

Standards Committee

4:30pm, Wednesday 3 October 2018

Longfield School, Longfield Road, Darlington DL3 0HT

MINUTES

Present: (Directors)	Sam Jameson, Keith Bernstone, Rita Rees, Nick Rees, Derek Bell (chair), Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer, Swift Academies)
In attendance:	Nicholas Lindsay (Head of School, Longfield School) Nichola Peaker (Head of School, Hurworth School) John Armitage (Head of School, The Rydal Academy) Sarah Jones (Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies) Tracey Curtis (Governance Partner, Avec Partnership)

Item	Description of Discussion	Action
1	<p>Election of chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to elect a chair to serve until the first meeting of the autumn term 2019 <p>The governance partner sought nominations for the election of a chair to the standards committee of Swift Academies. One nomination was received for Derek Bell.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that Derek Bell was elected chair of the standards committee of Swift Academies.</p> <p>Derek Bell in the chair.</p>	
2	<p>Election of vice-chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to elect a vice-chair to serve until the first meeting of the autumn term 2019 <p>Nominations were sought for the election of a vice-chair to the standards committee of Swift Academies. One nomination was received for Rita Rees.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that Rita Rees was elected vice-chair of the standards committee of Swift Academies.</p>	

3 Welcome and confirmation that quorum present

A round of introductions took place for the benefit of all present.

The Governance Partner confirmed that a quorum was present. The scheme of delegation for Swift Academies stated that *the quorum for each of the committees is three*. Six Directors were present at this point in the meeting. Dean Judson joined the meeting later.

4 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

Directors were informed that the Chief Executive Officer would join the meeting as soon as possible.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

5 Notification of items of other business

- items that the standards committee of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

No items of urgent other business were notified.

6 Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests

- a) complete the register of interest

Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the register of interest to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members or Governors and/or members or Governors and employees. A register should be completed annually and updated during each academic year where circumstances change.

- 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) to complete the automatic disqualification declaration

Directors were informed that the Charity Commission automatic disqualification rules had changed with effect from 1 August 2018. New reasons for disqualification included being in contempt of court, being named under particular anti-terrorism legislation or being on the sex offenders register.

Directors RESOLVED that the register of interest and automatic disqualification declaration should be completed as soon as possible and returned to the Governance Partner.

7 Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising

- **standards committee, Tuesday 26 June 2018**

Draft minutes of the standards committee meeting of Swift Academies held on Tuesday 26 June 2018 had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the minutes of the standards committee meeting of Swift Academies held on Tuesday 26 June 2018 were approved as a true record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Trust Business Manager would retain the approved signed minutes.

Chair / Trust
Business
Manager

8 Understanding your data

The Education & Skills Funding agency *Understanding your data, a guide for school governors and academy trustees* had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Head of School (Hurworth School) discussed with Directors the content of the circulated guide. It was reported the guide provided a template that could be used across Swift Academies to ensure a standardised format and support governors and directors in their role to interpret information across the multi-academy trust. The headteacher and heads of school had used the template when writing the autumn term 2018 reports for presentation during local governing body and board of directors' meetings.

Directors were asked to provide comments on the format of the circulated reports. Directors commented that the reports were 'simplistic' in part but that it made for 'easy' reading. It was reported that the reports were intended as an audit tool and had been written for an audience unaware of the respective school settings.

Directors sought clarification whether the format would be informative during an Ofsted inspection. It was reported that the standardised format was believed to be helpful and that information would be located in one place.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

9

Hurworth School

- a) head of school report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit

The Head of School report (Hurworth School) and EDP visit report had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Head of School discussed with Directors the content of the circulated Head of School report, including pupil numbers and exclusions, attendance, 2018 results, curriculum linked to funding, finance and budget, associated transport, Ofsted, safeguarding and wellbeing, mental health of students and health and safety.

Pupil numbers

It was reported that the published admission number (PAN) for Hurworth School was 127 per year group. The school continued to be over-subscribed.

Exclusions

Four fixed term exclusions were reported since 1 September 2018; there had been 100 fixed term exclusions during 2017-2018.

Attendance

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated report for information in respect of pupil absence levels including persistent absence by year group. It was reported that attendance was currently 96.03% (76 pupils with persistent absentees under 90%). 25 pupils were reported as persistent absentees with attendance under 90%.

