

**Minutes of the Retford Oaks Academy Committee meeting  
held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 5:30pm at the Academy.**

<b>Governor name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Governor category</b>	<b>A = absence</b>
Mr A Knight <b>Chair of Governors</b>	AK	Appointed	
Mr D Cartwright <b>Vice Chair of Governors</b>	DC	Appointed	
Mrs P Bryn-Jones	PBJ	Appointed	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	A
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed	
Mr K Morgan	KM	Appointed	A
Dr Ann Harris	AH	Elected Parent	
Mrs Sarah Miles	SM	Elected Parent	
Mrs L Clough-Watson	LCW	Staff Governor	

<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Position</b>	
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional (GP)	

<i>Quorum numbers</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Governor's present</i>	<i>7</i>
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<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/when</b>
<b>AC/37/2425</b>	<p><b>Welcome</b> The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of the newly elected parent governors.</p> <p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Mr Morgan. These were accepted by the committee. Apologies had not been received Mr Silcock and the Governance Professional will contact him following the meeting. <b>[Action]</b></p>	<b>NB 25/03/25</b>
<b>AC/38/2425</b>	<p><b>Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made.</b> 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>	
<b>AC/39/2425</b>	<p><b>Local Academy Committee membership</b> The governance professional (GP) told the academy committee members that Mrs Bridgeman and Mrs Bennett have resigned from the committee. Both have experienced changes in their work schedules making it difficult for them to fulfil their role.</p> <p><b>Parent Election</b></p>	

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	<p>The GP welcomed the successful candidates, Mrs Miles and Dr Harris and confirmed they have been elected by parents with effect from 13/03/25 for a 4-year term of office. The GP will be in touch following the meeting to progress with their induction.</p> <p><b>Reappointment of Mr Knight</b> Mr Knight was unanimously re-appointed for a four-year term of office as governor with effect from 17/03/25 to 16/03/29. Mr Knight will step down from his role as chair of governors at the end of this academic year.</p> <p><b>Staff Governor</b> Mrs Clough Watson was unanimously appointed as staff governor with effect from 17/03/25 to 16/03/29 following her observation at the last meeting and expression on interest.</p> <p>The committee discussed an application to become governor from a past school student and agreed to progress the application with a meeting with Mr Dickinson and Mr Knight to be scheduled by the GP. <b>[Action]</b></p>	<b>NB 25/03/25</b>
<b>AC/40/2425</b>	<p><b>Local Training</b> <b>Suspensions and exclusions training event / recording</b> The GP explained that the recent training session on suspensions and exclusions is available for governors to review via the link in the agenda and via the governance portal, adding that governors are often asked to support with panels at other academies within the trust and for any governors that have not done this before and might be interested, this will provide valuable background.</p> <p>The GP asked if governors had reviewed the DfE guidance on reviewing the attendance summary. The guidance is available via the link in the agenda and via the governance portal along with a copy of the Spring 1 attendance report for Retford Oaks Academy. <a href="#">Guidance - 4 minute read</a> <a href="#">ROA Spring 1 Attendance</a></p> <p>The GP informed governors that the Governance Conference has been scheduled for <b>12<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b> at HQ (Retford Education Centre), the <a href="#">agenda</a> has been shared and governors were encouraged to attend.</p>	
<b>AC/41/2425</b>	<p><b>Governance report</b> 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. <b>[ACTION]</b></p> <p><b>Governor action plan update</b> The GP informed governors that the action plan had been updated and can be accessed via the GP report or via the governance portal.</p> <p><b>Governor Link visits reports</b></p>	<b>Govs 31/03/25</b>

