



Swift Academies

Success will inspire future triumphs

Board of Directors' Meeting

Friday 9 December 2022

MINUTES

Directors present:	Derek Bell (Chair), Dean Judson (CEO), Stuart Hargrove, Michael Garmston, Tim Fisher
Members present:	Laurence Job, Keith Bernstone, Robert Bell
In attendance:	Glen Hart: Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies Sarah Jones: Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies Leon Watson: Trust ICT Manager, Swift Academies Angela Sweeten – Head Teacher, Longfield Academy John Armitage – Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Rachel Somerville – Head of School, Hurworth School Julie Sowerby (EPM) – <i>item 10 only</i> Caroline Jennings: Trust Governance and Policy Officer (Clerk)

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</p> <p>It was confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that the quorum for Board of Directors meetings will be three voting Directors. 5 (five) Directors were present. Three members were also in attendance.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged Directors to seek clarification where discussions or information were not understood.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</p> <p>It was reported that apologies had been received from Julie Cornelius, Geoff Liddle and Kelly-Ann Lyle.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the apologies for absence were received and accepted.</p>	
3.	<p>Notification of items of urgent other business</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer requested 'energy contracts' be added to the agenda.</p>	

	<p>Directors RESOLVED this additional business item would be discussed under item 23.</p>	
4.	<p>Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests. It was confirmed that all Directors present had completed and submitted the annual Declaration of Interest form for the current academic year which was available to view on the Swift Academies website.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received for this agenda.</p>	
5.	<p>Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising Draft minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting held on 8th July and 13th October 2022 had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting.</p> <p>All action points had been completed.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the minutes were a true and accurate account of the meetings. The Clerk would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.</p>	Clerk
6.	<p>Chair's Report The Chair reported that he had received DFE communications relating to the Ofsted inspection outcomes at Hurworth School and Longfield Academy. Members of the board were thanked for representing Swift Academies at The Rydal Academy Ofsted inspection this week. The full report is not available yet, however the Inspectors initial feedback was very favourable.</p> <p>The Chair asked that all staff at The Rydal Academy should be thanked for their hard work and positivity whilst the inspection took place.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Single Central Record had been signed.</p>	
7.	<p>Review of Membership Directors APPROVED the appointment of Kelly-Ann Lyle as a Director.</p> <p>Directors also formally ratified the appointments of new LGB governors; Victoria Maddison, Deborah Hindson, Sarah Kelly at Longfield Academy and Joanna Thurland at The Rydal Academy.</p>	
8.	<p>Feedback from Finance and Resources Committee The Chief Finance Officer gave details regarding the audit findings report by the external auditor, Clive Owen. He informed Directors that it was a clean audit with just a few internal recommendations. Corrective actions had already been put in place to address this.</p>	
9.	<p>Feedback from the Standards Committee</p> <p>Attainment and Progress – Longfield Academy</p> <p>The 2021/2022 GCSE results were shared with Directors. Although not validated they show that the Academy has maintained its performance despite the disruptive year it had</p>	

Attainment and Progress – Hurworth School

The GCSE results were shared with Directors; overall progress has improved since 2019 for all students.

Disadvantaged student progress has shown improvement since 2019. Boys overall progress has improved. Attainment 8 has improved across all groups since 2019. English and Maths basics have shown improvement since 2019 and are in line with or higher than LA and national average figures. Overall Science 4+ grades in both combined and separate Science has increased since 2019 which demonstrates the impact of the work done with the department.

Attainment and Progress – The Rydal Academy

The Head Teacher presented the overarching points relating to pupil outcomes.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good Level of Development (GLD) projection is broadly in line with 2016 and 2017. Growth is more than double the national average and has reduced the attainment gap by x2 (43%) from the Reception Baseline. Growth for disadvantage pupils is significantly closing the attainment gap.

Year 1 & 2 Phonics

Directors were advised that the Year 1 phonics result (60%) was below the national average of 82%; other pupils outperform disadvantaged pupils; stability pupils significantly outperform mobility pupils.

Year 2 phonics cumulative result are slightly above national averages; disadvantaged pupils are in-line with other pupils; stability pupils outperform mobility pupils and are above national averages.

