

**Summary of discussions of the Local Academy Committee meeting  
held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February at 5:30pm via Teams**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mr A Knight <b>Chair</b>	AK	Appointed	A
Mr D Cartwright	DC	Appointed	A
Mrs P Bryn-Jones <b>Vice</b>	PBJ	Appointed	
Mr A Silcock	AS	Appointed	
Mr J Purle	JP	Appointed	A
Dr Ann Harris	AH	Elected Parent	
Mrs Sarah Miles	SM	Elected Parent	
Mrs L Clough-Watson	LCW	Staff Governor	A
Miss Sophie Babu <b>start date postponed</b>	SB	Appointed	A
Mrs J Wilson	JW	Appointed	

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs H Widdup	HW	Executive Principal	
Mr L Dickinson	LD	Principal	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional (GP)	

<b>Quorum required</b>	5	Governor's present	5
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**Outstanding Actions Log**

C = Complete   
 CF = Carried forward   
 I = Incomplete (carried forward more than once)

Agenda item	Meeting Ref	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline	Update	Status
AC/68/2425	2425 - 6	[carried forward AC/55/2425 AC/41/2425] AK share SEND link visit reports.	AK	14/07/2025	Action carried forward. Action is time expired. PBJ has completed a recent visit and the Link report is available for all governors to view	C
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Complete Declaration of Interests	AS	30/09/2025	AS confirmed that there were no changes to his Dol from the last academic year and NB agreed to carry the details forward to close this action.	C

AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Send meeting invitation to all governors	NB	30/09/2025	Meeting scheduled Monday 13th October at 5:30pm	C
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Consider the performing arts link role	ALL GOVS	13/10/2025	Link roles will be revisited in the summer term when SB has returned and in conjunction with a review of the action plan.	C
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Complete mandatory training modules on National College	ALL GOVS	30/09/2025	chased AS, AK, JP 26.11.25 chased AS, JP 02.02.26 AS and AK have completed mandatory refresher training, JP is still outstanding	I
AC/11/2526	2526 - 2	Contact JP regarding non-attendance	NB	24/11/2025	Email sent to JP with link to portal and reminder to complete training and send apologies. offered a catchup to review roles and responsibilities and provide additional support. NB	C
AC/13/2526	2526 - 2	Formalise appointment and set up induction session with JW	NB	19/12/2025	Welcome letter and request for ID sent to start the induction process.	C
AC/14/2526	2526 - 2	Expand on the information in the outstanding actions	NB	24/11/2025	NB will include more details to explain actions in the rag rated table.	C
AC/15/2526	2526 - 2	Distribute the correct version of the SEND information report to Governors	NB	24/11/2025	Shared via email and in governance portal 26.11.25	C
AC/15/2526	2526 - 2	Review the trust policy and SEND information report and ensure they are accurate	LD	24/11/2025		
AC/16/2526	2526 - 2	Share a detailed breakdown of how PP budget is spent with governors.	LD	08/12/2025	To be built into Spring - 2 agenda. It was agreed that this would carry forward into the summer training meeting given changes in staffing at ROA	CF

AC/18/2526	2526 - 2	Arrange SEND Link visit before end of half term	PBJ	19/12/2025	Meeting scheduled for 9th December with CG, attendance visit also scheduled - meeting was rescheduled, then cancelled due to resource issues. To be rescheduled. SEND link visit was carried out on 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	C
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Q = Question from Governors

A = Answer from senior leaders

Agenda item	Key points / Summary	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline
<b>AC/23/2526</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apologies received and accepted from LCW, AK, DC, JP</li> <li>- SB will start in May</li> <li>- PBJ (vice chair) agreed to chair the meeting in the absence of AK and DC.</li> </ul>			
<b>AC/24/2526</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no changes to declarations of interest made at the start of the year and no declarations in relation to the agenda.			
<b>AC/25/2526</b>	<b>Vision Mission Values</b> SM shared feedback from the recent collaboration event. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The meeting went well but attendance was low.</li> <li>- Although the event was well advertised, some parents mistook it for a parents' evening.</li> <li>- Both parent governors agreed the advertising was effective.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: What was the feedback from the last collaboration session around homework?</i></p>			

