

Standards Committee

4:30pm, Wednesday 27 February 2019

The Rydal Academy, Rydal Road

MINUTES

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

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Discussion</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and confirmation that quorum present</p> <p>The Governance Partner confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that <i>the quorum for each of the committees was three voting directors</i>. Five Directors were present at this point in the meeting. Rita Rees joined the meeting later.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>No apologies for absence had been received. Directors were informed that Rita Rees would arrive late.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.</p>	
3	<p>Notification of items of other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> items that the Standards Committee of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda <p>One item of urgent other business was notified for consideration: Pupil Premium Policy. The Pupil Premium Policy would be considered during item 10 of the circulated agenda – Policy for approval.</p>	

4 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 Directors and/or members or Directors 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.
- d) Code of Conduct
Directors were reminded that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies had approved a Code of Conduct for Directors in March 2018. The Code of Conduct should be signed by Directors to confirm they will undertake to abide by the code of conduct for Directors across Swift Academies.

Directors RESOLVED that the Register of Interest, Automatic Disqualification Declaration and Code of Conduct should be completed as soon as possible and returned to the Governance Partner.

5 Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising

- **Standards Committee, Wednesday 3 October 2018**
Draft minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of Swift Academies held on Wednesday 3 October 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 Wednesday 3 October 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

Hurworth School

- a) Head of School Report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit report (Spring Term 2019)
- c) School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document

The Head of School Report (Hurworth School), EDP visit report (Spring Term 2019) and School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Pupil numbers

The Head of School reported that the published admission number (PAN) for Hurworth School was 127 per year group. The school was currently over-subscribed which was the case historically. There were 310 applications in total for Year 7 places from September 2019. Directors discussed the Admission Policy for Hurworth School and the impact on the school of associated areas.

The Head of School reported that mobility of pupils was low overall. Hurworth School was within the lowest 20% of all schools in respect of the proportion of girls to boys. There had been a significant increase in the number of students requiring additional support and an associated impact on staff time and resources. A number of pupils starting Hurworth School in September 2019 had already been identified as requiring additional support. A plan to manage the impact was being prepared.

The Head of School drew Directors' attention to information contained in her report and information in respect of attendance. Increasing overall attendance to 95% was one of the key priorities for the current academic year. 'Case studies' are retained on individual pupils as well as an overview of the year group. Analysis of attendance had been highlighted positively in the Education Development Partner report.

Directors were informed that permanent exclusions at Hurworth School were below the national average. Overall fixed term exclusions are above the national average for schools with a similar level of deprivation.

Attainment and progress

It was reported that the overall Progress 8 score for Hurworth School was average. English, Maths and the Open Element of Progress 8 are in the top 40% of schools. The EBacc Element of Progress 8 was reported to be in the bottom 20% of schools: this was almost exclusively due to the Summer 2018 results in Science. An action plan had been put in place and intensive additional support provided.

The performance of pupils with middle prior attainment decreased slightly in comparison to the previous academic year in most areas with the exception of Science. There was no gap in performance between disadvantaged and all pupils. The number of pupils completing EBacc was reported to be below the national average with the number of pupils taking languages impacting on the figure.

Curriculum planning

The Head of School reported that students are set on entry to Hurworth School based on Key Stage 2 information provided by the respective

primary school. There are five sets in Key Stage 3 which are regularly reviewed to ensure that students are in the correct set and make expected progress.

Quality assurance

The Head of School reported that the last Section 5 Ofsted inspection report had judged the school 'outstanding' in all areas. A no-notice inspection in April 2018 had concluded that Safeguarding was effective.

Education Development Partner Report

Directors were informed that the Education Development Partner (Jim Murray) had visited Hurworth School in September 2018 and again in January 2019. A copy of the Education Development Partner Report from the January 2019 visit had been shared with Directors.

Safeguarding and well-being

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School Report for information in respect of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register. Hurworth School had received the SENDIA award for outstanding SEN practice in July 2018.

School community: staff, pupils and parents

Internal staff questionnaires are circulated biennially and completed anonymously. The last questionnaire was circulated in June 2017 with findings demonstrating that 98% of staff strongly agree / agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at Hurworth School.

The Head of School reported that previous parental questionnaires had prompted little response with only 24 responses received. The current parental questionnaires had been circulated during parents' evenings, with 51 responses received to date.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head of School Report and information presented was noted.

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Longfield School

- a) Head of School Report (attached)
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) Visit Report (Spring Term 2019)
- c) School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation document

The Head of School Report, EDP Visit Report (Spring Term 2019), School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation document had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head of School presented to Directors the content of the circulated documents, drawing Directors' attention to the following specific areas contained in the report:

Head of School Report

Pupil Numbers / Attendance and Exclusions

Directors' attention was drawn to the content of the report and information in respect of pupil numbers across the cohorts, year 7 transition 2018-2019, in-year mobility, pupil absence and persistent absence.