Key Stage 1

Directors were advised that pupil attainment tracks below national data. But growth is more than double the national average. Stability pupils outperform mobility pupils. Disadvantaged pupils don't perform as well as all pupils (at expected or greater depth level). Results in Maths at greater depth level are lower than reading and writing but have improved since autumn.

Key Stage 2

Directors were informed that progress in Maths was at National average but progress in Reading and Writing was below. Although, Reading progress is the second highest it has been in the school's history, as is progress in Writing. Progress of Stability pupils is significantly better than that of Mobility pupils.

Attainment is below national averages in all three areas. The largest gap exists in writing which impacts at combined. Stability pupils significantly outperform mobility pupils in all areas and combined (+21%).

Whole school

Attainment against national averages continues to be a key focus for all year groups. Growth is double the national rate in most year groups. Reading remains the key intervention focus.

<p>10.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive Officer advised Directors that there had been some amendments to the Scheme of Delegation which had been recommended at the Standards Committee for Directors' approval.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED to approve the Scheme of Delegation amendments. This would be published on the Swift Academies website.</p> <p>Update on the Schools White Paper and Options for Swift Academies Julie Sowerby from EPM gave a presentation to Directors regarding the Government White Paper. The Government expects all academy trusts to grow to the minimum number of 7000 pupils by 2030. The Regional Director has asked all schools to have a plan in place to ensure all pupils will be taught in a strong MAT or planning to join one.</p> <p>Directors were informed that Darlington has been identified as an Education Investment area which will generate additional funding.</p> <p>JS advised Directors that although it is not legislation, they should consider the following three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stay as we are 2. Have a grown plan with another trust/trusts 3. Join an established trust and become part of their institution. <p>A Director commented that 'due diligence' was critical before any commitments are made.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer suggested approaching the Regional Director when we had received 'statements of intent' from schools with an Ofsted Good grading. The rationale being that it would offer more capacity to support Longfield Academy</p> <p>Director Question: how far geographically can we go to recruit schools? JS response: General rule of thumb is within 1 hours driving between each radius, but this isn't set in stone.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED to move forward with exploratory conversations with other schools and approach the RD when an agreement in principle between organisations was in place.</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer's Report The CEO gave details of the ESFA request for documents and his subsequent meeting with them. Directors informed the keen focus was on the Academies Trust Handbook, and the unofficial verbal feedback at the end of the 4½ hour meeting was 'damned good' and 'the best they have seen. The outcome being there were four minor remedial actions to be put in place.</p> <p>The CEO reiterated that receiving a positive report from the Longfield Academy Ofsted monitoring visit was key in removing the 'Minded to Terminate Notice'.</p> <p>Director Question: When do we expect the visit to take place? Response: Between 6-9 months from when the report was published.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>11.</p>		