	<p>A: The wording will be changed from <i>optional</i> to <i>suggested</i> to positively encourage participation without making homework completion mandatory. Instructions on how to access the homework area will be uploaded to Weduc. All departments are reviewing the content before a relaunch.</p> <p><i>Q: Will there be rewards for children who complete the suggested homework?</i> A: Yes. Teachers will log when homework is completed, ensuring rewards can be distributed appropriately.</p> <p><i>Q: What was the most recent collaboration event focussing upon?</i> A: The recent session explored how the school communicates with parents. Much of the feedback from this event focused particularly on options, careers and work experience. The next session will target Year 9 and Year 10 parents to improve engagement with work experience opportunities. JW (Jane West, careers lead) is working with <a href="#">Unifrog</a> and will share relevant information.</p> <p>Governors commented that the careers and guidance pages on the academy website are very good <a href="#">Careers and guidance - Retford Oaks Academy</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- linked to the Gatsby benchmarks.</li> <li>- work experience exposure from Year 7 onward, including online opportunities.</li> <li>- Careers through the curriculum and year-group-specific career experiences outlined.</li> <li>- A STEM fair is upcoming and includes NHS links.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: Is there a way to ensure parents are accessing the webpage?</i> A: One of JW's actions this half term is to produce a careers newsletter to inform parents about student opportunities and upcoming events.</p> <p>Additional discussion around recruitment of students to post 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The team is gathering reviews to counter perceptions of Post-16 options.</li> <li>- Alumni have been invited to speak with students.</li> <li>- Further work continues around recruitment.</li> </ul>			
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<p><b>AC/26/2526</b></p>	<p><b>Approve actions log dated 17<sup>th</sup> November</b> The Actions log from 17<sup>th</sup> November was reviewed and approved.</p>			
<p><b>AC/27/2526</b></p>	<p><b>Governance Report</b> Declaration of Interest - AS confirmed no change to previous year.</p> <p>Governor membership - DC will need to complete a statement for another term to be voted on at the May meeting (page 30 section 12.7 of the Governance Strategy document) <b>[ACTION – DC]</b></p> <p>Action Plan - The action plan will be discussed and reviewed in the Spring 2 meeting</p> <p>Outstanding training - NB informed LAC of requirement to ensure statutory training is up to date <b>[ACTION – JP]</b></p> <p>Head of Governance - The LAC was informed that Alison Elway has left the organisation, Nicola Benson has been appointed interim Head of Governance and will continue to support the LAC until a replacement is assigned.</p> <p>Link visits PBJ shared feedback from her SEND link visit report on 4<sup>th</sup> February. - Concern raised that CG needs more time to undertake the SENDCO role, as she is currently teaching 7 sessions. - KA is supporting SEND attendance and GDA forms, which are currently up to date.</p> <p>Change in SENDCO Arrangements LD informed the LAC that since PBJ’s link report, there has been a change:</p>	<p>DC to prepare a statement and send it to NB to be shared with papers for Summer 1 meeting</p> <p>JP to complete all mandatory training ASAP</p>	<p><b>DC</b></p> <p><b>JP</b></p>	<p>05/05/26</p> <p>ASAP</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CG stepped down at the end of Spring Half Term 1.</li> <li>- KA has been promoted to Interim SENDCO.</li> <li>- CG continues involvement as the qualified SENDCO, especially for EHCPs and funding.</li> <li>- HW confirmed this is due to a personal matter unrelated to the academy.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: Should SEND instability be added to the risk register, given the reputational risk in an area previously being strengthened?</i></p> <p>A: No, because the situation is being managed effectively and is already in hand.</p> <p><i>Q: Will parents be informed.</i></p> <p>A: HW is writing the letter to parents, has met with RS and firmed up all arrangements.</p> <p><i>Q: Will SEND link governor now meet with RS and KA instead?</i></p> <p>A: CG is still picking up responsibility with students with EHCPs and can still be involved in link visits</p> <p><i>Q: Will there be support for KA?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, QEA are going to provide the support of their SENDCO as a mentor for KA.