


**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 10th July 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	A
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	A
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	
Miss N Ward	NW	Appointed	
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	A
Mr C Kemp	CK	Appointed	A
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed	

In attendance	Initials	Position	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	A
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mr A Cooper	AC	Vice Principal	
Mr R Stewardson	RS	Assistant Principal	
Ms S Truseler	ST	SENCO & Strategic Development Lead for SEND	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Governor's present</i>	<i>5</i>
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/58/2223	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for Mrs Bennett and Mrs Bryn-Jones. No apologies were received from Mr Kemp and Mr Silcock.</p>	
AC/59/2223	<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>	
AC/60/2223	<p>Training</p> <p>Feedback from recent training events, recordings of which were distributed before the meeting.</p> <p>There was no feedback from recent sessions and governors were reminded that all sessions are available to review and links have been circulated with the meeting documents.</p> <p>Actions from link governor visits</p> <p>There was no feedback from link visit reports. <i>All governors were reminded to carry out their link visits this term and to feed back to the Governance Professional.</i></p>	Governors

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AC/61/2223	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 22nd May 2023 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/62/2223	<p>Matters arising AC/60/2223 All governors reminded to let the Governance Professional know of any trust led training attended or reviewed. AC/60/2223 All governors reminded to carry out link visits and feed back to the Governance Professional. AC/52/2223 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/53/2223 To note: A presentation on the plan for improving SEND has been included in the agenda. AC/54/2223 To note: Diversity and inclusion form has been recirculated to all governors.</p>	AK/ Governors/ NB
AC/63/2223	<p>SEND Presentation was delivered by Adam Cooper. Mr Cooper presented the plan for SEND 2023/2024 (attached)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  SEND.pdf </p> <p>It was noted that Retford Oaks appear to have a higher percentage of students with SEND than many schools nationally. <u>The Governors asked</u> if there was any reason or indication as to why. Ms Truseler explained that the numbers are rising nationally in terms of SEND students in relation to non-SEND.</p> <p><u>The chair of governors acknowledged</u> that the level of support for SEND students has not been sufficient at Retford Oaks. Mr Cooper agreed and told the committee that there had been 4 applicants for the recently advertised SENCO role. Mr Cooper also said that it was very important that, once in place, team building within the SEND team is a priority in order to move forwards.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know</u> how the size of the team compares to other academies. Ms Truseler confirmed that the numbers of staff are similar but slightly lower. <u>The governors then questioned</u> whether this type of role is usual for a TA to take on. Ms Truseler confirmed that ideally the TA SEND team members should be involved in the classroom rather than taking a more administrative role. <u>The governors wanted to understand</u> that investment in the area was being made effectively and <u>asked</u> how this affects the staffing budget. Mr Dickinson confirmed that there will be a healthy surplus this year, next year looks tighter but there is budget for an HLTA and additional funding from AFN (Additional Family Needs). Ms Truseler added that as a result of the recent Ofsted for Notts CC, more funding has been put in place for SEND and explained the following:</p>	