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	<p>Mr Knight confirmed that he had visited the ROAC and completed a SEND link visit with Mr Cooper will write up his reports. <b>[Action]</b></p> <p>Mr Knight provided verbal feedback to the committee on the visit to ROAC and was complimentary about the work going on, he was impressed with the way in which all students were clearly mapped out each had their own individual plan.</p> <p>Mr Cartwright has completed a Safeguarding link visit and will write up his report. <b>[Action]</b></p> <p>Mrs Bryn-Jones has completed an Attendance Link visit and her report is available via the portal <a href="#">Link Visit Reports 2024-25</a></p> <p><b>Upcoming Training and Academy Events</b></p> <p>The GP has included the calendar of events at the academy within the GP report.</p>	<p><b>AK</b> <b>31/03/25</b></p> <p><b>DC</b> <b>31/03/25</b></p>
<b>AC/42/2425</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the vice chair.</p> <p>The vice chair went through the minutes and they were agreed by everyone at the meeting.</p>	
<b>AC/43/2425</b>	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p><b>AC/23/2425</b> NB to contact Mrs Bennett regarding attendance. <b>complete</b></p> <p><b>AC/27/2425</b> JP to complete declaration of interest. <b>complete</b></p> <p><b>AC/27/2425</b> All governors to complete any outstanding mandatory training. <b>Carried forward</b></p> <p><b>AC/27/2425</b> NB to share H&amp;S report with governors and check dates for H&amp;S meeting to confirm them with AS <b>complete</b></p> <p><b>AC/27/2425</b> DC to attend The Year 7 progress evening on 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 3:45-6:45. <b>complete</b></p> <p>Mr Cartwright told the committee that he had attended the Year 7 progress evening and was able to speak with a lot of parents, most had good feedback. There were a couple of safeguarding issues raised and as he was meeting with Mr Stewardson (DSL) the following day they were passed onto him, and he was already aware of them.</p> <p><b>AC/30/2425</b> DC to complete safeguarding link visit <b>complete</b></p>	<p><b>Govs</b> <b>31/03/2025</b></p>
<b>AC/44/2425</b>	<p><b>Principals Report</b></p> <p>Mr Dickinson displayed the AIR (Academy Improvement Review) on the screen and asked if there were any specific questions in relation to the report that has been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b><u>The governors expressed concern</u></b> about SEND resource <b><u>and asked</u></b> what level of resource was being put into SEND and what the staffing input will be moving forwards. Mr Dickinson said that currently the academy has an interim SENDCO and will be interviewing tomorrow for a permanent SENDCO. Mrs Widdup added that everything has been mapped to ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled, and it has been confirmed that there are no statutory duties out of date.</p>	

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	<p>Mrs Clough-Watson said that from May, coffee mornings will be scheduled to enable parents to meet the SEND team, discuss needs and find out what support is available and once the new SENDCO is appointed, they will continue to run those sessions.</p> <p><b><u>The governors wanted to know</u></b> if there is sufficient TA support within SEND support as they had been informed of some sickness and issues with resources. Mrs Widdup explained that there is one member of staff on long term sick, and this is being managed by HR and that a full time SENDCO needs to be in place before a decision can be made as to what is required in terms of support and resources. <b><u>The governors then questioned</u></b> whether supply had been brought in to cover the sick leave, Mrs Widdup explained that TA positions aren't covered by supply.</p> <p><b><u>The governors noted</u></b> from the documentation that the number of students identified with SEND and requiring support is approximately one fifth of the student population <b><u>and asked</u></b> if resource reflects the needs of the community adding that currently the SENDCO is part time as she is still teaching some lessons. Mrs Widdup explained that it is expected that the SENDCO still teaches and added that the interim SENDCO had been given the opportunity to reduce her teaching allocation to allow her to perform the SENDCO role but that she wanted to continue teaching to see her exam classes through. She is aware that this is fine while she's doing an interim role, but should she be appointed after interview tomorrow, she may need to come down to zero teaching to recover the SENDCO role. Mrs Widdup went on to say that the deputy SENDCO has significant time out of her timetable to support and that Sally Truseler (SEND Trust Lead) has also been supporting.</p> <p><b><u>The governors wanted to understand</u></b> how the number of SEND support staff is aligned with the number of SEND students. Mrs Widdup explained that students are assessed as individuals and then the level of support they require is based on their individual need rather than a ration on total numbers of students with SEND. She went on to tell the committee that the number of students currently on the register may not be accurately classified and explained the classification of students on the SEND register. A significant number of students with a 'K' classification had been previously categorised as 'I' and may not need the levels of support implied by their current classification. All 'K' students should have a diagnosed need or be on the path to having a diagnosed need. Students coded as 'I' would have SEND strategies applied to support them in the classroom but should not require the level of support expected for those classified 'K'. Mr Dickinson added that the recent staff training day was delivered around those students and using strategies effectively.</p> <p><b><u>The governors queried</u></b> a recent change in senior management over SEND and Mr Dickinson confirmed that Richard Stewardson is now responsible for SEND. <b><u>The governors wondered</u></b> if adding responsibility for SEND to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) would be a stretch in terms of</p>	

