

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 8th July 2024 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	
Mr W Spooner	WS	Staff	
Miss N Ward	NW	Appointed	A
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	A
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed Parent	
Mr K Morgan	KM	Appointed	
Miss W Luke	WL	Appointed	A
Miss N Bridgeman	NBR	Appointed	A

In attendance	Initials	Position	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mr R Stewardson	RS	Designated Safeguarding Lead	A
Mrs N Benson	NBE	Governance Professional	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	6	<i>Governor's present</i>	6
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/66/2324	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Miss Bridgeman due to a prior engagement and Mrs Bryn-Jones recovering from a surgery and these were accepted by the committee. Mrs Widdup explained that Mr Stewardson would not be present, but he will be able to respond with answers to any specific Safeguarding questions via the governance professional.</p> <p>The governance professional will contact Miss Ward, Mrs Bennett and Miss Luke. [AP-NBE]</p>	NBE 15/07/24
AC/67/2324	<p>Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.</p>	
AC/68/2324	<p>Training</p> <p>The chair asked all governors to confirm that they had viewed the Safeguarding recording sent via email ahead of the meeting. Most governors present confirmed that they had. The chair asked governors if there were any questions following the training.</p>	

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	<p>The chair reiterated to governors from the training that it is within their roles and responsibilities to ask challenging questions and be assured that the appropriate procedures are in place.</p> <p><u>The governors</u> noted from the training that self-harm amongst students is a growing concern <u>and asked</u> if there is any sign of it being a growing issue at Retford Oaks. Mr Dickinson responded that staff are vigilant to self-harm, they do look for signs and support is available to students but that it doesn't appear to have increased. Mental health continues to be the biggest concern, online safety, sharing indecent images and, misogyny are key themes.</p> <p><u>The governors shared concerns</u> that a greater responsibility for the safeguarding of children appears to be under school jurisdiction and wondered 'where does school responsibility end and parental responsibility start?'. Mrs Widdup acknowledged that school responsibilities to safeguard children are growing and all staff understand this, however there is a concern around the capacity to do this. <u>The governors asked</u> how staff would deal with concerns around children coming into school smelling of cannabis. Mrs Widdup said that the school has a duty of care and would report concerns such as this to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p><u>The governors wanted assurances</u> that the academy has everything in place to ensure that its students attending Alternative Provision (AP) are appropriately safeguarded. Mr Dickinson confirmed that all relevant checks and procedures are in place. <u>Governors felt that</u> they might benefit from some more information about Prevent and radicalisation <u>and wondered</u> if Retford Oaks had seen any exposure to Prevent. Mr Dickinson confirmed that there has been some involvement with Prevent recently. <u>Governors then asked</u> if all relevant and appropriate records have been created. Mrs Widdup explained that all concerns/issues identified are documented under my concern. It was agreed that a training session on Prevent be built into the meeting timetable for 2024/2025. [AP-NBE]</p> <p><u>Governors acknowledged</u> that staff should be recognised, and it is important that they have all the necessary support. <u>Governors referred back</u> to discussion around Safeguarding at previous meetings <u>and asked</u> if concerns about staffing and support for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) were still an issue. Mrs Dickinson stated that currently there are no issues in this department and that contingency is in place adding that some staff are looking to gain experience from taking on voluntary roles in safeguarding which is a significant asset.</p>	<p>NBE 23/09/24</p>
AC/69/2324	<p>Actions / Feedback from link governor visits</p> <p>Mr Morgan completed his initial Pupil Premium visit, and his report has been shared. There were no questions.</p> <p>Mr Cartwright completed a visit last term for Safeguarding Mr Silcock has a Health & Safety meeting and link visit scheduled</p>	

