

# Swift Academies

*Success will inspire future triumphs*

Longfield Academy  
 Local Governing Body  
 Monday 3 October 2022  
 MINUTES

Present (Governors)	Nicola Bales (Chair), Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer), Angela Sweeten (Head of School), Robert Bell, Nick Rees, Sarah Glover, Liam McCavanagh, Tanya Singh, Natalie Forster
in attendance	Glen Hart – Chief Financial Officer, Swift Academies Sarah Jones - Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies Stuart Rawle – Deputy Head Leon Watson - Director of ICT, Swift Academies Derek Bell – Chair of Board of Directors Caroline Jennings: Governance & Policy Officer, Clerk

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
1.	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present</b>            It was confirmed that a quorum was present.            The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that the quorum for meetings of the governors will be three voting governors. 9 (nine) governors were present.</p> <p>A round of introductions took place at the start of the meeting for the benefit of new governors; Tanya Singh and Natalie Forster.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</b>            Apologies received and accepted from Laura Snowdon and Jenni Bowe.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Election of Chair</b>            Nicola Bales was nominated and elected as Chair to serve until the first meeting in Autumn 2023.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Election of Vice Chair</b>            Nick Rees was nominated and elected as Chair to serve until the first meeting in Autumn 2023.</p>	
5	<p><b>Governing Body Membership</b>            Governors advised that Mandy Payne and Bev Clifton had offered their resignation with immediate effect.</p> <p>Jennie Bowe had indicated that she would not be continuing as a governor once her term of office expires on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.</p>	Clerk

<p>6.</p> <p>7.</p> <p>8.</p> <p>9.</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p>	<p><b>Governing Body Code of Conduct</b> Governors signed a declaration to confirm they had read the Governors Code of Conduct.</p> <p><b>Notification of items of urgent other business</b> There were no additional items of urgent business for this agenda.</p> <p><b>Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests</b> All Governors present completed the annual Declaration of Interest form for the current academic year. The Clerk will contact absent Governors, and collate all responses to be published on the website.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received for this agenda.</p> <p><b>Approval of minutes/review of actions/ matters arising</b> Draft minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of Longfield Academy held on 20 June 2022 had been shared with Governors prior to this meeting.</p> <p>All action points had been completed.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of Longfield Academy held on 20 June 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Clerk would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.</p> <p><b>Chair's Report</b> The Chair confirmed she had met with the Head of School and reviewed the feedback from the Ofsted inspection. She proposed moving to two termly meetings, one per half term, one would be Quality Assurance of Education and the other Finance and General Purposes. This was felt to be an important step in ensuring that the school move, given that that the school was making significant improvements at a rapid pace and that increased commitment by Governors to this momentum was imperative.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> There are a number of policies included on the agenda is there a particular reason for this?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> It was acknowledged that recently there has been a lot of DFE changes and these have been incorporated into policies and procedures to reflect working practices. Only policies specific to individual schools are added to the LGB agendas; the Swift policies approved by Directors are for information only.</p> <p>The CEO reminded Governors that the new meeting dates would need to align with the Directors Standards Committee and link to the publication of EDP reports.</p> <p><b>Head of School Report</b> A copy of the Head Teacher's report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Pupil Numbers/Context</b> The PAN for the school is 180 per year group. The school is currently undersubscribed</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> From the data presented there appears to be a decline in the number of pupils; are we worried about next year's numbers?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> We are hoping to get an early indication regarding parent preferences for September 2023. The steady declining birth rate in Darlington is anticipated to have an impact in all Darlington schools in 2025 with a surplus of secondary school places 16% by 2030.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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**Governor Question:** Will the number of new houses being built around Darlington help to boost pupil numbers?

**Response:** There has to be a significant increase in housing for it to impact on pupil numbers; ratio tends to be for every 2000 houses there will be about there will be circa 140/150 secondary age pupils. The plan to raise pupil numbers is to continue to work with our feeder schools to raise the school profile and enhance transition.

The Head of School drew Governors' attention to the number of pupils who left at the end of Year 8 to go to UTC. She said that the school would continue striving to retain students (and welcome them back) by promoting the good GCSE results compared to UTC.

#### **Alternative Provisions**

Governors reviewed the data provided.

**Governor Question:** Can the school afford to pay for Alternative Provision?

**Response:** The budget for Alternative Provision is allocated at the start of the academic year. However, it is important to note that DFE guidelines on Suspension & Exclusion states the school needs to explore all possibilities before the last resort of suspension.

#### **Suspensions**

The days of exclusion have increased from 20/21 to 21/22 although the numbers of students of student have decreased. Recidivists have increased with Year 10 having the highest number. 13 (1 pending) of those 91 recidivists have now been permanently excluded from Longfield Academy.