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	<p>Additional Family Needs Funding (AFN) is divided out into three funding bands; Low, Medium and High. This funding is accessed through the SENCO putting detailed written bids for individual children who require additional funding to meet their specific needs. These bids are then moderated by all SENCOs within Retford Oaks Family of Schools.</p> <p>Last financial year AFN funding for the Retford Oaks Family of schools was: Low AFN: £2000 Medium AFN: £4000 High AFN: £6000</p> <p>However, with an increase of approximately 23% of High-Level Needs Funding (HLN) from Nottinghamshire County Council this financial year into the AFN pot of money, AFN funding for the Retford Oaks Family of schools is: Low AFN: £2500 Medium AFN: £4500 High AFN: £6500</p> <p>This financial year 2023-2024, Retford Oaks Academy will therefore receive £62,509.62 in AFN funding for a total of 16 children. This is an increase of £11,894.21 on the previous financial year 2022-2023, when Retford Oaks Academy received £50,615.41 AFN funding for a total of 14 children.</p> <p><u>The governors questioned</u> whether there are a greater number of children who will be fighting for the AFN funding and Ms Truseler said that the focus will still be on a similar number of children.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to understand</u> the reason for the focus on teambuilding and asked if the priority should be the students rather than teambuilding for the team as a new SENCO may feel that the role is more focused on leading a team than supporting the students and may not therefore remain in place.</p> <p>Ms Truseler said that it was important that the right questions are asked, and the current challenge is made clear in the interview process. Ms Truseler is confident that CG will deliver on teaching and learning which will help meet the needs for the majority of students needing SEN support.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there will be many students with EHCP coming into year 7 in September. Ms Truseler confirmed that there are 3 or 4 children that the academy knows about, but it is likely the number will be higher.</p> <p><u>The governors asked for reassurance</u> that there will be ongoing supervision for the SEN team to help drive them forwards and to hold them to account. Mr Dickinson said that the last 2 SENCOs he has worked with have been encouraged to get around the school and see how children are supported in classrooms and for a number of reasons</p>	

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	<p>that hasn't been done and Mr Knight agreed that having new staff members in these roles has been a challenge in achieving a more proactive and dynamic approach. CG's revised role will enable this.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted clarification</u> with regards the qualification that KA is working towards and asked if KA would be a qualified SENCO at the end of the training. Ms Truseler said that the course gives staff an overview of what being a SENCO entails but also alongside that, KA will get a better picture of the role, she will also be involved in Local Authority webinars within Notts CC as it has very unique approach to the way that SEND is funded. Ms Truseler confirmed that she will be supporting those roles and that Retford Oaks is a priority from the trust point of view.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson stated that the team will be required to ensure that SEND is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the SEND team. The SENCO qualification is an expensive one to fund, therefore the process is being taken more slowly to ensure that the right people are given the opportunity and will bring value to the role before a large investment is made.</p> <p><u>The governors asked Ms Truseler</u> if there are any easy wins, quick gains that the Academy can make. Ms Truseler said it is vitally important to make sure that communications are good between parents and the school. Every opportunity should be taken to ensure that SEND team members are visible and present at events such as parents' evenings, year group meetings etc. The Academy could consider a timetabled slot for parents to be able to meet with the SEND team. A method to obtain feedback to understand the baseline would be welcome such as a questionnaire/comments box potentially with the offer of a prize draw to encourage more responses. Ms Truseler said that she has found in consultation with the primary schools that feedback has been good in terms of the support for children coming up.</p> <p>Ms Truseler went on to suggest that changes to the website need to be made. It is too corporate and needs to be reviewed and she has shared with the Trust what a good practice website looks like. <u>The chair of governors confirmed</u> that similar concerns had been raised about the website and access to contact information from governors not present. Ms Truseler went on to state that it is important to ensure that all parents know the processes to follow and have a clear understanding of who to contact about what issues.</p> <p>Mrs Ward acknowledged that historically in primary schools the parent would go to the SENCO who would generally have more time and a closer relationship to both the student and parent. Parents may not be prepared for or appreciate the difference when students arrive into secondary school.</p> <p>Ms Truseler suggested that a shared mailbox such as a 'SEN admin address' should be the main contact email address for parents. The administrator can then filter correspondence accordingly and where the</p>	