12.	<p>a) Longfield Academy Head Teacher Update</p> <p>School Improvement Plan and School Priorities The School Improvement Plan and School Priorities were shared with Directors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The eight school priorities are based on key areas of concern in the Ofsted report, and the impact will be evaluated and reported each term in order to demonstrate progress. Directors advised that some areas may take longer than others to achieve.</p> <p>Behaviour and Attitudes The Head Teacher advised Directors that the behaviour system has been overhauled, and the Choices system is having a positive impact in classrooms; she added that monitoring by school leaders is crucial to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Evidence of progress in this area has been seen in the reduced number of suspensions which are significantly lower in comparison to the same period last year. Furthermore, the student voice has been over-whelming positive.</p> <p>A Director gave an account of his recent visit to Longfield Academy. He commented that all the pupils in the Choices Room were engaged and on task. He saw a calm purposeful environment in the classrooms he visited; even where there were staff absences.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that there is now a more consistent approach to address bullying and the Anti-bullying Policy had been rewritten. Furthermore, the SOS button is working well.</p> <p>A Director commented that pupils the had spoken to said they felt safe in school.</p> <p>Quality of Education Head Teacher informed Directors that the provision for SEND pupils required staff training and modelling in order to embed it fully; she felt confident the SENCO understood what needed to be addressed and is being supported by her peer at Hurworth School.</p> <p>The target of achieving quality first teacher is supported by the 10 non-negotiables linked to the Appraisal Policy. High expectation are set and learning walks undertaken by SLT. The assessment process has been streamlined, but this will take time to embed.</p> <p>Personal Development Directors advised that form tutor time is more purposeful and incorporates British Values. Personal Development has been redesigned and now features a more rigorous 'Life' curriculum. Staff training has been arranged for later in the year.</p> <p>Leadership and Management The Head Teacher reported QA processes have been schedule and form part of the School Improvement Plan. The recent staff questionnaire evidences more positively whereby they feel more supported. A staff forum has also been set up, and the Head Teacher offers an 'open door' policy to all staff.</p>	
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13.	<p>Link Governor templates have been developed to record feedback on school visits, and the Head Teacher reiterated that Governors and Directors are most welcome to come into school at any time to see the School Improvement Plan in practice.</p> <p>A Director commented he noticed there had been more challenge from Governors in the last LGB meeting.</p> <p>b) The Rydal Academy Head Teacher Update</p> <p>School Improvement Priorities The Head Teacher referred Directors to the school Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Priorities document and noted that priorities identified in the OFSTED report would be added to the SIP once the final report was received.</p> <p>Internal and External Quality Assurance The Head Teacher referred Directors to the relevant section of the HT report.</p> <p>Director Question: Did the quality assurance processes support the school during the recent Ofsted inspection? Response: The Head Teacher reported that the previous term's EDP visit focused on SEND, behaviour and attendance; as well as internal SEND and attendance audits during Summer term and this had effectively prepared leaders for the inspection process and ensured self-evaluation was accurate and up-to-date. The Head Teacher explained the Local Authority Year 6 writing moderation had supported a book scrutiny activity during day two of the inspection, and that Subject Area Verification Exercises during the Summer term had allowed the school to identify Music and History for successful deep dives. Also preparing PSHRE and RE for mini-dives on day two of the inspection.</p> <p>School Improvement Partner The Head Teacher informed Directors that, following this week's Ofsted Inspection, Christine Durand visit was delayed until Monday 23 January 2023. This will focus on; an introduction to the school; Ofsted Areas for Improvement, a review of the PSHRE curriculum and observations of Phonics teaching.</p> <p>Ofsted The Head Teacher informed Directors that the report was currently going through a quality assurance process and the school are awaiting the draft report. The Head Teacher gave an overview of the initial feedback in each Ofsted framework area and thanked Directors for their support and challenge during the process.</p> <p>Directors commented that the meeting with the Inspectors had been one of the most rigorous they had experienced, and were pleased that the outcomes had reflected the work which is on-going at the school. They asked the Head Teacher to convey thanks to all the staff for their hard work which ensured that the visit was successful.</p> <p>IDSR The Head Teacher referred Directors to the document shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Director Question: Should we be concerned that the school continues to be in the bottom 20% of all schools in some areas of attainment?</p>	
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14.	<p>Response: As reported in the 'Attainment and Progress' section of the Head Teacher's report, the growth of the percentage of pupils working at Age Related Expectation (ARE) from Reception Baseline for All Pupils and Disadvantage Pupils is more than double the national average. The Head Teacher also confirmed that the focus areas in the IDSR are reflected in the School Improvement Priorities.</p> <p>c) Hurworth School Head Teacher Update A copy of the Head Teacher's report had been circulated to Directors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>School Improvement Priorities Directors advised that since the recent Ofsted inspection, the reading strategy had been tweaked in line with the report. Staff had received training and tracking was in place. Pupil's reading ages will be reviewed in January and the evaluation and analysis will be shared at the next meeting. The library continues to be popular with the aim of developing a love of reading.</p> <p>Behaviour and Attitudes Directors informed the Choices system had been embedded. Pupils are compliant and a specific Choices room will be allocated from January 2023. A Choices Lead person has been appointed, due to start in January 2023.</p> <p>Quality Assurance The Head Teacher notified Directors that whole school learning walk had taken place and staff had received feedback. A subject review rotation was in place of which four had taken place with HOD having received feedback and actions points to move forward. A whole school Personal Development review will take place next term.</p> <p>School Improvement Partner The Head Teacher informed Directors that the EDP visit focused on Disadvantaged Pupils; they were impressed with staff's knowledge and strategies in place and gave ideas for improving the strategy to be more bespoke for Hurworth students. The next visit in the Summer 2023 will focus on Reading and Behaviour.</p> <p>IDSR The Head Teacher drew Director's attention to Year 11 Science. She said the latest assessment review was not as positive as previous years, however actions have been put in place to remedy before the Summer exams. It was suggested that the impact of Covid lockdowns have particularly impacted this year group and may affect Progress 8 outcomes.</p>	
15.	<p>Approval of Annual Accounts and Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2022</p> <p>The audit findings report from Clive Owen had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Governor Question: There seems to be very little movement in the balance sheet reconciliations from month to month until the year end. Response: Some accruals have been put in place in the monthly accounts, but it was recognised this is more apparent at year end.</p>	