Persistent disruption and Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult are the most common reasons for suspension in 21/22, with Year 9 and 10 the highest in both categories.

The comparison is not based on like to like data, as due to lockdown, 9 weeks of comparative data are not included in the 2020/21 information. By averaging out the 30 week total suspensions and then multiplying the average weekly suspension by 39 weeks, the number of students being suspended has reduced from 20/21 to 21/22.

As of the end of week 3 2022 there have been 8 suspensions; this is 4 students less than at the same time last year.

**Governor Question:** Are all the staff following the Behaviour Policy to reduce suspensions?

**Response:** There is lots of work going in to mitigate against suspensions – however it is difficult to pre-empt one-off incidents. The new regulation room, structures and systems are having an impact. Most staff are following the Choices Policy consistently, we will continue to embed to ensure complete consistency.

#### **Attendance**

Governors informed that although Persistent Absence is less than the national average, this data is based on just a few weeks into the term.

The Head of School advised governors that a new Attendance Officer had been appointed.

#### **Safeguarding**

All teaching staff have had the updated KCSIE input which took place on the inset day in September. The aim is for all of the pastoral team to be Level 3 trained. Assemblies are taking place 26<sup>th</sup> September to raise awareness of Prevent with pupils and staff training is planned to take place early in this term.

### Quality of Education

Governors informed that deep dives took place in English and Maths this term. A summary of strengths and areas for development are included in the report. Consistency is a key focus going forward – non-negotiables and expectations have been put in place.

The 2021/2022 GCSE unvalidated results were shared with Governors. SLT will drill down in History, Maths and Science and offer remedial support and strategies for improvement.

**Governor Question:** How do our GCSE results compare with other secondary schools in Darlington?

**Response:** The school is 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 8 secondary schools in the Darlington Local Authority rankings.

**Governor Question:** Are we offering EBACC qualifications to our pupils?

**Response:** Yes the EBACC is offered to all pupils; however, it is an “open offer” as opposed to a “directed offer”.

**Governor Question:** How do you engage staff with the new policies and procedures?

**Response:** We are mindful of the pace of change. The staff questionnaire and new forum demonstrates that staff feel more supported, and the pie charts shared with governors show the Choices policy is working.

**Governor Question:** 13 staff attended the Staff Forum, is this an issue?

**Response:** The forum is part of the school’s open culture and is solution focused; attendance is optional.

**Governor Question:** What happens if supply staff do not conform to expectations?

**Response:** They are not invited back. To mitigate supply, we have secured a Supply Teacher who is trained in the Choices policy to cover absences.

### Student Voice

Governors informed the last student questionnaire took place during the summer term of 2022. A repetition of this questionnaire will take place this term. In response to how pupils highlight concerns a ‘SOS-Speak Out Safely’ button was launched in the final half term of the year. How the questionnaire is administered will change in order to gain a more accurate recording of pupil views.

**Governor Question:** What are we doing to support pupils if they raise concerns about feeling safe?

**Response:** Pupil feedback during the quality assurance process indicated that there has been a noticeable change for the better and the split lunches have proved popular.

Governors advised the new Academy’s Pledges was introduced this September. Pupils are expected to achieve two per year in order to achieve all 10.

### Financial Management and Governance

The monthly management accounts were shared with Governors. The 2022/2023 budget was submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. The CFO advised the education sector is facing a very uncertain future with increases in staff and energy costs amongst others being a major concern. Confirmed figures released by Education & Skills Funding Agency for the school budget share for 2022/23, the budget share for Longfield Academy is £5,266,233, which is an increase of £148k. All other income is expected to be in line with the 21/22 budget.

One area that is key to financial planning is the retention of existing pupils and ensuring Year 6 intake is strong in terms of pupil numbers.

Governors were advised that the last-minute release of the 32nd School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) report, informing us of a change to the expected increases to experienced teachers pay from 3% to 5% from September 2022, was released after Swift Academies had already approved the budget and financial plans. The changes apply to all teachers on main scale 6 and above, including leadership.

Many Schools and Trusts were also projecting a 2% increase on experienced teachers from September 2023 which has increased to 3% (with some smaller changes to the lower pay scales). These are not yet set in stone, and the DfE state that a review may occur early next year.

Regarding non-Teaching Staff, Governors informed that at the end of July, the National Employers for local government services also made a final pay offer to the unions representing NJC 'Green Book' employees. We had been advised a 3% inflationary increase, however the latest offer is an increase of a £1,925 on all NJC pay points from 1 April 2022 which equates to increases of between 10.5% and 4.04%. The majority of 2022/23 budgets will have been set and approved before this announcement so Schools and Trusts will need to consider the financial impact on the current and future year spending plans.

