

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting
held on Monday 20th January 2025 at 5:30pm at the Academy.**

Governor name	Initials	Governor category	A = absence
Mr A Knight Chair of Governors	AK	Appointed	A
Mr D Cartwright Vice Chair of Governors	DC	Appointed	
Mrs P Bryn-Jones	PBJ	Appointed	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	
Mrs J Bennett	JB	Appointed	A
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed	
Mr K Morgan	KM	Appointed	A
Miss N Bridgeman	NBR	Appointed	A
2 x parent governor vacancies			
1 x staff governor vacancy			

In attendance	Initials	Position	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mr R Stewardson	RS	Assistant Principal - DSL	
Mrs N Benson	NBE	Governance Professional (GP)	
Mrs L Clough-Watson	LCW	Teacher - Observing	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Governor's present</i>	<i>4</i>
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AC/23/2425	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mr Morgan, Miss Bridgeman and Mr Knight. These were accepted by the committee. The GP will contact Mrs Bennett following the meeting. [ACTION]</p> <p>In Mr Knight's absence, Mr Cartwright agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed everyone, introducing Mrs Clough-Watson who was in attendance to observe the meeting with a view to applying to become staff governor.</p>	NB 27/01/25
AC/24/2425	<p>Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made. 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/25/2425	<p>Local Academy Committee membership The governance professional told the academy committee members that Miss Luke has resigned from the committee. Miss Luke has a new teaching job which requires her to work late on Monday evenings and she can therefore no longer perform the role.</p>	

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	The GP confirmed that a new parent election process would begin on Monday 27 th January with a view to appointing 1 or 2 elected parents at the next meeting on 17 th March 2025.	
AC/26/2425	<p>Local Training - Prevent</p> <p>Mr Stewardson delivered a presentation on the Prevent Duty. Prevent was introduced by the labour government after the 7/7 bombings in 2005 and is part of the counter terrorism strategy. It attempts to tackle radicalisation as early as possible, and guidance is intended for use by the SLT and DSL teams. Police and social services are also involved. Mr Stewardson told the committee that it is important to understand that extremism and radicalisation are as much a safeguarding concern as all the other things people consider that schools should be aware of and referred to www.educateagainsthate.com as a useful resource to gain a greater understanding.</p> <p>Mr Stewardson went on to describe how the Prevent strategy works in schools. All new staff undergo prevent training as part of their onboarding via the National College and a refresher is delivered to all staff in September every year which is delivered by the DSL, Mr Stewardson.</p> <p>Staff understand that they must report any concerns relating to Prevent on the 'My Concern' system. Providing context Mr Stewardson said that there have been 13 'my concern's which have touched on elements of extremism or radicalisation since he took post in 2021. Once investigated they don't all necessarily have to be escalated to prevent other strategies can be applied as part of behaviour policy. If a concern needs to be escalated, a form will be sent to the Nottinghamshire Counter Terrorism Officer who will take it to the 'channel panel' who meet monthly. The channel panel includes representatives from the police, social services, health and education. Usually what will happen is that counter terrorism officers will visit the student and family, they will do some background checks on online searches etc. and they may confiscate devices if they are particularly concerned.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u>, once a form is submitted, what are the responsibilities on the school. Mr Stewardson explained that should any further incidents come up, they would be reported on another form but once a liaison is in place for a specific student additional concern can be raised with them directly.</p> <p>Mr Stewardson shared 3 confidential case studies with the committee and talked through how these issues were dealt with in school, what intervention was delivered and the subsequent outcomes that the school is aware of.</p> <p><u>Governors questioned</u> what the obligation is on the academy once a student has left, and Mr Stewardson confirmed that there is no obligation on school to follow up on prevent cases raised after a student has left but they do pass on relevant information.</p>	