Students' attendance had increased, in some cases, significantly.

Punctuality for all groups had improved significantly in the current academic year. There had been a renewed focus on attendance and a strategy introduced to improve punctuality.

Pupil exclusions

It was reported that there was an increasing trend of exclusions from 2016-2017 onwards. The trend was reported to be likely to continue into the 2018-2019 academic year. Pupils' expectations have been increased in respect of behaviour.

Attainment and Progress

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head of School Report for information in respect of pupil education outcomes.

It was reported that the current year 11 cohort continued on their improvement journey. Predictions for average attainment 8 was 4.22 which was lower than the average estimated A8 score (4.68). Progress 8 score was above floor standards at minus 0.33 which was an improvement on the 2018 leavers (minus 0.51).

Teaching & Learning

A number of measures had been put in place in order to improve teaching and learning, for instance, a 'blind' whole school book scrutiny by the Head of Department, and a standardisation of book scrutiny with the Senior Leadership Team.

Safeguarding Audit

An independent safeguarding audit had been completed in January 2019. Extremely positive feedback had been received with only minor action points identified in respect of the keeping and developing of training records and being able to better evidence day to day practice. Safeguarding recording systems have already been adjusted to reflect the actions identified.

School community: staff, pupils and parents

It was reported that a staff questionnaire would be issued to staff in due course. The EDP report confirmed a positive picture in respect of pupil views. The Senior Leadership Team are currently reviewing when best to issue a pupil questionnaire. An "active" School Council would be in place during Spring Term 2019.

The Senior Leadership Team were also exploring when a parent questionnaire would be issued. Parents evening attendance was reported at 62% for Year 8 and 71% for Year 11.

Education Development Partner (EDP) Report

The Head of School reported that the EDP Report acknowledged that Longfield School had 'strengthened' into a 'requires improvement' judgement. A learning walk had been undertaken as part of the EDP visit: some lesson observations had been positive whilst others judged as in need of improvement. Interaction with both pupils and parents was reported to have improved.

The Head of School explained that there was still a huge amount of work to be done: the EDP visit had confirmed the 'requires improvement' judgement to be appropriate.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the Head of School Report, EDP Visit Report (Spring Term 2019), School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation document were noted.

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The Rydal Academy

- a) Head Teacher Report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit Report (Spring Term 2019)
- c) School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document

The Head Teacher Report (The Rydal Academy), EDP visit report (Spring Term 2019) and School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher presented to Directors the content of the circulated Head Teacher's report, drawing Directors' attention to the summary of change within each section:

Pupil numbers / attendance and exclusions

The Head Teacher reported that the number of pupils on roll continues to rise year on year, although 54 surplus places remain.

Nursery places are lower than in the previous year due to a drop in the birth rate in the local area and surplus places have increased due to the nursery expansion.

The extended nursery day has been collapsed due to high staffing costs against minimal uptake from parents. The school will continue to monitor interest and can extend the offer in future if the level of demand can cost out increased staffing.

The proportion of Free School Meals; Looked After Children; English as an Additional Language; Gypsy, Roma Traveller; Education Health Care Plans; and Vulnerable pupils are all significantly high against national indicators. Governors' attention was drawn to the School Improvement Plan, position statement and self-review document for The Rydal Academy for further information and how provision supports pupils within these groups.

Reception transition /in-year mobility / cohort mobility /Year 6/Year 7 transition

Mobility remains one of The Rydal Academy's most limiting factors. The vast majority of pupils leaving the school are due to social factors and the majority of pupils admitted are due to reputation or mobility into the local area.

Transition procedures, baselining process and attendance / safeguarding policy are regularly reviewed in line with this phenomenon. Mobility pupils' attainment is significantly lower than that of stable pupils across all cohorts.

Pupil absence levels / cohort analysis

The Head Teacher reported that projections suggest annual attendance *will continue to improve although remain low against national averages*; current year attendance, with the Travelling code removed, stands at 95.38%. Gypsy, Roma Traveller pupils continue to have a significant negative impact on overall attendance.

The appointment of a full time Attendance Officer in September 2018 was proving to have an immediate positive impact on overall attendance.

Of the 102 children who were persistent absentees in summer 2018, 35 have left: of the 67 pupils remaining 70.15% have improved their attendance and 20.89% have improved to above the national average. Low attendees attain less well than the cohort as a whole.

