

Swift Academies

Success will inspire future triumphs

Standards Committee, The Rydal Academy

4.30pm, Thursday 17th March 2022

MINUTES

Present (Directors)	Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Fisher, Derek Bell, Sam Hirst
in attendance	John Armitage: Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Nick Lindsay: Head of School, Longfield Academy Glen Hart: Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies Sarah Jones: Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies

Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present

Directors were reminded that three Directors were required in order that decisions could be taken during this meeting of the Standards Committee of Swift Academies. Four (4) Directors were present.

Apologies for absence and their acceptance

Directors were informed that apologies were received from Julie Cornelius who would not be attending this meeting.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted and apologies accepted.

Notification of items of urgent other business

- items that the Standards Committee of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

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No items of urgent business were raised.

Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests

- a) complete / review the Register of Interest for the 2021-2022 academic year
Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the Register of Interest annually to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members and / or other trustees and / or employees. The Register should be updated during the academic year should circumstances change.

All Directors present submitted a completed Register of Interest.

- b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting
Directors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting.

No declarations of interest were received.

- c) Code of Conduct – The Chair reminded all present of the importance of adhering to the code of conduct at all times.

Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising

Draft minutes of Standards Committee held on Wednesday 6 October 2021 had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Trust Business Manager would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.

Trust
Business
Manager/
Chair

PART B: Business Items for Discussion

The Rydal Academy

- a) Head Teacher Report
- b) Education Development Partner report
- c) SEF/Action Plan

The Head Teacher Report, EDP Report and SEF/Action Plan had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher reported to Directors that in-year mobility had been significantly high compared to previous years, receiving many children through the women's refuge. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that 2 Gypsy, Roma Traveller pupils have moved to Elective Home Education since

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September citing cultural reasons. The Head Teacher advised Governors that meetings were held with the family to try and encourage the family to keep the pupils in education.

The Head Teacher informed Directors that attendance was currently tracking above national average with the exception of 1 week. Traveller families have been more static during covid pandemic due to national restrictions which has benefitted pupil learning. There are currently only 2 pupils who have a concerning level of persistent absence – this continues to be monitored.

The Head Teacher reported to Governors that there had been no permanent exclusions during the reporting period although suspensions were higher than average, the majority of which related to a small percentage of pupils in years 4-6 with challenging behaviours.

One pupil is currently accessing alternative education through Outdoor Ambition.

The Head Teacher reported Y1 Phonics are currently in line and above national average (compared to 2019 averages) and Y2 phonics are currently just above average for stability children compared to Rydal's last 5 years.

They reported that KS2 attainment was difficult to measure progress but are hopeful to come out with positive progress.

The Head Teacher informed directors that additional information had been added to this term's report to include curriculum and class sizes.

A Director queried how Teacher to Pupil ratios compared to national averages.

The Head Teacher confirmed they were very similar and that Rydal invest heavily in Support staff to reduce ratios and ensure pupils over pan in certain year groups can be welcomed.

A Director queried if the amount of Teaching Assistants was above average.

The Head Teacher confirmed they were very fortunate to currently sustain this level.

It was also reported that the most recent EDP report commented on the robust moderation processes in place.

The Head Teacher informed Directors that funding had been received for 163 pupils to support school led tuition and this has actually helped support 353 pupils.

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The Head Teacher advised that due to the comprehensive offer at Rydal Academy they sometimes are unable to evidence any additional measures that can be put in place as they are already offered as standard. Therefore, SEN figures often appear lower.

A Director asked what impact this would have on inspections.

The Head Teacher stated that there may be an impact, however, the offer was an honest reflection of provisions.

A Director queried which SEN characteristics were more prominent.

The Head Teacher stated there was a mix but high percentage of MLD and SEMH.

The Head Teacher stated that staff, pupil and parent questionnaires would now take place termly and the most recent results were evidenced in the Head of School report.

The Head Teacher explained that the focus of this terms visit was for an update on the current context of the school, a review of the schools Subject Area Verification Exercise process and a subject review of History.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, SEF/Action Plan, Education Development Partner Report, and information reported, were noted.

Hurworth School

- a) Head Teacher's Report
- b) Education Development Plan
- c) SEF/Action Plan

The Head Teacher informed Directors that pupil numbers had increased steadily and school expect to have 690 pupils on roll in September 2022 which will be an increase on previous years. They also stated that the percentage of pupils who are PLAC/LAC or SEN continue to steadily increase.

Attendance 2021/2022 – Attendance to date has been significantly impacted due to the Covid pandemic although there appear to be signs that this is now settling. Overall school attendance is 91.61%, in comparison the latest national average attendance data is 89.1%

The Head Teacher advised that reduction of student suspensions remain a focus. Recent figures have decreased dramatically with only 16 external suspensions this year so far – without compromise on quality of behaviour.

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The Head Teacher informed Directors that there has been a significant increase in recorded safeguarding incidents since the lockdowns related to Covid-19. There has been an increase in disclosures made regarding abuse at home and mental health concerns. The rise in safeguarding cases, especially linked to mental health is a county and nationwide issue. Pupils presenting and reporting with anxiety or stress related issues has also risen significantly.