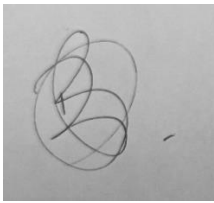
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	<p>Mr Stewardson explained that there appears to be commonality in right wing cases that have recently been experienced where TikTok propaganda has been a significant influencing factor.</p> <p><u>Governors asked for clarification</u> that that concerns identified by teachers are initially raised with the DSL and then followed through the process. <u>Governors then asked</u> if Prevent is mandatory. Mr Stewardson explained that it is mandatory for schools to be trained in prevent but it is possible for students that are identified to opt out of the process, but he confirmed that once identified they will remain on the radar.</p> <p>Mr Stewardson told the committee that feedback received on the prevent referrals that have been made from Retford Oaks Academy has been that those made have been valid.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson asked if there were any further safeguarding questions from governors.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the increase in misogyny amongst school aged boys recently reported in the news has been seen within the academy. Mrs Clough-Watson told the committee that the school has been looking at this with students in year 10 and sixth form in small working groups, talking about different areas of respect, control and sexism and misogyny. Some staff have raised issues of misogyny but there seems to be a misunderstanding of what is defined by misogyny and sexism. A plan is being put together to address this and train staff to identify sexism and misogyny and report it effectively. During assemblies there will be some year group work to get the messages across. Mrs Clough-Watson went on to say that the work with small groups has been effective and will continue and added that social media influence is significant, and many students are susceptible. <u>The governors then wanted to know</u> if it feels like the work being done is getting through to the students. Mrs Clough-Watson said it is slow progress, but it does appear that the work is getting through to them. Mr Stewardson said that the channel panel offered ROA the opportunity to be involved in a home office project with 2 speakers from different backgrounds who came into school and spoke to year 9 and 10 students some of whom had displayed misogynistic tendencies and since then, even though it appeared that they were not taking any notice at the time, events reduced since. <u>Governors asked</u> if there is any support given to enable staff to identify misogyny. Mr Stewardson explained that unfortunately students' knowledge is often greater than that of staff as they are more in touch with the latest language trends and terminology that they see and hear on social media.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson said that Mrs Clough-Watson will review issues and concerns raised to help identify trends and aim to nip them in the bud as quickly as possible.</p>	

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	There were no more questions and governors thanked Mr Stewardson for his attendance at the meeting.	
AC/27/2425	<p>Governance report The Governance Professional reminded Mr Purle to complete the outstanding declarations of interest form. [ACTION]</p> <p>All governors were reminded to complete any outstanding mandatory training as soon as possible, details of all outstanding training is contained within the GP Report. [ACTION]</p> <p>The Governance professional told the committee that attendance at recent trust led link governor training sessions has been very low and reminded all governors that they are expected to attend sessions relevant to their Link role when invited and if they watch the recordings following the meeting, to let NBE know so that the training log can be updated. Governors said they don't always transfer dates of sessions to their everyday calendar so sessions can sometimes be missed but agreed to ensure any sessions reviewed later be confirmed with NBE.</p> <p>Governor action plan update Given low attendance, the action plan was not discussed in the meeting.</p> <p>Governor Link visits reports NB to check share H&S report with governors and check dates for H&S meeting to confirm them with AS [ACTION]</p> <p>Mr Cartwright confirmed that he had met with Mr Dickinson and Mr Stewardson before Christmas and will follow up in the next couple weeks.</p> <p>The governance professional told the committee that the committee now has 2 vacancies following the recent resignation of 3 governors. Currently the committee has no elected parent governors and therefore a parent governor election needs to be scheduled. The Committee can elect two parent governors as part of this process. Nominations will run from 27th January to 10th February and if there are more than 2 applicants, an election will be held. Successful candidates to be appointed at the LAC on 17th March</p> <p>Upcoming Training and Academy Events Mrs Clough-Watson asked if any governors would like to attend upcoming open evenings. The Year 7 progress evening at Retford Oaks is scheduled for 13th Feb 3:45-6:45 and Mrs Clough-Watson invited governors to attend providing a good opportunity for them to meet and greet parents and carers end gather feedback. Mr Cartwright confirmed that he will attend this event. [ACTION]</p>	<p>JP 10/02/25</p> <p>Govs 10/02/25</p> <p>NBE 10/02/25</p> <p>DC 10/02/25</p>

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	<p>Year 9 Options evening is on 20th March 3:45-6:45 and provides a good opportunity to see what's being offered to students.</p> <p>Policies Approved by Trustees The governance professional referred to amendments to policies that have been shared with governors for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premises Management • Health and Safety Policy • Provider access policy • RSE policy 	
AC/28/2425	<p>Governance Strategy Governance Strategy and Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference 2024/25 – review AC remits</p> <p>There were no comments or questions from governors with regards the changes to this document.</p>	
AC/29/2425	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 18th November 2024 The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the vice chair.</p>	
AC/30/2425	<p>Matters arising AC/12/2425 NBE to contact JP, PBJ and WL re non-attendance complete AC/15/2425 AS to share H&S link visit report with the committee complete AC/15/2425 DC to complete a Safeguarding Link visit this half term and share his report carried forward AC/15/2425 ALL GOVS to complete cyber security training and any other outstanding mandatory training (see individual emails / GP report) carried forward AC/15/2425 ALL GOVS to review the draft scheme of delegation complete AC/15/2425 NBE to send a reminder with the minutes regarding the admissions policy consultation complete AC/17/2425 ALL GOVS to complete the Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 [see GP report for outstanding DoI's]. complete AC/17/2425 ALL GOVS to read and sign the Code of Conduct for 2024-2025 [see GP report for outstanding CoC's]. complete AC/17/2425 Carried Forward AK to produce a newsletter for November concentrating on the role of governors. expired</p>	<p>DC 17/03/25</p> <p>GOVS 17/03/25</p>
AC/31/2425	<p>Principals Report Mr Dickinson explained that since the ERM report was produced there is more up to date data which demonstrates some positive progress. Percentages appear to be better, and the numbers are higher.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson asked if there were any questions regarding the matrix at the top of the report.</p>	