**Governor Question:** When do the current energy contracts end?

**Response:** We secured a four-year Gas contract which is very competitive. Electricity contracts are due for renewal in December 2022, initial meetings were held with suppliers in September 2022 to discuss the current market and projections due to the global crisis and rise in costs. Although the government has proposed a price cap this has not yet been finalised and information has not been published. Further meetings are scheduled throughout the Autumn term to ensure the best possible deal is secured when possible.

#### **Trust IT Update**

The Trust IT Manager reported that the IT Team replaced two full IT rooms with new Stone Computers. A significant number of aged computers were also removed from multiple locations with the premise of using portable devices like Laptops as a replacement, meaning that 105 computers were booked to be collected by StoneRecycling with the potential of £350 refund dependant of condition. 40 of the better quality removed computers have been stored with plans to equip the Library area once desks network and power have been installed.

Governors were informed that work has started on auditing the site infrastructure with means to improve the WIFI access and backend systems. This will enable the site to progress with most wireless setups in the future, however it has been noted that the age of the cables between rooms and the edge switching equipment does not have the capacity to host the modern WIFI equipment, so this will have an effect on the roll out date as the foundations that the WIFI will sit on needs to be addressed.

Governors were advised that Longfield would now be eligible for the DFE Connect Classroom Grant to replace infrastructure, rewiring, switches and enhance Wi-Fi. However, this cannot be applied for until a letter of invitation is received and then the application period runs for three years from January 2023.

#### **Schedule of Contracts**

Governors were advised 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. This has ensured we retain the personalised service of a H&S Consultant who has knowledge of each site to provide support from September 2022.

It was requested that Health and Safety is listed separately on future reports.

#### **Estates Management and Health and Safety**

Governors advised that the 2022/2023 CIF applications were submitted to the DfE via the online portal in December 2021 and results were received in May 2022. Despite neither application being successful in the first instance, this was appealed which resulted in one successful application.

The successful application has resulted in circa £400k of funding to improve fire safety by installing fire stopping barriers and repairing/replacing fire doors to classrooms and corridors. Due to the nature of the works this project is expected to be carried out in Summer term of 2023.

2023/2024 Round - Initial discussions have already taken place between the Trust Business manager and RLB who assist with the writing of our bids. Applications are due to be submitted mid-December. Site visits and full asbestos surveys will be undertaken to ensure the applications are robust and fit this year's criteria once it is published, this is expected to be in October.

Short, medium and long-term premises priorities continue to be reviewed for the upkeep and development of the school premises. This enables us to prioritise capital spending and assist budget forecasting. These take into consideration both Head of School priorities and results from Condition Data Surveys. The Trust Business Manager, CFO, Trust ICT Manager and head of School meet regularly to discuss and implement planning phases for expenditure and asset replacement to ensure the above priorities are met.

In 2021 the Government announced that a second round of Condition Data Surveys (CDC) would take place. Longfield Academy expect to receive a survey date before August 2023. Results of this survey will further enable items of prioritisation for Estates Management enable the future planning of funding applications.

Governors were advised that the Premises and H&S Audits are due to take place in October 2022. Once these are completed the link Governor will be provided with feedback and any outstanding actions or recommendations will be addressed as a priority.

#### **12. Risk Register**

The register was shared with governors prior to the meeting.

**Governor Comment:** A governor asked if the risks on the register had been increased in view of the Ofsted report. It was also suggested that the register is re-ordered so that the highest risk was at the top of the report, and arrows added to indicate whether the risk had gone up or down.

**Response:** We are looking at other templates and feeding it into the SIP.

#### **13. Scheme of Delegation**

LGB Governors advised the Scheme of Delegation had been approved at the June Board of Directors' meeting to include changes to governors' roles and responsibilities.

#### **14. The Trust Development Plan**

The Trust Development Plan was shared with governors.