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AC/70/2324	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 20th May 2024 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/71/2324	<p>Matters arising AC/54/2324 NBE to contact NW following the meeting. complete AC/59/2324 LD to check email from AS was received re H&S link visit. complete AC/60/2324 LD to investigate LA transport to ROA in relation to St Giles being referred to as a closer alternative school and used as a reason for refusal. Mr Dickinson explained that this concern has now been raised with Chris West (Academy Business Leader) who will be speaking with the Local Authority. Complete</p>	
AC/72/2324	<p>Principal's report - ERM Mr Dickinson referred to the ERM report circulated prior to the meeting and asked if there were any questions. No questions were raised.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson explained that looking towards next year;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A round of mock exams has been completed with year 10 which was introduced this year to better prepare students for exams and understand where they are currently. ➤ SEND is a significant focus for next year, ensuring that all staff are meeting the needs of the children. ➤ Outcomes in terms of academic outcomes, (results) and social outcomes (attendance, cultural, enrichment, careers creating the wholistic child) are also a key focus. <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the upcoming Year 11 were significantly impacted by Covid. Mr Dickinson said that these students were impacted in year 6 and year 7 in terms of being taught in bubbles. <u>The governors then wanted to understand</u> if there are any ongoing issues for these students because of that time and Mr Dickinson said that there are still some things to work on, in particular around social skills and resilience because they were so affected by the two lockdowns. Mrs Widdup added that in terms of data, there are no Key Stage 2 (KS2) measures which will make it very difficult to compare results and measure progress. This will also be the case for the following year group.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if big changes in education are expected now that there is a new government. Mrs Widdup said that, at the moment it is very unclear.</p> <p><u>Governors noted</u> that the mocks for year 10 appear to have been well received from parents <u>and asked</u> if there have been any significant concerns highlighted as a result. Mr Dickinson said that work is currently underway to establish the position, heads of department will be discussing individual results, identifying strengths and areas for improvement with greater depth analysis available for the start of September.</p>	

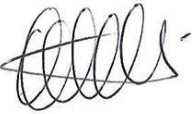
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	<p>Principals report</p> <p>Mr Dickinson asked if there were any questions regarding the supporting data provided. <u>Governors asked</u> if the number of data breaches reported as zero was realistic. Mr Dickinson explained that the figures reported are accurate and that there are currently no reported breaches.</p> <p>Admissions and current year group sizes.</p> <p>Transition week was last week and currently the academy is expecting to welcome 221 students into year 7 in September, this number could increase. <u>The governors asked</u> how this number fits with the extra spaces the Local Authority have asked the Academy to provide. Mr Dickinson confirmed that funding has been guaranteed for the extra students, but the academy will be running based on 8 form entry which creates greater value for money. <u>The governors then asked</u> what is expected in September 2025 in terms of numbers and Mr Dickinson confirmed that another large cohort is expected with another request from the local Authority to increase PAN. He added that the transition strategy has changed, as highlighted in the ERM report, and more children will be spending time at Retford Oaks as well as staff going into the primary schools to adopt an academy-based approach with the whole staff rather than one individual.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know</u> the expected figures for Post 16. Mr Dickinson said the number in year 12 is expected to be similar to the current year 12 which is approximately 50-60 students, this is likely to increase following exam results.</p> <p>The staff survey closed last Friday, results have not been received yet but this information will be reported when it is available.</p> <p>Time change to the school day</p> <p>The parental consultation around changing the timing of the school day to finish at 3:15 rather than 3:30 in the afternoon has been largely positive. The reason for this change has been to address workload, wellbeing and improve staff work/life balance and student study/life balance. This will increase CPD time for staff development which will in turn be beneficial to students. The proposal removes split breaks when half the school are on PDE whilst the other have a 20-minute break. This is a noisy period within school. The change will increase home learning time and enrichment opportunities for students outside of school. The proposal will bring tutor time back to the start of the day enabling form tutors to set the tone for the day. <u>The governors asked</u> why the split break had begun in the first place and Mr Dickinson explained that this is a hangover from covid. The academy will return to holding two 30 minutes breaks during the day.</p> <p>There is an impact as a result of the change to school transport. Buses provided by the local authority will amend times in line with the Academy however the Stagecoach buses are not able to alter their timetable. They will be on site within 15 minutes of the end of the school day and the academy will ensure that there will be a secure place for students to remain on site while waiting for their bus.</p>	