</p> <p><i>Q: Will KA be given more time away from teaching to focus on the SENDCO role?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, this all happened quickly on the day we broke up for half term. LD explained that before half term with the unfortunate passing of Leon Fevre, the process to recruit an English teacher was already underway, following that process two English teachers have been appointed to backfill KA so she can commit to the interim SENDCO role. One is strong with vulnerable students and another team member has strength in safeguarding. BW is supporting and working on the EHLN (high level needs) funding to support KA.</p> <p><i>Q: Will KA still be teaching?</i></p>			
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	<p>A: Yes, there is currently a split between teaching and SENDCO for this short half term until the new teachers start after Easter. CG is doing some break out interventions, following Easter KA will have more capacity for the SENDCO role.</p> <p><i>Q: When are you proposing to finalise a permanent SENDCO, will it need to be advertised and interviewed?</i></p> <p>A: We would need to advertise this before may half term in order to appoint in September, however we are hoping to fill the role internally if possible.</p> <p><i>Q: Were wider staff invited to show interest in the position?</i></p> <p>A: KA will be qualified at Easter, nobody else could apply as there is nobody else currently qualified or in training within the academy staff.</p> <p><i>Q: Are still informed that training is available should they show an interest?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, if anybody puts forward requests to develop in this area, it will be considered to strengthen contingency in this area.</p> <p>PBJ referred back to the link visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The provision map is used effectively with good notes.</li> <li>- Timely transition of information has improved, although there were some trust-level issues. HW confirmed PK has picked this up at trust level.</li> <li>- CG has developed good link with the LA team and transition responsibilities will be handed over.</li> <li>- RS and BW attend Springboard</li> <li>- Ofsted's new framework focuses strongly on inclusion.</li> </ul> <p>LD told the LAC that RS presented a piece at SLT related to this.</p> <p><i>Q: Could governor see this presentation?</i></p> <p>A: We are currently writing the new SEF (Self Evaluation Form) in line with the Ofsted framework and then it will be shared with all governors.</p> <p>PBJ plans to join the SENDCO for a walkaround and will talk to some students on the register when she next visits on 4<sup>th</sup> March</p>			
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	<p><i>Q: Has anything been done to address the buzzer in one of the student support rooms. It is very loud and could be triggering for students with autism or SEMH needs. This was raised with RS.</i></p> <p>A: LD confirmed he would look into this to see whether it can be muffled.</p> <p><b>[ACTION – LD]</b></p>	LD to investigate the buzzer in the student support rooms to see if it can be muffled.	<b>LD</b>	04/03/26
<b>AC/28/2526</b>	<p><b>Governance Strategy and Scheme of Delegation</b></p> <p>All attendees confirmed that they had reviewed the webinar shared regarding changes to the scheme of delegation and governance strategy.</p>			
<b>AC/29/2526</b>	<p><b>Principals Report</b></p> <p><b>Questions from the ERM report</b></p> <p><i>Q: Can you explain the colour coded data within the ERM around vulnerable students?</i></p> <p>A: LD explained that for vulnerable and SEND students, the school is performing above the national average.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-disadvantaged students, however, need to do better.</li> <li>- Mock exam outcomes from November show the school is well ahead of last year.</li> <li>- If the same proportional improvement continues—particularly in accessing higher marks—the average grade will increase.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: What about the high end?</i></p> <p>A: LD explained that students typically arrive as low attainers, so foundational knowledge must be built first. There has been improvement at the high end, but the biggest gains will come from pushing the middle. Quality has improved significantly.</p> <p><i>Q: How well did we perform compared to forecast last year?</i></p> <p>A: Last year, progress from this point in the year to summer was in line with forecasts, and forecasting accuracy has improved over time.</p>			