16.	<p>Following review at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting, it was recommended that Directors approve the accounts.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer confirmed the Trust was in a good financial position going into 2022/2023 with £639k reserves.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that Swift Academies financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2022 were APPROVED.</p> <p>Longfield Trading Report of the Directors and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2022 A summary of the report had been circulated to Directors prior to this meeting.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer reported that the Longfield Trading accounts had been reviewed and approved by the Directors of Longfield Trading at the meeting the Board of Directors' meeting which had been held today.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that Longfield Trading Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2022 were APPROVED.</p> <p>Management Accounts The Management Accounts for 2022/2023 had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Academy Trust Handbook 2022 had been sent to Directors via email with changes highlighted.</p> <p>Directors were advised that the auditors had confirmed that Swift Academies was deemed a 'Going Concern' in their report.</p> <p>Director Question: Had there been any challenge in the auditor's report? Response: There were small minor recommendations regarding coding and a small known balance deficit which has now been resolved.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer said that any additional funding received from government next year is like to be used on increased energy costs.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the Management Accounts and information presented had been noted.</p> <p>Risk Registers Directors were advised that in advance of the ESFA audit, all the risk registers were reviewed and rewritten to include more detail rather than just the key headlines.</p> <p>The risk registers were also cross-referenced across all three schools to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Director Question: Were the risk registers used to inform ESFA audit and did their feedback include any recommendations? Response: Yes the risk registers were submitted and it was recommended that feedback from both the Finance and Resource Committee and the Standards Committee is recorded in Board of Directors' minutes.</p>	
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	<p>Internal Audit Areas for Focus Directors were reminded the focus of internal audits is driven by the Board of Directors in view of the School Development Plan.</p>	
17.	<p>Trust Development Plan This document had been rewritten and shared with Directors prior to the meeting.</p>	
18.	<p>Trust Business Manager's Action Plan The Trust Business Manager reported that the Trusts' external H&S contract was reviewed in July 2022 following notice from EPM that our current service was moving to an online system. We sought and secured H&S Consultants Ltd who provide a specialist contract manager to support each of our schools.</p> <p>A premises and H&S audits of documentation took place in October 2022. A site visit with the H & S Consultant for each of the schools has been scheduled. Once these are completed the link Governor will be provided with feedback and any outstanding actions or recommendations will be addressed as a priority.</p> <p>Directors advised the fire Risk Assessments to be reviewed in Spring Term 2023 – These are scheduled for January 2023.</p> <p>The most recent H&S audit was completed at Longfield Academy and Hurworth School in November 2022 and The Rydal Academy audit is scheduled for December 2022.</p> <p>Refresher training for Premises staff continues to be arranged to ensure legal compliance is met. Site staff at Longfield Academy completed their Pool Operator refresher training October 2022. Hurworth School staff will complete PASMA training in January 2023 and a newly appointed Building Maintenance Supervisor will complete a full suite of relevant training in January 2023.</p> <p>Governors were given an update on the CIF (<u>Condition Improvement Fund</u>), and works completed.</p> <p>Two applications for each Academy were submitted to the DfE in December 2021 for the CIF 2022-2023 round of funding. These included fire safety, heating distribution and roofing projects. As a result of these bids Longfield Academy have been awarded £377k to improve fire stopping barriers and upgrade fire doors.</p> <p>Applications for the 2023/2024 round are currently being finalised and the maximum of 2 bids per school will be submitted in December 2022.</p> <p>Hurworth's survey was completed on 8th June 2022 and the results of this survey will further enable items of prioritisation for Estates Management to facilitate the future planning of funding applications, including CIF and School Re-building Programmes.</p> <p>Director advised the Trust Business Manager is working alongside Hurworth SLT, the CFO and the Trust ICT Manager to prioritise tasks and projects and allocate spending. Hurworth have recently received funding from local developers as part of an S106 agreement which is to be utilised to improve the infrastructure and learning environment.</p>	

