</p> <p><u>The governors wanted an update</u> with regards the budget. Mr Dickinson told the committee that the budget is in surplus, and the recent resignation of a staff member will be considered in relation to maintaining a healthy budget.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there might be the opportunity to get more financial support from the council. Mrs Widdup explained conversations were ongoing with NCC regarding capital funding.</p>	
AC/54/2223	<p>Governance Housekeeping The governance professional explained that governors will be asked to complete an MS form containing questions about diversity and inclusion. This has come about as a result of new DfE guidance that MATs should publish data on the diversity of governing boards. The guidance and the form have already been shared with governors, but the governance professional will recirculate them to everyone.</p> <p>The governance professional also informed governors that a further request will be circulated to all governors to complete a skills audit. This will be an opportunity for governors to share their knowledge, skills and experience to better assist the role of governance and also identify any gaps or areas that might benefit from additional training or support from the trust.</p>	NB
AC/55/2223	<p>How have governors held the school leaders to account? It was agreed that the governors held the school leaders to account. Challenges on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEND – behaviours and attitudes, attendance, staffing and support. - Behaviours and attitudes in general and PSHE curriculum. - Careers support and guidance for students - Mental Health awareness and support - Trips and budgeting - School transport 	
AC/56/2223	<p>How have the VMV of Trust / Equality been upheld? It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.</p>	
AC/57/2223	<p>Complete report to trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are concerns that there are issues across the trust with regards SENDCO and availability of the email address - Governors have approved a ski trip, please confirm that medical insurance for trip will be in place. - It is good to see that trips and extra curricular activities are returning to school. - Numbers are in a very healthy position, the school is near capacity and we will struggle to take students beyond this year. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gratitude extended to Jamie Tegardine from Tuxford Academy who has been supporting with engineering following a member of staff leaving and Sally Truseler who has provided valuable support in SEND while there have been unexpected staff absences. - 	
	<p>Determination of Confidentiality Equality Act consideration Nolan Principles Trust mission, vision, and values</p> <p>Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no confidential items discussed. - There had been no Equality Act implications. 	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday 3rd July 2023 at 5.30pm at the academy.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:45pm</p>	
	<p>Signed..... (chair) Date.....</p> <p>Print.....</p>	