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	<p>The academy is exploring the possibility of additional serveries within the canteen which is with the Local Authority at the moment. Additional staff are in place and specific serving places are in place. Parents have shared concern that 30 minutes is not long enough for students to get served and eat their lunch, however a recent review has proven 39that it is a successful approach. Some students buy their lunch during the morning break and some at lunchtime. It has been identified that it takes time for the new year 7 cohort to adjust which can slow everything down so they will be brought in earlier than the rest of the academy initially to relieve pressure.</p> <p>Traffic was a concern raised by parents however the local road network and position of the pedestrian crossing is out of the control of the academy. The academy is working with St Giles to ensure traffic flow is managed safely and is exploring obtaining advice from an independent body. Parents and carers will also be reminded that the car park if for staff only.</p> <p>The final concern raised by parents was around what extracurricular activities will be available. In response, a timetable will be published, updated termly and shared on Weduc. The library will be available for students who want to do independent study after school. The proposal has gone to trustees.</p> <p>CPD update If the proposal to change the timetable is accepted, staff will gain an hour and 15 minutes per week to spend on CPD activity. Staff will be required to stay an hour on a Monday (when there are no other education related events such as parent evenings etc). There will be 15 department sessions put into the calendar for next year and 8 sessions of pastoral time on a ratio of 2:1 department time. This will support the Academy Improvement plan (AIP) for next year. <u>Governors asked</u> for the staff governor perspective and Mr Spooner said staff seemed to welcome the CPD opportunity and 8 sessions for year group leaders with pastoral leaders is greatly welcomed. <u>Governors then asked</u> if there will be any change at the timing of the start of the day. Mr Dickinson said the start time will remain the same but that Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time will be reduced slightly by five minutes, however as it is done at the end of tutor time and students will not be required to move around the building the impact will be minimal. This additional CPD time will also enable Senior leadership team (SLT) to coach individuals and make them feel more valued.</p> <p>Trips calendar There were no questions with regards the trips calendar and no decisions from governors required.</p> <p>Complaints Mr Dickinson confirmed that the complaint dated 18th October reported to governors in the document as open is resolved. The complaint dated 19th June has a meeting scheduled for this Thursday which should resolve the issue.</p>	

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	<p>The final open complaint is currently being dealt with by Mr Cooper and regular liaison is in place. Mr Dickinson is confident that this will be resolved. There were no questions.</p> <p>Trustees Report Feedback</p> <p>Retford Oaks welcomed 3 trustees on 6th June who met with students, senior leaders and had a walk around the academy. The things that struck them in a positive way were the strong commitment the school has and importance of integrating teams to achieve the best for the school. They commented that the school was neat and tidy, they were pleased by the specific subject areas and associated boards, reward areas celebrating success, great outdoor facilities, how mental health is being tackled, how both teaching and non-teaching staff are well trained to help with mental health support. They were impressed by the alternative curriculum provision at HQ and they noted that students were articulate and friendly and very well behaved. They were surprised by the on the ground practical approach to standards and outcomes for students reflected in the ‘pop-ins’ by SLT, peer group work and feedback sessions. They were talked through the CPD offer and the plan to introduce more coaching. They were positive about the Quality Assurance and Quality of Education data coming into year 10 and agreed that the summer exam series enables planning interventions earlier to yield better outcomes.</p> <p>The NHS foundation school status was discussed, there is an event on Thursday afternoon at the Well in Retford. The trustees were complimentary about the variety of trips and opportunities for students and the Academy’s community focus and involvement in remembrance and young citizens activities etc. Trustees were surprised by the number of young carers within the academy and Mr Dickinson added that work is ongoing to identify young carers as he and staff members feel that registered numbers are lower than they are in reality. <i>The governors queried</i> whether the academy receives additional funding for young carers. Mr Dickinson explained that there isn’t additional funding for young carers although some may also be in receipt of pupil premium funding. Young carers can register with the Young Carers Alliance who offer support and rewards for individuals but there is no additional funding for the school. Andy Tomkins (former member of staff) does a lot of work in this area.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson went on to describe areas Trustees identified for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reporting of absences data for both planned and unplanned absences to be considered at committee meetings. ➤ Chair or another governor to join the next visit <p>Final reflections were positive in that they found the school to be open about its projects and challenges with a pragmatic approach to providing the best for its pupils. All staff were passionate about what they were driving towards, some concerns were raised about the reduced ability of pupils due to covid and how they should be addressed. This relates to the younger pupils in primary schools now, the primaries are working towards catching them up, however these pupils will be coming into the academy in 5 or so</p>	