<p>15.</p>	<p><b>Longfield Academy School Improvement Plan</b> This document was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors advised this was a working document prepared in line with the Ofsted inspection report. The overarching focus was directed to the impact of the activities and strategies in place.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> How can we verify the progress of improvement in the School Improvement Plan as the previous EDP reports were positive and then we get an Inadequate rating? <b>Response:</b> Policy into practice is key which can be verified by governors visiting the school. Governors also welcome to go on learning walks with SLT and join deep dives into departments.</p> <p>The Head of School informed governors that external support would be sought to hone in on specific subject specific needs. The CEO added that the school is also looking at securing additional external Quality Assurance.</p>	
<p>16.</p>	<p><b>Response to Minded to Terminate Letter</b> Governors informed about the Chair of the Trustees/Head of School/CEO's meeting with the Regional Schools' Commissioner and the ESFA. The capacity to improve and actions in place were discussed. Additional documentation was requested and this has been sent.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> What is the worse outcome? <b>Response:</b> Longfield Academy could be taken out of the Trust or the Trust could be taken over by a bigger Trust.</p>	
<p>17.</p>	<p><b>Single Central Record</b> Governors RESOLVED that the Single Central Record for Longfield Academy should be reviewed and signed by the Head of School and LGB Chair.</p>	
<p>18.</p>	<p><b>Policies</b> The Head of School drew Governors' attention to the policies for information and approval.</p>	
<p>19.</p>	<p><b>For information</b> – Trust approved policies (Summer 2022): Infection Control Policy; Probationary Policy; GDPR Data Protection Policy; Pupil Premium Policy, Anti-Harassment and Bullying, Bring your own Device Policy, Capability Policy, Family Friendly Policy, IT Acceptable User Policy, Leave of Absence Policy, Sickness Management Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy, In-Year Admission Policy, Remote Education.</p> <p>a) <b>For review</b> - Anti-Bullying / Charges for Activities Policy (Charges and Remissions) / Literacy Policy / Numeracy Policy/ SEN Policy b) <b>For approval</b> – Behaviour Policy (with Rewards), Quality of Education Policy, SEND Information Report, c) <b>For approval following the meeting</b> - Safeguarding Policy, Attendance Policy. Governors advised that the DFE changes were being incorporated into these policies, but as they were not ready in time for this meeting, the policies would be emailed for approval.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the circulated policies, including any changes were noted and agreed to adopt and approve with immediate effect.</p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p><b>Admissions arrangements 2024-25</b> This document was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED to approve the admissions arrangement for 2024-25.</p>	

- 21. Pupil Premium**
- Pupil Premium Strategy Review 21/22
  - Pupil Premium Statement 2022-23; (will be provided separately before December and will require governors to approve via email)

Governors RESOLVED that the contents of the circulated Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2022- and the Pupil Premium Review 21/22 were approved and adopted with immediate effect.

**22. Special interest governors – feedback/updates from school contact:**

Governors asked to complete the templates sent to them when visiting the school. It was explained that all sections do not need to be completed as this will build up over time.

Governors asked to contact their link member of staff as soon as they can.

Governors volunteered for the following areas of interest.  
This will be approved at the next Standards Committee meeting.

Premises / Health & Safety	Robert Bell
Safeguarding (including E-Safety) & Welfare	Nicola Bales
Looked After Children (LAC) & Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)	Tanya Singh
Special Educational Needs (SEN), including SEMH	Tanya Singh
Finance	Nick Rees
Personal Development	Robert Bell
Behaviour and Attitudes (Attendance & Punctuality, Conduct, Rewards and Sanctions)	Nicola Bales
Disadvantaged	Nick Rees
Careers & Transition	Natalie Forster
Quality of Education (Teaching & Learning, Curriculum and Progress)	Nicola Bales
Early Careers Framework	Natalie Forster

**23. MAT Development Session**

Governors reminded about the next MAT Development session to be held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 5.00pm..

**Any urgent other business raised under item 3**

There were no urgent items raised under item 3 of the agenda.

**Approval of documents for inspection**

Governors RESOLVED that the agenda and approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.

**Date and time of future meetings: Local Governing Body**

Monday 13 March 2023 4.30pm at Longfield Academy

Monday 19 June 2023 4.30pm at Longfield Academy

These minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of Longfield Academy as follows:

on: 30/1/23 date

Signature: NBales Print Name: NBALES

**Action Points:**

- Minutes to be signed by Chair (CJ)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Declarations of Interest – Clerk will contact absent Governor's.</li><li>• Health and Safety to be separate on future reports (SJ)</li><li>• Risk register to be updated and re-ordered with highest risk at the top (GH)</li></ul>	
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**Explanatory notes:**

\* Minutes of the previous meeting are draft and cannot be issued until the Board of Directors approves them at the current meeting. This gives the Board the opportunity to correct any inaccuracies and review 'approval of documents for inspection' (see below). Detailed minutes of discussions are inappropriate and likely to inhibit the full and frank exchange of views and debate.

\*\*\***Approval of documents for inspection**' is a section within the minutes which gives the Board of Directors an opportunity to withhold from public consumption information which has been deemed to be inappropriate for general release, e.g. personal information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers. Supporting documentation could, for example, include the names of pupils or teachers

**Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Governors need to be aware that despite withholding documents under 'approval of documents for inspection', they could still be requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If this is the case, the school needs to consider the request and the application of possible exemptions. You are advised to seek further advice

APPROVED