Governors challenged the information presented in respect of attendance and sought clarification; the Head of School reported that two pupils in Year 11 were experiencing mental health issues, with another subject to regular hospitalisation due to a medical condition.

The Head of School drew Directors' attention to the comparison data contained in the circulated Head of School report. Comparison data had been included in order to provide context to the information reported in respect of the first three weeks of autumn term 2018.

Results

The Head of School reported good GCSE results in 2018 with the school achieving an effectively flat Progress 8 score. However, science was a cause for concern and had lowered the overall figure. Pupils considered to be disadvantaged had made great progress. The 2018 cohort was the first to have new GCSE specifications in the majority of subject and the 2019 cohort will be the first to have the same gradings across all subjects. Engineering and enterprise and marketing courses had been introduced from September 2018 as an alternative to GCSE classes.

Teacher Contact Ratio

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School report for information in respect of teacher contact ratios. It was reported that based on a staffing model best for the requirements of Hurworth School the contact ratio was 93.2%. Directors were informed that not all members of the senior leadership team had 25 lessons teaching time. The information contained in the report also provided an overview related to finance, for instance spend on teachers and spend on non-teachers. Comparisons to national benchmarking data would be made and available to directors at their next meeting.

Darlington Secondary Schools Associated Transport 2018-2019

The Head of School reported that all year groups would be charged for school transport unless students were eligible for free school transport. The daily cost had been set at £3 per day. There are currently 312 pupils travelling by bus to Hurworth School. Following a review of the requirements of school transport, the school bus numbers have reduced from 8 to 6. It was hoped that the reduction would eliminate the small loss experienced in the previous academic year.

Ofsted judgement

The last Section 5 Ofsted inspection took place in April 2008: the judgement at that time was Outstanding in all areas. Hurworth School experienced a Section 8 no-notice inspection in April 2018, where safeguarding was found to be effective.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The Head of School reported that all staff must attend Level 1 Safeguarding Training, whilst some staff also attend Level 2 and Level 3. The Head of School report contained information about staff and the vulnerable pupils being supported. Baseline assessments had been completed with Year 9 pupils in respect of a mental health pilot scheme.

Directors sought clarification whether staff were qualified to provide support for mental health. The Head of School confirmed that services were purchased where needed and staff had been upskilled as much as possible. The Headteacher and Heads of School across Swift Academies were to be involved in a joint commissioning network that it was hoped would also support mental health issues for pupils.

Health and Safety

The Head of School reported that the Health and Safety Committee meets regularly and the lead governor for Health and Safety conducts regular inspections. External support is also provided by Avec Partnership. Safety Premises Inspection and Fire Risk Assessments were completed in March 2018. Actions from the reports had been addressed.

Staff Views

Staff and pupil questionnaires would be completed during the current academic year.

Directors thanked the Head of School (Hurworth School) for the presentation of the report and RESOLVED that the content and presentation were noted.

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Longfield School

- a) head of school report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit

During this item Dean Judson entered the meeting.

The Head of School report (Longfield School) and EDP visit report had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Pupil numbers

It was reported that pupil stability had been an increasing issue. Attempts to address the issue would be made via Community Cohesion plans.

At the end of Year 9, 13 pupils had moved to UTC (10 male, 3 female). The Head of School expressed his disappointment at the loss of 13 pupils and explained that Longfield School would be mindful of the curriculum offer in 2019-2020. Key Stage 4 engineering provision at Longfield School was reported to have excellent pupil progress.

Absence

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School Report (Longfield School) which contained data in respect of attendance. The data was the most recently available with a comparison to national average values. Data in respect of 2017-2018 was reported to be 'encouraging' and showed a substantial increase in overall attendance and for all pupil groups with the exception of Looked after Children for the academic year 2017-2018.

Behaviour

It was reported that up to 18 June 2018, fixed term exclusions had reached 257 pupils. The Head of School commented that this position was not acceptable. There had been 189 fixed term exclusions in November 2017 at Longfield School by the time the interim leadership team were appointed.

Attainment

Governors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School report for information in respect of attainment per year group. The Head of School reported that the progress of Longfield School since November 2017 was a credit to the staff.