Nursery and Reception pupils who are not statutory school age continue to be targeted in order to develop good attendance habits. Punctuality was also a current focus along with English as an additional language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) attendance.

Pupil exclusion levels

Permanent and fixed term exclusions remain low, zero for the current year.

Internal exclusions are currently projected to be high when compared to previous years. This is due to a no tolerance approach to aggressive behavior.

Attainment and progress

Current projections for 2019 Reception outcomes are believed to be conservative due to the data collection taking place early in the school year. Even so, projected growth is almost double the national average and would reduce the attainment gap by half from the reception baseline. Growth for disadvantaged pupils remains consistent over time and currently outperform other pupils.

Year 1 phonics - percentage of cohort at expected standard / Year 2 phonics - cumulative percentage of cohort at expected standard

Year 1 phonics outcomes are projected to continue to track just below national averages; no gap exists between disadvantaged and other pupils; stable pupils are projected to outperform mobility pupils and be in-line with national averages.

Year 2 phonics outcomes are projected to continue to track just below national averages; no gap exists between disadvantaged and other pupils; stable pupils are projected to outperform mobility pupils and be in-line with national averages.

Key Stage 1 – percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard+ percentage of pupils reaching a higher level of attainment

Projections indicate attainment will continue to be below national averages for expectation+ and in line for higher level. From starting points growth was reported to be four times the national average.

Stability pupils were projected to significantly outperform mobility pupils and to attain broadly in line with national averages. Disadvantaged pupils are projected to underperform against other pupils, no gap had existed in previous years.

Key Stage 2 – school progress score

Current projections for key stage 2 progress were reported to be below national floor targets (reading -5, writing -7, maths -5), but as these are based on actual scores from mock SATs in December 2018, staff remain confident that final progress figures will be above floor targets, although negative in all areas. An intensive intervention programme was in place to support the current year 6 cohort to attain as well as possible in May 2019. Conversion rates of prior, middle ability pupils are a key focus.

Key Stage 2 – conversion from previous attainment

Key Stage 2 – percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard+

Key Stage 2 – percentage of pupils reaching a higher level of attainment

Attainment is projected to be significantly below national averages; Disadvantaged pupils are projected to be outperformed by Other pupils; Stability pupils are projected to significantly outperform Mobility pupils.

Current cohort projections

The Head Teacher reported that key focus year groups in terms of attainment are Year 6, Year 5, Year 3 and Reception.

In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 growth is almost double the national rate and the gap to national attainment is closing considerably from Reception baselines. Growth in Year 2 and Year 3 is also strong.

Writing continues to have the largest gap when compared to national attainment. Governors' attention was drawn to the School Improvement Plan for current actions. Reading remained the key intervention focus for the school as improved comprehension and vocabulary would also support areas for development in pupils writing such as spelling, grammar and breadth of language.

Curriculum planning – staffing and class sizes

The Chief Finance Officer reported that it was vital that curriculum planning was coordinated as a joint exercise with the budget to produce a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and was affordable. Information was contained in the Head Teacher's report in respect of key factors to be monitored.

Curriculum offer

The Head Teacher reported that The Rydal Academy had developed and published a curriculum statement to sit alongside curriculum plans and the curriculum / teaching and learning policy on the school's website.

Impact marking in English was being established across the academic year to enhance use of critique and the quality of peer / self-assessment as well as to provide evidence of independent writing for moderation.

Developing Experts was reported as an online platform which was currently being introduced to embed and extend children's scientific knowledge.

Reading within and beyond the curriculum remains a key focus for curricular development, intervention support and to improve outcomes for pupils.

Progression in foundation subjects is the focus of Spring term curriculum scrutiny.

Audit ratings

The Head Teacher reported that within the school Self-Evaluation Document, Overall Effectiveness continues to be graded as Good but all other areas have been re-graded to 'good' rather than 'outstanding' (or good and rapidly improving – outcomes for pupils) against the current Ofsted framework. Due to current progress projections for 2019 and 2020 not evidencing the impact of the wide variety of outstanding provision and systems on offer across the school in respect of pupil outcomes.

The draft Ofsted framework for September 2019 may allow The Rydal Academy to re-grade some areas as 'outstanding' due to the focus moving more towards provision rather than being so heavily weighted towards outcomes.

Education Development Partner (EDP)

Governors' attention was drawn to the Head Teacher's report and EDP report for further information. Recommendation from the Spring and Summer term visits of the EDP and actions against those recommendations were contained in the circulated report.