Year 10 data currently reflects a Progress 8 score of +0.18, this has regressed in comparison to previous predictions and therefore is a focus for targeted intervention to ensure all pupils maximise their potential. It was stated that outcomes for current Year 11 look positive despite the effects of the recent pandemic, overall predicted progress score is +0.18

Following a school wide focus on reading all pupils have evidenced a minimum of 3 months improvement in their current reading age.

The most recent staff, parent and pupil surveys were carried out in Autumn Term 2021. The staff survey received 51 responses with the vast majority of responses being positive. The parents survey for Y10 and Y11 was conducted at parents evening and again results were wholly positive.

The Head Teacher confirmed the school's EDP Partner, visited in February 2022 and completed a SEND learning walk, witnessed interventions and completed classroom observations. They also spoke to students and completed book scrutinies. Languages and Geography were a focus for the visit– both reported as very positive in the report. Feedback from the visit was given to staff at briefing held in March 2022.

A Director queried how often EDP visits are conducted.

The Head Teacher confirmed these take place each term.

The Head Teacher informed Directors that following a successful interview process a new Head Teacher had been appointed and would commence in September 2022.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, EDP report, SEF/Action Plan, and information reported, were noted.

Longfield Academy

- a) Head of School Report
- b) SEF/Action Plan

The Head of School at Longfield drew Directors attention to the previously circulated Head of School report.

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The Head of School reported to Governors that pupil numbers for September 2022 were lower than in recent years.

They stated recent observations of classes and teaching have been calm and focused and this has also been evident during unstructured times. Pupil punctuality has seen a significant improvement which has also reduced disruption.

The Head of School clarified that the school's Behaviour Plan that was implemented after February Half term (including the implementation of an internal suspension room) was working with conduct returning to the levels that the school had experienced prior to the significant period of staff absence in January/February 2022.

The Head of School provided an update on Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and stated that there had been 2 PEX at the time of writing the report but this had now risen to 7.

The Head of School informed Governors that they expected Longfield Academy to perform strongly in the 2022 public examinations. Current year 11 teacher predicted new data that has now been compared to 2020 SISRA estimated grades so that we can compare like with like across previous year groups. The Autumn 2020/21 was from 2019 estimated grades, thus the difference in data. The progress for current year 11 is around flat zero from the summer term and some of the 4+ English and Maths have converted to 5+ which shows in the table current year 11 2020/21

Curriculum Planning is currently underway for September 2022. The Head of School advised they feel the decision to not enforce Ebacc at Longfield Academy was the correct decision for the cohort as this will provide to best opportunity of success for pupils.

The Head of School informed Governors that there is a currently a vacancy in Science and the Academy is actively recruiting for this role.

The Head of School advised Governors that Longfield Academy remains a sponsored establishment and currently has no Ofsted rating. The Educational Development Partner continues to visit school on a termly basis to ensure a robust process for quality assurance is in place and to support the school to achieve its' improvement objectives.

Staff wellbeing offer is continuously under review to address as many needs as possible – results of staff surveys tend to fluctuate more than pupil results.

Safeguarding incidents have risen significantly with County Lines, Sexual & Alcohol Exploitation cases all rising. This has increased the amount of incidents reported on CPOMS systems, requiring more administration time to monitor. The Head of School advised that all reports are taken seriously and police often patrol around school if required.

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The Head of School added that as well as the additional workload from this the Academy had been largely effected by staffing issues and the lack of availability from supply agencies in both autumn and spring terms – this had a significant impact on standards. Despite this they stated that overall behaviour was still remarkably improved since Swift took over the Trust in 2017.

A Director recognised the journey the Academy has been on and the improvements that have been evident and thanked the Head of School for being part of this.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, SEF/Action Plan, and information reported, were noted.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

- a) Scheme of Delegation
- b) Trust Development Plan

The Chief Executive Officer's Report, Scheme of Delegation and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive Officer commented that the content of the circulated Report had also been shared with Local Governing Bodies and ran through in detail at these meetings.

Directors RESOLVED there were no further questions at this point.

Policies for approval and review

- a) Probationary Policy
- b) GDPR Data Protection Policy
- c) Pupil Premium Policy

The Chief Executive Officer reported that the circulated policies were existing policies which had been reviewed to ensure they continued to be fit for purpose. Amendments to the circulated policies had been highlighted in yellow for ease of reference and reflected national guidance.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated policies was noted and approved and adopted with immediate effect. The approved policies would be uploaded to the Trust website

PART C – Concluding Items

Any urgent other business raised under Item 3

No urgent items of other business were identified under Item 3.

Approval of documents for inspection

Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, 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 (all from 4.30pm): Standards Committee

- Wednesday 22 June 2022

MAT Development Sessions (all from 5pm)

- Thursday 7 July 2022

Chairs / Vice Chairs of LGB and Executive Leadership Team (all from 1:30pm)

- Friday 24 June 2022

These minutes were approved by the Standards Committee, as follows:

On...22.6.22... (date)

signed by: (Chair) J. Cornelius

printed name: Julie Cornelius