Alternatively educated pupils 2017-2018

It was reported that all alternative education provision was quality assured through the Darlington 11-19 partnership. All providers have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

Curriculum

It was reported that personal development had been built into curriculum time with pupils accessing 20 minutes each day with their form tutor. Pupils were encouraged to develop skills in leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication. Pupils were developing their personal, social health and citizenship skills through the key themes.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 was reported to be broad and balanced and included a range of subjects. In addition there was a literacy group in Years 7 and 8 for pupils who have low reading and writing scores from Key Stage 2. They follow a bespoke literacy programme incorporating accelerated reader, Bedrock, fresh start and phonics intervention whilst studying aspects of geography, history, RE and English. Pupils are 'set' based on Key Stage 2 scores and have larger sets from 1-4 with smaller sets from 5 to 8.

At Key Stage 4, pupils have four options based on five hours per fortnight. There are a large number of options. Triple science and RE feature in the options with pupils encouraged to select humanities or language choices where appropriate for the 'bucket' to be filled.

It was reported that literacy was a key focus for boys at Longfield School. The whole school literacy drive involved a weekly literacy session during personal development time. Literacy was also a key focus in curriculum areas with understanding texts and extended writing encouraged in all department areas.

Curriculum Planning

As part of the multi-academy trust development fund, the trust would be undertaking a piece of work relating to Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning.

It was reported that curriculum planning should be a co-ordinated, joint exercise running alongside the budget to produce a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and was affordable. Governors' attention was drawn to the Head of School's report for information in respect of key factors that were to be monitored.

Quality assurance

It was reported that Longfield Learning had been introduced. The initiative would allow pupils to make progress at a challenging pace and promote development of special aptitudes.

Directors sought clarification of any feedback received from the Department for Education in respect of the progress made to date at Longfield School since the involvement of Swift Academies. The Chief Executive Officer reported that he has spoken with a representative from the Regional Schools Commissioner's office who had been 'impressed' that the support provided by Swift Academies had managed to arrest the decline in progress at such an early stage.

A second 2018-2019 Strategic Action Plan had been written as the original plan had been outstripped. Leadership had stabilised pupil progress and behaviour for compliance in the academy. Systems in respect of data, curriculum and assessment had been implemented to ensure consistency across departments, allowing for learning to be a focus of the classroom and ultimately impact positively on the progress of pupils.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School report for information in respect of safeguarding and wellbeing across the academy and staff involvement with pupils. It was reported that a safeguarding audit would be undertaken which was likely to identify recommendations for improved practices.

During this item Nick Rees and Dean Judson left the meeting and re-entered.

School community – staff, pupils and parents

The Head of School reported that a formal questionnaire of staff views would be undertaken before 2019 – staff were volunteering as a gesture of goodwill to undertake lunch duties and interventions: morale was believed to be very good.

Pupil and parent views would be completed during 2019. It was reported that attendance at open evenings and parents nights was now recorded to retain statistical information for comparison in future. The Ofsted parent view facility was being explored as a way of recording parent views on the school and their interactions.

Directors thanked the Head of School (Longfield School) for the presentation of the report and RESOLVED that the content and presentation were noted.

11

The Rydal Academy

- a) Headteacher report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit

The Headteacher report (The Rydal Academy) and EDP visit report had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Pupils on roll

It was reported that there were 640 pupils on roll (including nursery) on 20 July 2018. The number of pupils on roll had increased during the term to 608 pupils. 64 surplus places were reported (Reception to Year 6). Stability was reported as 64%, a 10% reduction over 3 years.

Attendance

Whole school overall attendance (92.9%) for the year was reported to be down on the previous year (2017-2018). The percentage of persistent absentees (16.7%) had increased when compared to the previous year. Attendance would remain a key focus area for improvement. Actions taken to date to improve attendance included extending the capacity of the Attendance Officer. In total of 226 days had been lost where pupils had moved out of the area and were awaiting transfer to another school.

Exclusions

One pupil had been Permanently Excluded from The Rydal Academy during Summer term 2018 and had recently been removed from roll at The Rydal Academy following completion of the review process.

Fixed term exclusions were reported to have decreased when compared to the last two years: 0.3% in 2017-2018.

Directors sought clarification whether any of the fixed term exclusions involved repeated incidents of exclusion. The Headteacher confirmed where incidents had been repeated. Repeated incidents would be included in future Headteacher's reports.

Attainment and Progress

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Headteacher's report for information in respect of pupil progress and attainment. The Headteacher discussed with Directors Early Years Foundation Stage, Phonics testing, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 outcomes. Key Stage 2 progress measures were confirmed to be above National average for the first time in the schools history.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment was currently graded as Outstanding. 97% of teachers consistently demonstrate good or better practice with 92% of individual judgements during 2017-2018 academic year Good or better and 22% outstanding.