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	<p>capacity. [This question was responded to confidentially and has been recorded separately].</p> <p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> what succession planning had been done around SEND. Mr Dickinson said that Karina will be qualified in December as the deputy SENDCO.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson asked if there were any more questions from governors about the content of the AIR. Mr Dickinson said that he has now taken over line management of the staff in the geography department and he is already seeing gains in this area and Mrs Widdup has line managed the English department this year. One <u><i>governor commented</i></u> they had seen an improvement in English from their child's perspective and another added that the work with geography has been noticed with the year 7 development.</p> <p>Mrs Miles asked if there is anything that she can do to be of help to the academy adding that she has qualifications in SEND and would be more than happy to support. Mrs Widdup suggested that Mrs Miles meet with Mr Dickinson to discuss how she can help. <b>[Action]</b> SM will schedule a meeting with LD to see where she can support.</p> <p>Mrs Clough-Watson said that she would welcome support from governors in the planning of the SEND coffee mornings. Mrs Widdup made it clear that any parents coming into the academy to support would be required to have a DBS certificate.</p> <p>Given the nature of the discussion about the AIR focussed on SEND it was agreed that the SEND Rapid Recovery Plan be discussed next.</p> <p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> if there will be any quality assurance of the GDA forms already submitted or will it be a case of waiting for the hospital to respond. Mrs Widdup said that the interim SENDCO has developed a process to follow them all the way through and explained that GDA needs work both from the school and from medical practitioners to action. She told the committee that there are misconceptions about the process which requires 3 cycles of plan, do, review in order to submit the application and then there's a waiting list with the hospital. Mrs Bryn-Jones said that the waiting list is currently around 18months, she added that previously information on individuals and where they were along the process was not available to staff but that now the system is much better managed. Mrs Bryn-Jones further explained that the academy first completes their part of the GDA, then parents complete their part before it is submitted, the hospital will then respond and at that point they join the waiting list. <b><u>Governors asked</u></b> if the parents were kept informed throughout the process. Mrs Bryn-Jones explained that academy should let parents know when the GDA forms have gone to the hospital but after they are with the hospital the academy has limited knowledge of progress being made. <b><u>The governors acknowledged</u></b> that communications are vitally important to avoid misunderstandings.</p>	<p><b>SM / LD</b> <b>19/05/2025</b></p>