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	<p>years' time. Trustees suggested that more links with careers in the health sector could be offered in terms of trips, visits, experiences etc. Concerns about the budget implications of mental health support and support for staff with extra responsibilities. More staff training is being delivered in this area but more funds would be welcome.</p> <p>Dave Cotton and Neil Holmes have also visited over the last few weeks, and they have been pleased with what they have seen within the academy.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> how many new members of staff will join the academy in September. Mr Dickinson said that the number is quite low this year as two trainees from this year have been given contracts going forwards, Mr Dickinson said he thought the number was around 6. <u>The governors then asked</u> how many were leaving and what types of role they are leaving for. Mr Dickinson said that one member of staff has left to become a full-time foster carer, two are leaving the profession and moving into different work areas of social sciences, one is retiring, and another has gone to work in the private sector. <u>The governors wondered</u> how many applicants are generally received per advertised post. Mr Dickinson explained that it depends upon the subject but on average between 6 and 10 applicants per post. <u>The governors questioned</u> how CV's are reviewed, agency or in-house and Mrs Widdup confirmed that they are reviewed in house.</p> <p><u>The governors stated and asked</u> that they had not seen a risk register for this meeting if there had been any changes to the risk register. Mr Dickinson confirmed that the risk around pupil numbers for years 7 and 12 are on the register but these were discussed in depth at the last meeting.</p> <p><u>The governors then wanted to know</u> how improvement in Maths is developing as this had been a risk previously. Mr Dickinson said that the picture is improving but the longer-term impact will be seen in the coming years. Maths papers were more favourable this year so the faculty are hoping to see better results in August.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> how many supply teachers are currently being provided by supply agencies. Mr Dickinson said there is only currently one supply teacher but that she will be starting as a member of staff in September. He went on to explain that the cover costs were extremely high a few years ago and so the supply budget has been used to employ four cover teachers onto staff which has been a lot more successful. Mr Spooner added that the cover team are working extremely well as a team supporting one another. This has yielded some successful results for staff opportunities for these members of staff to develop. Mr Dickinson added that staff turnover is low and former students are returning to the academy as staff which is very encouraging.</p>	
AC/73/2324	<p>Governance Housekeeping It was agreed that Mr Morgan will pick up the role of Creative Arts link governor and will liaise with Kirsty Simpson. [AP-NBE]</p>	<p>NBE 15/07/24</p>

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	<p>Results from skills audit NBE will share the results along with the minutes of the meeting but added that the results reflected the work that she and Mr Knight had done around the self-evaluation for 23/24. [AP-NBE]</p> <p>Draft action plan The action plan with suggested actions was shared with all governors prior to the meeting. Governors were informed that there are links within the action plan to training resources and to ensure that they inform the governance professional if the complete any of the voluntary training modules so that the plan can be updated. There were no questions or comments from governors.</p> <p>Appoint chair and vice chair Mr Knight was re-appointed Chair for the forthcoming academic year. Mr Cartwright was re-appointed vice-chair for the forthcoming academic year. Succession planning was briefly discussed and those governors coming to the end of their terms of office will be contacted individually by the governance professional prior to the next meeting. [AP-NBE]</p> <p>Annual report to trustees The annual report to trustees was completed</p> <p><i>Governors asked</i> if the academy produces a newsletter and wondered if there should be a section for governors to contribute to. Mr Dickinson confirmed that his end of summer newsletter will be completed in the coming weeks and it was agreed that the chair will provide a message to be included. [AP-AK]</p>	<p>NBE 25/07/24</p> <p>NBE 23/09/24</p> <p>AK 19/07/24</p>
AC/74/2324	<p>How have governors held the school leaders to account? It was agreed that the governors held the school leaders to account with discussion and robust challenges on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Question following safeguarding training ➤ Data breaches ➤ Admissions numbers ➤ Staff turnover and recruitment 	
AC/75/2324	<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/76/2324	<p>Complete report to trustees The report to trustees was discussed and completed and covered the following positive points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low staff turnover and past students returning as teachers demonstrates a strong sense of belonging ➤ Mr Knight re-appointed as chair for 24/25 ➤ Mr Cartwright re-appointed as vice chair for 24/25 ➤ New link governor role in Creative Arts established – Mr Morgan ➤ Trust feedback has been positive 	

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AC/77/2324	<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. 	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Date 23rd September <u>at 5.30pm</u> at Retford Oaks Academy</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:42pm</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Signed... (chair) Date.. 22/07/2024</p> <p>Print.....A Knight</p>	