Ofsted judgements

The Headteacher reported that the last Ofsted section 5 inspection took place in May 2016 with judgments in all areas reported as 'good'. School overall effectiveness at The Rydal Academy was reported as Good, moving towards Outstanding. Self-evaluation judgements made against Ofsted grade descriptors contained in the current framework show overall effectiveness as Good, with all other aspects as Outstanding.

External review had included:

- Moderation of writing and maths across key stage 1 and key stage 2 (Carmel College)
- ITE provision external examiner visit (Durham University)
- Education Development Partner visit (Durham Education Development Service)

Health and safety

Audits and reviews completed during the reporting period:

- premises audit
- health and safety audit

Questionnaires

Pupil views were recorded annually during spring term each year and through the school council in the form of a pupil SEF. Parent views were also recorded annually during the spring term and through Ofsted Parent View.

Education Development Partner Report

Directors' attention was drawn to the content of the Education Development Partner Report and the following recommendations were discussed:

- Continue the high focus on increasing the proportion of children who attain a GLD by the end of reception.
- Ensure there is appropriate challenge for all children in Early Years, especially the most able, so that a greater proportion exceed the ELG in R, W & M by the end of reception.
- Rigorously track the progress of all children across Year 1 and 2 and intervene as necessary to ensure that a greater proportion of children who leave reception at the expected standard in R, W & M attain at the least the expected standard by the end of Year 1 and Year 2, and that children who leave reception below make strong progress to "catch up."
- Continue to rigorously monitor attendance and PA and take rapid actions to address this when children start to fall below the target set by the school. Continue to compare attendance and PA at key points in the year to the previous year so that comparisons can be made to see whether it is improving.
- Closely monitor the attendance of children whose attendance was particularly low the previous academic year so that improvements can be evidenced

The School improvement plan priorities in 2018-2019 were discussed and the following key focuses outlined:

- explore opportunities to extend multi-academy trust to include a primary partner

- close the gap to national average attainment through progress being above the national average in Key Stage 2
- close the gap to national attainment in writing through accelerated progress due to impact marking approach
- improve overall school attendance towards 95%+
- to establish new leadership responsibilities and roles in line with Swift Academies central team including responsibilities for health and safety, premises management, performance management

Directors thanked the Headteacher (The Rydal Academy) for the presentation of the report and RESOLVED that the content and presentation were noted.

12

Chief Executive

- a) Chief Executive Report
- b) Trust Development Plan

The Chief Executive Officer's report and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive apologised to those present for his late arrival, and explained that he had been invited to attend the governing body meeting of a local authority maintained school, who were exploring academy conversion. The Chief Executive reported further that other approaches had been made by other primary schools exploring academy conversion.

Directors asked the CEO to outline the nature of the discussion and the likelihood of the school wanting to join the Trust.

The Chief Executive reported that the Chief Executive Report and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Directors for information, prior to discussion during the forthcoming Board of Directors' meeting of Swift Academies (Friday 26 October 2018).

Directors RESOLVED that the information presented and the content of the Chief Executive Report and Trust Development Plan were noted. Comments on the content of the circulated documents should be shared with the Chief Executive Officer.

13

Standing item

Swift Academies: scheme of delegation

Directors were reminded that the Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies remained a 'standing item' for meetings of the Local Governing Body, Board of Directors of Swift Academies and the two committees of the board. Changes approved by the Board of Directors would be reported in each meeting across Swift Academies.

The Chief executive officer reported that changes had been incorporated into the circulated Scheme of Delegation, as follows:

- delegation of performance related pay decisions
- levels of authority when purchasing goods and services
- signatures for contracts and service level agreements

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

14 Concluding items

Items of urgent other business

No items of urgent other business had been notified.

15 Approval of documents for inspection

Governors 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.

16 Date and time of next meeting

Directors RESOLVED that future meetings of the standards committee of Swift Academies would take place as follows: (all at 4:30pm)

- Wednesday, 27 February 2019 at The Rydal Academy
- Wednesday, 12 June 2019 at Hurworth School

approved by the Standards Committee of Swift Academies on:

27.02.19 (date)

signature (Chair):



name:

Derek Bell