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	<p>issue is not appropriate for the SEND team, pass it on and return a standard response to the parent explaining who best to contact.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what contingency is in place if the right candidate is not found for the SENCO role. Mr Cooper confirmed that he will remain in the role until such time as the right person is found. Ms Truseler was thanked for her valued input and she left the meeting.</p> <p>Professional development impact 2022/23 & planning for 2023/24 CPD and Impact presentation</p> <p>Mr Cooper presented a review of CPD for 22/23 (attached)</p> <div data-bbox="453 669 504 732" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>CPD Review.pdf</p> <p>Mr Cooper began by explaining that the training had followed a BOD model, Blanket, Optional and Directed.</p> <p>There has been a push on improving and increasing middle leadership with 8 members of staff completing NPQs this year which is now starting to filter through. Mr Dickinson said that the Outstanding facilitator programme is a good opportunity for staff to further their development.</p> <p>Mr Cooper explained that there is a focus on steering coaching away from being considered a bad thing, rather an improvement opportunity to help develop confidence in staff.</p> <p>Mr Cooper said that he would only turn down a course if the funding isn't there, cover can't be found or the course has no benefit. Otherwise, he is very supportive of staff who want to improve their skills, knowledge and experience. Mr Knight agreed and added that there is positive engagement with the trust offer for developing learning.</p> <p>Mr Cooper went on to explain that classroom practice is an area for focus this coming year and more capacity is being added to teaching and learning and to middle leader aspirations. Mr Cooper will be pushing a 'no hands up' approach in classrooms to encourage better engagement with all students.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the impact on teaching had been as a result of immersion days, for example staff have had to be pulled from attending courses due to lack of cover. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the cost does come out of the academy budget to cover supply for staff on these courses and occasionally staff are not able to attend. <u>The governors suggested</u> that this should be a consideration for the trust in terms of supporting academies with supply costs when staff are required to attend trust training.</p> <p>Mr Cooper confirmed that ECT staff sessions have hit Retford Oaks hard because all staff are required to attend at the same time and we currently have a large number of ECT staff. Mr Dickinson confirmed that</p>	

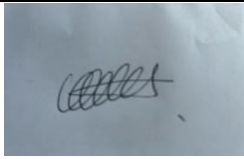
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	<p>the academy is keen to invest in staff but it can sometimes be a double edged sword.</p> <p>Mr Cooper was thanked for his presentation, and he left the meeting.</p> <p>Safeguarding & Pupil Premium Mr Stewardson presented an update (attached)</p> <div data-bbox="453 573 504 636" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Govs update Safeguarding and Pup</p> <p>Safer Recruitment With regards Safer Recruitment, <i>the governors asked</i> if all references were being followed up as part of the recruitment process. Mr Dickinson confirmed that they are.</p> <p>Culture: to inc. peer on peer, sexual harassment and violence, mental health, bullying and racism, online safety Mr Stewardson explained that the data taken from My Concern shows an increase in incidents reported but much of this indicates greater use and understanding of the correct methods of reporting.</p> <p>The external mental health support team have been coming in regularly. Students have found Ms Devonshire extremely helpful to talk to and she will be returning to the Academy 3 days a week as a dedicated team member.</p> <p>There is an improvement opportunity in training for all staff to use My Concern correctly and not for reporting behaviour issues inappropriately.</p> <p>Pregnancy is a concern at the moment as the numbers have risen year on year and further work is ongoing to address this concern.</p> <p>The numbers of students found vaping have reduced. <i>The governors asked</i> where the trading places are for vapes in the area. Mr Dickinson explained there had been an issue last year around trading at the academy but this is now resolved. <i>The governors wanted to understand</i> what concerns there are around cyber bullying. Mr Stewardson confirmed that there is an issue around online safety with students, for example sharing images etc. Mr Spooner said it is worth pointing out the some work was done last year to address the responsibilities of parents to work with their children around this issue as well as school. Mr Dickinson added that many of the physical assaults occurring in the Academy have resulted from social media activity outside of school.</p> <p>Pupil Premium School led tutoring, mental health TA, 1:1 tutor (for LAC students) and the behaviour mentor are funding by pupil premium and the Academy will be looking at developing more creative solutions to utilise the PP funding going forwards.</p>	