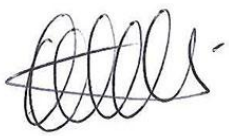
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	<p><b><u>The governors asked</u></b> if they could be included in the mailing list for the SEND newsletters. Mr Dickinson shared a copy of the staff newsletter that is sent to all staff on screen and all governors agreed that it was a positive way for the SENDCO to communicate with staff. Mrs Clough-Watson added that it acts as a good reminder to staff. <b><u>Governors asked</u></b> if there was a similar newsletter aimed at parents and Mr Dickinson explained that the parent newsletter isn't up and running yet but once the appointment of a permanent SENDCO is made this will be delivered. The governance professional will liaise with the academy to arrange the best way to share the newsletters with governors. <b>[Action]</b></p> <p><b><u>The governors wondered</u></b> if the rapid recovery plan was achievable, and Mrs Widdup said that significant progress had already been made, and Mr Dickinson added that a significant amount of funding has been secured which will help deliver the plan.</p> <p><b>Attendance</b> Mr Dickinson displayed the Attendance Summary report and explained that there was a significant dip towards the end of January demonstrated on the graph when the academy was hit by a particularly bad period of illness but the general trends within the report indicate that that work that has gone in to improving attendance is working. Particularly, persistent absence at 24% is an improvement.</p> <p><b>Academy Improvement Plan (AIP)</b> <b><u>Governors noted</u></b> that there are 9 areas to improve and currently we are only hitting one area. Mr Dickinson said that the SEND gap has come down but not yet moved below the 5% that the academy wants to see, the academy also wants to see suspensions reducing. <b><u>Governors commented</u></b> that numbers might be significantly impacted when the SEND categories get corrected. Governors questioned whether the targets to reduce suspensions were ambitious. Mr Dickinson said they should be ambitious, and significant work goes into preventing suspensions wherever possible but as an example a student on a managed move or directed move that causes disruption in their host school needs to be sanctioned by their home school and this can impact on figures.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson told the committee that attendance of students at ROAC impacts on the attendance data, looking at A8 of students, some are taking functional skills rather than GCSEs and they will impact on the figures for A8 which brings the average down. Governors recognised that a lot of hard work has gone into it the ROAC and asked if improvements are being seen in results. Mr Dickinson said that staff at ROAC are working hard with students on coursework and making sure coursework is completed and plans are in place for teachers to follow up on this to ensure the best outcomes for these students. He added that not all students at Alternative Provision have improved in attendance, and this skews the overall figures but that Persistent Absence is low compared to previous years. There have been no permanent exclusions this year.</p>	<p><b>NB</b> <b>31/03/2025</b></p>

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	<p>Mr Dickinson explained that the target to ensure there is enrichment during every break and lunch times is not quite there and just requires the final bits of the jigsaw.</p> <p><b>Trips</b>  <u>Governors commended</u> the academy on number and variety of trips that have been delivered and planned. Mr Dickinson told the committee that an additional Cat C trip had been scheduled, a Geography field trip to the coast and asked if governors were happy to approve the trip. Governors confirmed that they were happy for the trip to go ahead.</p> <p><b>Pupil Number Projections</b>  Mr Dickinson told the committee that following national offer day, Retford Oaks are currently expecting 212 students into year 7 in September. These numbers are very positive and show a significant improvement from the feeder primaries compared to last year which demonstrates that the outreach work that academy has done with primaries is having an impact. Considering that this year's cohort is 15% smaller, numbers are looking good. <u>Governors asked</u> what the PAN will be, and Mr Dickinson confirmed that the PAN remains 240 and added that although the local authority had approached the school to ask them to take additional students for 3 consecutive years, in the end they were only asked to take more once, the current year 8. <u>Governors asked</u> whether the sixth form numbers were improving, and Mr Dickinson said the numbers are moving in the right direction, staff are working on how to encourage the current year 11 who haven't chosen Retford Oaks stay but equally will be supporting those students that don't expect to get the grades they need to stay to ensure they are on the right path. He added that a team have been into school earlier today making a promotional video for the sixth form. <u>Governors commented</u> that the Tuxford Academy sixth form appears to be glossier than the Retford Oaks one and Mrs Dickinson shared that the academy are looking at making a better space for the common room etc. <u>Governors questioned</u> if there was still a significant intake of students from Worksop. Mr Dickinson told the committee that there are still students from Worksop, some that don't get into the Outwood schools and a few that would prefer not to go to the Outwood schools.</p> <p><b>Data Protection</b>  Mr Dickinson told the committee that there has been one Freedom of Information (FOI) request around PSHCE and RE which was trust wide.</p> <p><b>Exclusions and suspensions data</b>  Mr Dickinson displayed the data on screen and explained to the committee that the data shows a significant difference to 2-3 years ago. There hasn't been a discipline panel at the academy for a while because intervention happens early, and the work being done through ROAC has significantly improved this. <u>Governors noted</u> that there appeared to be an uplift in numbers of sanctions issued in the second half term of the Autumn term. Mrs Widdup explained that as we approach the Christmas break and</p>	