19.	<p>Trust ICT Manager's Update A report from the Trust ICT Manager was circulated to Directors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Director Question: What is our oldest computer? Response: Some computers at Longfield Academy are ten years old. The maximum time is ideally five years.</p> <p>Director Question: What is the impact on the curriculum? Response: The old computers have issues with speed and cannot support Windows 11. Those subjects most affected are Year 10 and 11 vocational courses - IT, Photography and Graphics.</p> <p>The ICT Manager said he was looking holistically at the whole system from foundations to user level in an effort to apply the same principles to all three sites.</p> <p>Director Question: Do we know what can be done in-house and where we need to commission external contractors? Response: This has been planned and costed but now delivery is a problem; with some companies quoting up to 40 weeks. We have applied for the DFE Connect grant and originally advised we were not eligible, but it seems we were 'missed off the eligible schools list' so awaiting an invitation from the DFE to reapply.</p> <p>Director Question: Does IT meet any of the Conditional Improvement Funding criteria? Response: The key areas to look at for CIF are: Safe, Dry and Warm so IT does not fit into any of these areas.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer reminded Directors that the ICT Manager was new to the Trust and has had to build a new IT team as three staff left before the Summer break. Adding capacity to the team has proved to be problematic with an advert with a flexible contract going out for another technician several time without success. He informed Directors that the Wifi at Hurworth School had been damaged in the ceiling voids when the fire safety work had been done. He added that now we were aware of all the issues, a more detailed plan needs to be shared and the Trust may need to spend money on the most urgent works whilst awaiting a decision from the DFE regarding the grant</p>	
20.	<p>Scheme of Delegation The Chief Executive Officer advised Directors that there had been some amendments to the Scheme of Delegation which had been recommended for approval at the Standards Committee meeting.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED to approve the Scheme of Delegation amendments. This would be published on the Swift Academies website.</p>	
21.	<p>Policies for approval/review/information</p> <p>a) For approval – Finance Policy, Menopause Policy b) For information – Low Level Concerns Policy, Pay Policy, Appraisal Policy, Staff Wellbeing Policy, Health and Safety Trust Statement, Statement of Intent – Asbestos, Business Continuity Strategy</p>	

<p>22.</p> <p>23.</p> <p>24.</p>	<p>Governors RESOLVED that the circulated policies, including any changes were noted. The Menopause Policy and the Finance Policy were APPROVED and adopted with immediate effect</p> <p>Any urgent other business raised under item 3</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported the increase in surging energy costs remained a major concern with all companies quoting 300% increases.</p> <p>Directors were informed that the Trust's four year contract for electricity expires this month. Currently the annual cost is £147k. The CFO has been reviewing quotes provided by the DFE approved broker CPC Consultancy. Only two companies were prepared to quote. CPC recommended locking into a six month contract, taking into account the energy capping which will be reviewed in April, and the normal decline in demand during the Summer months which may have an impact on reducing prices.</p> <p>The CFO asked for an urgent decision to secure the contract.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED to approve the six month electricity contract from January 2023 to June 2023.</p> <p>Approval of documents for inspection</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the 8 July 2022 agenda and minutes be made available for public inspection. However, due to the confidential nature of the document the Pay and Appraisal minutes of 13 October should be retracted.</p> <p>Date and time of future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 31st March 2023 2.00pm at The Rydal Academy • Friday 7th July 2023 2.00pm at Hurworth School <p>These minutes were approved by the Chair of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies as follows:</p> <p>on: <u>31.3.2023</u> date</p> <p>Signature: <u>J. Cornelius</u> Print Name: <u>J. CORNELIUS</u></p>	
	<p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors RESOLVED that the minutes were a true and accurate account of the meetings. The Clerk would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file. • Directors RESOLVED to approve the Scheme of Delegation amendments. This would be published on the Swift Academies website. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