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	<p>Mr Dickinson acknowledged that staff don't always have an accurate understanding of the difficulties that some of their students face, and he will be working with staff to develop a greater appreciation.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> what the national average is for PP and Mr Stewardson confirmed that it was around 30%. <u>The governors then wanted to know</u> how school are notified about students and how need is tested, <u>and further</u> if pupils arrive into the academy with PP already assigned.</p> <p>Mr Spooner added that previously a letter was sent to the whole school reminding parents to check if they are eligible and were getting the right support.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the team are under capacity in terms of safeguarding. Mr Stewardson acknowledged this and confirmed that he is doing more operational work rather than strategic at the moment. <u>The governors then questioned</u> whether this workload is manageable. Mr Dickinson and Mr Stewardson agreed that workloads are manageable for the most part until something unexpected crops up.</p> <p><u>The governors queried</u> that this might be a risk. Mr Dickinson explained that he is looking at the strategic long-term plan and considering current resourcing. Mr Stewardson said that the risk is that something might get missed and it is important that staff are regularly reminded to put things on the system in a timely manner. Mr Dickinson confirmed that most heads of year are also DSL (designated safeguarding leads) so can direct staff accordingly but accepted that it is tight but working at the moment.</p> <p><u>The governors expressed concern</u> that the Academy may come under more pressure going forwards. Mr Stewardson explained that he completes the statement and the plan which goes to Simon Lowe in finance. PP is currently on a 3 year plan that will be evaluated at the end of this year and will be adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>Mr Stewardson was thanked for his attendance, and he left the meeting.</p> <p>Principal's report Mr Dickinson discussed the main points from his report.</p> <p>Health & Safety, staff & pupil well-being, Data Protection (breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests), complaints, claims (no's/overview) Staff training requirements for 23/24 have been planned with the association. No incidents to report that have required investigation. LTD is attending IOSH training in the Autumn term.</p> <p>All staff have been reminded about the salary extras and employee benefits available. Mr Dickinson presented this in briefing on 5th June.</p> <p>Staff have been assigned staff well-being as a UPS responsibility.</p> <p>Trip day – huge positive for both staff and student well-being.</p>	

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	<p>No GDPR concerns to report. There has been a SAR from ex-employee which is being completed by the Academy. The complaints log was circulated with meeting documents, there is nothing to report.</p> <p>Staffing update Mr Dickinson was happy to report that the Academy are fully staffed on teaching with TA's and SENCO the roles to be filled.</p> <p>Alternative Provision By offering alternative provision for students at the Diverse Academies HQ on Old Hall Drive, students were able to sit GCSE's this year and will hopefully attain qualifications that they would not have had. As a result of the successes and progress made in this area, Mr Dickinson said that he is looking to secure access to a room within the building enable the Academy to offer GCSEs for AC students utilising the staff and resources from ROA. One room has been secured and a position will be advertised for a HLTA to work with students at this location if ratified by SET.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if this will operate as one class of students. Mr Dickinson explained that the room secured is a significant size and can be segregated to support both KS3 and KS4 students. Students will be contained within the room which is a comfortable environment to allow them to work individually and in small groups. <u>The governors asked for clarity</u> with regards the age groups and Mr Dickinson explained that students will be from different age groups but will mostly consist of students from years 8,9 and 10.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson stated that he estimates that this approach will remove approximately £120k from the AP bill.</p> <p>Meetings are being held to look at the English curriculum and revamp it to have more impact. The implementation of this will be overseen by Pat Evans as trust adviser.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson wanted to extend his gratitude to Mr Spooner and to Beth Croggon, for the work that have done to ensure that students they have been working with are now highly likely to obtain GCSE grades this year. The governors wanted to know if students who have not attended can be removed from results figures and Mr Dickinson confirmed that they will not affect the results figures.</p> <p>There has been a positive move in attendance and persistent absentees have come down. Attendance team is not at full capacity. 6th form is an issue with regards attendance marks. Suspension rates have slowed following the reset on behaviour. There were 2 Permanent Exclusions this term. Both were upheld by panels.</p>	