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	<p>students become more tired, negative behaviours often increase at this time of year.</p> <p>Mr Dickinson described the difference between a managed move and a directed move explaining that good relationships with other local schools are important for this to be a success. A managed move is used as an opportunity for a student to have a fresh start in a new school and will be arranged in agreement with the student and their parents, if the managed move is a success the student may be able to transfer permanently. A directed move is usually for a shorter period and can be enforced by the academy, however the academy will always try and work with families and if the direction is initiated then the academy will pay for transport to the host school. Mr Dickinson went on to have that the most managed moves have been arranged for year 9 students and added that some directed moves have been included in the figures. <u>The governors acknowledged</u> that good links are being built with other academies and acknowledged that Retford Oaks are picking up students from other schools on directed and managed moves. Mr Dickinson went on to tell the committee that reliance on external alternative provision has significantly reduced adding that much of the AP need for key stage 4 is around mental health as well as behaviour. <u>Governors wanted to understand</u> at what stage a management move would be implemented <u>and asked</u> if there would normally be punishments in school before a managed move was considered. Mr Dickinson said that each case is different, and it depends on the individual and what the incident or issues might be.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b> Mr Dickinson told the committee that he has shared the details of training and courses taken by all staff, including mental health / mental first aid etc. There is also a voluntary qualification that staff can take through the National College. Mental health first aiders are trained to deal with self-harm.</p> <p><b>Complaints</b> <u>The chair of governors told the committee</u> that the complaints process has been changed to make use of the development leads within the trust earlier within the process involving governors at panel stage rather than in an investigatory capacity. The Governance professional explained that the new policy removes the need to involve governors twice within the escalation of a complaint. <u>Governors asked</u> if all complaints are being captured and recorded in the correct place <u>and further asked</u> at what point a dissatisfaction or a concern is recorded on the complaints log. Mr Dickinson confirmed that all concerns are recorded.</p> <p><b>Upcoming events at the academy</b> Mrs Clough-Watson told the committee that the Year 9 Options/Progress evening is scheduled for this Thursday evening and all governors would be welcome to attend and the Year 8 parents evening will be on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The GP will get a full list of dates from the academy to share with governors. <b>[Action]</b></p>	<p><b>NB</b> <b>31/03/2025</b></p>



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	Mr Dickinson added that governors would be welcome to attend the Year 6 induction evening on 19 <sup>th</sup> June, this involves meeting the tutor, meeting the head of year and preparation for transition week. This will be followed by the open evening on 26 <sup>th</sup> June. In the autumn term a more personal approach is taken where parents can come in and meet with the principal, head of year and subject staff.	
AC/45/2425	<b>How have governors held the school leaders to account?</b> It was agreed that the governors held the school leaders to account with discussion and robust challenges on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SEND (staffing, rapid recovery plan, succession planning)</li> <li>➤ Attendance</li> <li>➤ Behaviours, suspensions and exclusions data, alternative provision</li> <li>➤ Complaints</li> <li>➤ Pupil number projections</li> </ul>	
AC/46/2425	<b>How have the VMV of Trust / Equality been upheld?</b> It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld.	
AC/47/2425	<b>Complete report to trustees</b> The report to trustees was discussed and completed within the meeting.	
AC/48/2425	<b>Determination of Confidentiality</b> <b>Equality Act consideration</b> <b>Nolan Principles</b> <b>Trust mission, vision, and values</b> Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confidential items discussed have been recorded separately.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Date 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 at <u>5.30pm</u> at Retford Oaks Academy  The meeting closed at 19:06pm	
	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> Signed... (Chair) Date 27/03/2025  Print.....Andy Knight.....	