	<p><i>Q: Are there any particular subjects of concern?</i>  A:  - English and maths are improving year on year.  - Science is performing well post trial exams with a plan in place for this.  - Geography is improving; history is strong.  - IT and related subjects look stronger.  - Media is now more settled following previous turbulence, with vocational courses better suiting students' needs.</p> <p><i>Q: Are you offering further maths?</i>  A: Yes, in year 10, two mornings a week.</p> <p>There was considerable discussion around the staff survey and management of behaviour. Following lengthy discussion, it was noted that the data shared within the Principals report was outdated and more recent data demonstrates the progress that has been made in this area.  <b>[ACTION – LD]</b> to send the latest staff survey results out for review and comment.</p> <p><i>Q: Suspensions are below national average. Is this because poor behaviour is not being picked up? Given the student cohort with high additional needs, shouldn't suspensions be higher?</i>  A: School has reset the culture, leading to a big drop in verbal abuse and other behaviour issues. We utilise managed moves / directed moves to other schools rather than suspension as much as possible and have reciprocal arrangements. This has revealed that students coming in are worse behaved than Retford Oaks students.</p> <p><i>Q: Is there a concern from some staff that behaviour is not being managed?</i>  A:  - There is a small negative core of staff who struggle with behaviour management.</p>	<p>LD to send the latest staff survey results out for review and comment.</p>	<p><b>LD</b></p>	<p>11/03/26</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff are expected to take responsibility.</li> <li>- Recurring themes are picked up by Heads of Year.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: What happens in isolation?</i> A: Students complete the same work they would be doing in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Q: What is it like in isolation?</i> A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity for five students, each in individual booths.</li> <li>- Described as a very calm environment.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: Year 7 suspensions are a concern; do you know what the issues are?</i> A: These students were already known from primary school. The academy is working closely with the students, families and other agencies and providing as much support as possible.</p> <p><i>Q: Could DG (Dermot Gascoyne) be used to help with some of the difficult students?</i> A: Yes, both LH and DG support work with students in isolation throughout the day. More widely, staff have received de-escalation training with Simeon.</p> <p><i>Q: How are the results of the staff survey followed up?</i> A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LD highlighted the importance of recognising positives and celebrations.</li> <li>- A review will focus on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What needs developing?</li> <li>o What cannot be addressed, and why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Changes will be made where needed.</li> <li>- LD is working with HR on the staff survey outcomes and the People Value Proposition, and will create a joint plan with HR.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q: As a new governor please can you explain the background to changes in the RE curriculum?</i></p>			
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	<p>A: RE was previously compulsory for all ROA students. About 18 months into the course, it became clear that RE was hindering progress, so it was moved into Future Me, allowing students to prioritise subjects aligned with their goals.</p> <p><i>Q: How much RE do students get, and is it an option?</i></p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, RE is available as a full GCSE option with 4 lessons per week.</li> <li>- Students who don't choose RE GCSE receive the statutory requirement through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o KS3: 50 minutes per week</li> <li>o KS4: 50 minutes per week for 13 weeks</li> <li>o Additional RE content via the Personal Development (PD) programme</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Although not all PD time is RE, the statutory RE requirement is met for every student.</li> </ul> <p><b>[ACTION – LD]</b> to share the equivalent RE time allocation for all students.</p> <p><i>Q: How do you address supply issues?</i></p> <p>A: Short-term sick notes sometimes transition into long-term absences depending on circumstances. The school has increased cover teachers to reduce reliance on external supply staff.</p> <p><i>Q: Are staff being properly consulted when policies are changed or implemented? Is there a portion of staff who feel they are not involved in decision-making?</i></p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most policy changes are made at trust level.</li> <li>- Only the local appendices (e.g., homework) have changed in the last couple of years.