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	<p><u>The governors asked</u> if the trend in improved attendance continues above the national average. Mr Dickinson explained that recent attendance has been impacted by snow days when the school remained open.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson went on to tell the committee that suspensions are slightly higher than they were this time last year, but this is reflective of the attempts to ensure students remain with the academy. <u>The governors wanted to know</u> if the national trend is the same and Mr Dickinson confirmed that the national trend shows that suspensions and permanent exclusions are increasing whilst at Retford Oaks they are reducing. The Alternative Curriculum at Retford Education Centre continues to develop to better support these students.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson told the committee that attendance in year 11 shows a significant improvement on last year and <u>governors were interested to know</u> if the change could be attributed to difference experiences as the children affected by covid move through the system. Mr Dickinson said that the number of mental health cases is fewer this year 11 but added that the children coming through now appear to have been impacted socially and as we move lower down the school there appears to be less of an impact. The next significant wave to be mindful of may be those children currently in primary schools that didn't get early childcare.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know</u> if there are significant numbers of children leaving primary schools unable to read after hearing something anecdotally at a recent event at the library. Mr Dickinson explained that DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) is still a significant part of the timetable. This used to be a focus on reading for pleasure, but this has now changed to be better suited to the appropriate level enabling reading interventions for those students that are not able to read.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson shared with the committee that the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) is currently being finalised, and this will be shared at the next meeting for a more detailed review.</p> <p>SEND Mrs Widdup told the committee that Claire Gould (CG) is temporarily assisting with duties related to SEND as Suzy Whittaker (SW) is not currently in the academy. She is being supported by the Trust Lead for SEND.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there is an 'out of office' message on SW's email so that parents are aware that she isn't here. Mr Dickinson confirmed that there is and added that CG stared as interim SENDCO last Tuesday and is being supported by Sally Truseler and Karina Austerberry as deputy is still involved.</p> <p>Risks Mr Dickinson told the committee that the risk around the viability of Post 16 remains on the register, explaining that the academy expects a viable</p>	

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	<p>number of around 40- 50 students at post 16 in September. <u>The governors wondered</u> if there should be more risks identified on the register and said that there used to be more risks on the register. Mrs Widdup explained that if there is something that the team are aware of they will be logged as an issue as they are being addressed, whereas the risks are things that have not yet happened.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if the Post 16 curriculum will be subject to change again in order to meet requirements. Mrs Widdup told the committee that this time curriculum has been set early to enable students to opt into the curriculum rather than trying to make the curriculum fit requirements of the students.</p> <p>Data protection etc. All SARs have been dealt with All Police requests being addressed The Complaints that are ongoing can't be discussed in detail but are being addressed at the relevant stages of the policy.</p> <p>Migration Mr Dickinson discussed the migration numbers shared within his report and explained that movements between academies in year 7 is quite typical. Year 8 movements were a concern early in the year, some of it was because students have been on waiting lists for academies closer to their home and places have become available, also this year group appears to have displayed a preference for home education which has been an unusual trend.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if a student starts with the academy and then chooses to leave, do they take their funding with them. Mrs Widdup said that if they move after census the funding is allocated to the school where the child was when the census was taken.</p>	
AC/33/2425	<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"> ➤ Discussion and challenge on Safeguarding in particular around Prevent and misogyny and sexism in school ➤ Questions on risks and viability of Post 16 ➤ Challenge on attendance figures and suspensions and exclusions data 	
AC/34/2425	<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/35/2425	<p>Complete report to trustees The report to trustees was discussed and completed within the meeting.</p>	

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AC/36/2425	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: Date 17 th March 2025 at <u>5.30pm</u> at Retford Oaks Academy The meeting closed at 18:40pm	
	 Signed... (Chair) Date 29/01/2025 Print.....David Cartwright.....	