Safeguarding and well-being: SEN

It was reported that the number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) continued to rise while the number of pupils receiving SEN support remains relatively static. Due to the increase proportion of pupils with high level and complex needs the school has established two Individual Mentoring Programme Support Groups (IMPS) which are managed by the Shadow SENCO and provided pupils working several years below their age appropriate curriculum level with supported small group or individualised learning across core subjects. Strong evidence of improved progress in pupil's work, wellbeing, behaviour and attendance is currently evident.

Safeguarding

The number of Looked After Children (LAC), Children in alternative care and children effected by domestic violence continue to rise.

The number of Children's Services Referrals was currently low against previous years while Early Help and incidents of professional challenge are high, this is in most part due to concerns where cases have not met threshold for Child Protection or Child in Need in the view of the Local Authority and the decision had been challenged by the school.

Since September 2018 an identified Teaching Assistant has provided academic mentoring to LAC pupils while the Personal, Development and Wellbeing Assistant has provided therapeutic support.

Two staff have recently trained to deliver a child focused programme for victims of domestic violence; while a third member of staff is about to

train in delivery of the adult version of the course to ensure sustainability of the courses which already runs for parents.

Professional challenge within the school and recording of this through CPOMS had been promoted with all staff. All staff and Governors have completed Level 1 Safeguarding and HSB training. All teaching and learning staff have also completed online safety accredited training. Previous LAC are now also recorded on the alternative care register including Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

A Local Authority Safeguarding Officer audit of safeguarding will take place during March 2019.

Over the last five years the school has had on roll between 15%-20% of all children working with Social Services in the Darlington Borough. The continued reduction of external support services available to families had increased demand on the school to find creative ways to address concerns and support families (freedom programme, school bus, therapeutic support, wrap-around care, DSL + 6 deputies, LAC TA, Personal Development and Wellbeing Lead, Personal Development and Wellbeing Advisory Assistant).

Health & Safety

The Chief Finance Officer reported that health & safety audits had taken place in Autumn Term 2018 which resulted in positive feedback from the external health & safety advisor.

Monthly premises meetings commenced in February 2019 allowing site staff across the Trust to meet, discuss issues and share best practice. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure we have an effective site team and share experience where possible.

The school community: staff, pupils and parents

Staff views were last collected in Spring 2018 and highlighted that understanding of the effectiveness of Governors / Directors is a focus area, this is in part due to the current data being collected during the period of migration to Swift Academies.

Pupil views

Children's perceptions of the schools strategies for supporting positive behaviour have improved but otherwise there was very little fluctuation in responses. Following on from annual pupil questionnaires all comments are followed up by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead, no key issues for individuals were identified.

Parent views

Many parents felt homework was too voluminous and overly challenging; therefore the policy has evolved to focus on reading and spellings as core homework and to promote extended learning opportunities. A larger proportion of parents were unaware of whether the school is well led and managed but this was found to be due to the fact less parents had come to the school with issues that needed resolving.

Directors thanked the Head Teacher (The Rydal Academy) for the presentation of the Head Teacher Report, EDP visit report (Spring Term

2019) and School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document and RESOLVED that the content and presentation were noted.

9 Chief Executive Officer

- a) Chief Executive Report to Local Governing Body
- b) Scheme of Delegation
- c) Trust Development Plan
- d) Trust Review Letter

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

The Chief Executive Officer explained that the documents shared with directors, as part of the Standards Committee meeting of Swift Academies were for information only at this stage. The content of the circulated documents would form part of the agenda for the next Board of Directors' meeting planned to take place from 2pm on Friday 22 March 2019.

Directors RESOLVED that the information reported was noted.

10 Policy for approval

- Complaints Procedure
- Pupil Premium Policy

The Complaints Procedure and Pupil Premium Policy had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

Complaints Procedure

It was reported that the Department for Education had released updated guidance in terms of the content of school complaints procedures. The revised Complaints Procedure shared with Directors prior to the meeting, incorporated the revised guidance to ensure the Trust were compliant. The draft policy had been shared during each of the recent Local Governing Body meetings

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted and that the Complaints Procedure was approved and adopted with immediate effect.

Pupil Premium Policy

The Pupil Premium Policy had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

It was reported that the Pupil Premium Policy included a statement for each school within Swift Academies in respect of disadvantage.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted and that the Pupil Premium Policy was approved and adopted with immediate effect.

**11 Concluding items
Items of urgent other business**

Pupil Premium Policy

Refer to agenda item 10, Policy for approval, for information.

12 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.

13 Date and time of next meeting

Directors RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Standards Committee of Swift Academies would take place from 4:30pm on Wednesday, 12 June 2019 at Hurworth School.

The meeting closed at 6:20pm.

These minutes were approved by the Standards Committee of Swift Academies as follows:

12.06.19 (date)

signature (Chair):



name:

Derek Bell.