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	<p>The behaviour mentor, Dermot Gascoyne has been secured for another year. Mr Hardeman has returned as a behaviour mentor but unfortunately has a knee injury and will not be in the academy for the remainder of the term. Social behaviour needs to be threaded through the curriculum.</p> <p>AIP update Mr Dickinson summarised points of interest from the AIP 6th form has not been as successful as the academy would like, many students at Y13 did not have sufficient base knowledge from GCSE due to Covid. The Head of 6th form has stepped down and another member of staff has taken this role forward, Ms Hobson will be taking the role on with a strong commitment to students. All students have had careers advice including those on AP.</p> <p>The Academy are looking at MIS, 2 members of staff (middle leaders) are going to Holgate to look at class charts as a possible MIS to implement.</p> <p>AIR update Mr Dickinson confirmed that he would share the AIR report with governors upon completion but listed the highlights: Atmosphere – positive Student behaviour – positive Work on written feedback is required Lack of SENCO noted English curriculum redevelopment needs to be fit for purpose. Reading hampered by lack of SENCO DEAR is still seen as a positive activity. Maths – progress being made with new head of maths with less reliance on white rose maths. Geography is an area to be developed – needs to move away from being PowerPoint and text focussed. AP – huge positive, well managed and led. Safeguarding – very positive.</p> <p><u>Mr Knight asked</u> if details could be shared with him in advance of his AIR meeting with the trust and Mr Dickinson confirmed that he will provide the information.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> for the attendance targets for next year. Mr Dickinson said the target is 90% and agreed to provide figures for circulation. <u>The governors questioned</u> if intervention for poor attendance is in place and Mr Dickinson confirmed that it is.</p> <p><u>The governors queried</u> the PAN for September and Mr Dickinson confirmed that the Academy are currently expecting 250 students but are prepared for and have obtained funding to receive 270. Changes have been made to the timings of the school day with the first breaks split into 2 x 20 minute groups and lunchtime returning to the same time for the whole academy and extended to 40 minutes. So far this appears to have been a positive change. There has been no change to the start and end of the day which remains 8:40 to 3:30</p>	

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AC/54/2223	<p>Governance Housekeeping Attendees agreed that Mr Knight should continue in the role of chair and Mr Cartwright, vice chair for the 2023/2024 academic year.</p> <p>Link roles Given the low number of governors in attendance, it was agreed that Link roles would be discussed and assigned in the Autumn term 23/24.</p> <p>Annual Summary Template on the effectiveness of governance 2022/23. The governance professional explained that results of the skills audit have yet to be scrutinised and that these, along with the result of the self-evaluation work done with Mr Knight and Mr Dickinson will be used to develop an action plan that will be shared in September.</p> <p>Meetings 23/24 A Teams meeting to review exam results was confirmed for Monday 11th September at 5:30pm. It was confirmed that meeting dates for 23/24 academic year would be sent via calendar invitation following this meeting.</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 team structure and support for students/parents - Impact of training on teaching, staffing and resources - Safeguarding processes and support 	
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"> - Feedback from Ms Truseler with regards SEND on the website needs to be considered and reviewed - The committee would like to give recognition to Mr Cooper for his commitment to developing a plan for SENCO - The committee would like to give recognition to Mr Spooner and his team in relation to the significant progress made in enable students on AP to achieve. - Can trustees consider if there can be any offset from the trust to cover the costs to the academies of enabling attendance at trust led training? 	
	<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"> - There were no confidential items discussed. - There had been no Equality Act implications. 	

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	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Date <u>11th September at 5:30pm</u> via TEAMS to review exam results AND Date <u>25th September at 5.30pm</u> at Retford Oaks Academy</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19:33pm</p>	
	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Signed..... (chair) Date...12/07/2023</p> <p>Print.....A KNIGHT.....</p>	