</li> <li>- A recent reminder was issued to staff about live marking in the classroom as the policy around marking may have been misunderstood by some staff members. Clarification is being provided.</li> </ul>	<p>LD to share the equivalent RE time allocation for all students.</p>	<p><b>LD</b></p>	<p>11/03/26</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attempts to create staff voice opportunities—such as through the Staff Voice Group and T&amp;L sessions—have not been well-engaged with.</li> <li>- Staff feedback should be viewed through the lens of whether concerns are about skill or will, especially around behaviour management.</li> <li>- HW shared that negative responders totalled approximately 3–4 members of staff.</li> <li>- Cat Summers spoke to 20–30 staff during the most recent AIR (<a href="#">Academy Improvement Review</a>) which provides broader context on Page 6.</li> </ul> <p><b>Academy Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>Q: FSM (free school meals) absence rate is high, how is that being addressed?</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FSM absence rates haven't dropped at the same rate as the national average.</li> <li>- Leavers remain included in the data, affecting figures.</li> <li>- Persistent Absence (PA) remains a challenge, particularly for young carers, vulnerable students, etc.</li> <li>- The attendance strategy has been refined to target these groups.</li> </ul> <p>Q: Is there an underlying reason?</p> <p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 11 shows the lowest attendance, largely because many students are on Alternative Provision (AP) or alternative curriculum pathways.</li> <li>- Other year groups show much better figures.</li> <li>- Holidays contribute only around 0.5% to overall absence.</li> <li>- The primary issues are illness and lack of engagement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk reports</b></p> <p>Viability of the 6<sup>th</sup> form remains on the risk register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School is offering <b>Double Award PE</b> and needs to continue promoting 6th form as a viable pathway for its students.</li> </ul> <p>Q: Why is SEND is not on the risk register given its vulnerability and recent disruption?</p> <p>A: HW will clarify the reasoning. <b>[ACTION – HW]</b></p>	<p>HW to consider adding SEND to the risk register</p>	<p><b>HW</b></p>	<p>11/03/26</p>
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	<p>The SAR reported on in the principals' report was returned on time; one case is still being processed.</p> <p><i>Q: Are the numbers for next year looking healthy?</i> A: - Numbers are ahead of last year in terms of preferences. - Actual figures will be known at the end of March. - Strong outreach to village schools is ongoing, including: - The school play, <i>Frozen</i> - School Games events - Other outreach activities</p> <p><i>Q: Do you have an idea of the expected numbers for P16?</i> A: We have around 35 viable students but often this increases following exams and results.</p> <p><i>Q: JW asked about school events, is there a way to find out what's happening if you're not a parent?</i> A: <b>[ACTION – LD]</b> Share the school calendar with JW</p> <p><b>Cat C</b> There were no new Category C trips for review.</p>	<p>and clarify the approach to be taken.</p> <p>Share the school calendar with the LAC</p>	<p><b>LD</b></p>	<p>11/03/26</p>
<p><b>AC/30/2526</b></p>	<p><b>Safeguarding</b> There was a brief discussion regarding the safeguarding checklist and LD confirmed that everything remains compliant.</p>			
<p><b>AC/31/2526</b></p>	<p><b>Stakeholder update</b> See AC/25/2526 for feedback following the collaboration event.</p>			
<p><b>AC/32/2526</b></p>	<p><b>March Agenda</b> It was agreed that the March agenda would focus on:</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 16 – introduction to Matt James Head of P16</li> <li>• Progress against targeted outcomes – mock results data</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the deeper dive into PP funding would be delivered in the summer term 2 meeting. It was agreed that Jane West would be invited to the summer term 2 meeting to deliver a session on careers.</p>			
<b>AC/33/2526</b>	<p><b>Complete report to trustees</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the report to trustees would be completed by PBJ and NB following the meeting.</p>			
<b>AC/34/2526</b>	<p><b>Determine Confidentiality</b></p> <p>Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any confidential items discussed have been recorded separately.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications.</li> </ul>			
<b>AC/35/2526</b>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 5:30 pm at Retford Oaks Academy</p> <p><b>Meeting closed at 7:15pm</b></p>			

<p><b>Signed by Vice Chair</b></p> <p><i>P Bryn-Jones</i></p> <p>Pat Bryn-Jones</p>	<p><b>Date</b> 04/03/2026</p>
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