



# Swift Academies

*Success will inspire future triumphs*

## Board of Directors' Meeting

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 2.00 pm at Longfield Academy

### MINUTES

Directors present:	Dean Judson (CEO), Derek Bell (Chair), Tim Fisher, Stuart Hargrove, Michael Garmston, Kelly-Ann Lyle and Zoe Beach.
Members present:	Keith Bernstone, Laurence Job and Robert Bell
In attendance:	Glen Hart: Chief Financial Officer, Swift Academies Sarah Jones: Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies Leon Watson: Trust ICT Manager, Swift Academies Angela Sweeten: Head Teacher, Longfield Academy John Armitage: Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Laura Hawksby: Trust Governance and Policy Officer

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
1.	<p><b>Election of Chair</b></p> <p>The Governance and Policy Officer sought nominations for the position of Chair of the Board of Directors for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that Derek Bell be appointed Chair of the Board of Directors for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p><i>(Note: Derek Bell in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.)</i></p>	Governance & Policy Officer
2.	<p><b>Election of Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Nominations were sought and received for the position of Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that Director Julie Cornelius be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing Academic Year.</p>	Governance & Policy Officer
3.	<p><b>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</b></p> <p>The chair welcomed those present to the meeting.</p> <p>It was confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that the quorum for Board of Directors meetings will be three voting Directors. 7 (Seven) Directors were present.</p>	

<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>6.</b></p> <p><b>a)</b></p> <p><b>b)</b></p> <p><b>c)</b></p> <p><b>7.</b></p> <p><b>a)</b></p> <p><b>b)</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</b></p> <p>It was reported that apologies had been received from Directors Julie Cornelius and Geoff Liddle. Apologies for absence had also been received from Rachel Somerville, Head of Hurworth School.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the apologies for absence were received and accepted for Director Julie Cornelius, Director Geoff Liddle and Rachel Somerville, Head of Hurworth School.</p> <p><b>Notification of items of urgent other business</b></p> <p>There were no items of any other business.</p> <p><b>Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests.</b></p> <p><b>Complete / Review the Register of Interest</b></p> <p>Directors and those present were reminded that they should update the Register of Interest to declare any relevant business and pecuniary interest and close family relationships between Members or Directors and/or Members or Directors and employees.</p> <p>It was confirmed that all Directors present had completed the Register of Interest for the current academic year.</p> <p>Directors confirmed that their respective Register continued to be accurate and up to date.</p> <p><b>To declare any personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting.</b></p> <p>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 made.</p> <p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>Directors were reminded they had signed the 'Directors Code of Conduct', upon appointment. It was confirmed that signed Directors' Code of Conduct were held on file for all Directors.</p> <p><b>Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising</b></p> <p><b>Full Board of Directors Friday 7 July 2023</b> - Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023, a copy of which is retained on file. All actions contained within the minutes had been completed. There were no matters arising.</p> <p><b>Appraisal and Pay Review Committee 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Redacted minutes in accordance with Article 125 a.)</b> – The minutes of the meeting of the Appraisal and Pay Review Sub Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were reported upon by the Chair of the Appraisal and Pay Review Sub-Committee and considered by the Board of Directors, a copy of which is held on</p>	
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	<p>file. All actions contained within the minutes had been completed. There were no matters arising.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The minutes of the Board of Directors held on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and Appraisal and Pay Review Sub-Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were a true and accurate record of the meetings.</li> <li>b) The Governance &amp; Policy Officer would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.</li> </ul> <p><b>8. Chair's Report</b></p> <p>The Chair advised he had received no new correspondence. The Chair expressed thanks and gratitude for the hard work of staff, Governors, Directors and Members.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the report be noted.</p> <p><b>9. Review of Membership</b></p> <p>Directors reviewed the current Membership document. The Governance &amp; Policy Officer advised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To note the resignations of Deb Hindson (General Governor Longfield Local Governing Body) as of the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and Joe Kelley (General Governor Hurworth Local Governing Body) as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.</li> <li>b) To note appointments by Directors of Peter Armstrong and Lisa Morehead as General Governors of Longfield Academy as of 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.</li> <li>c) To note appointments by Directors of Kelly Nicholson as a General Governor and Gaurav Bhatia as a Parent Governor of The Rydal Academy as of 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Gaurav Bhatia was appointed by Directors in accordance with Articles 54 and Article 54A.</li> <li>d) To note following a Parent Governor election Louise McCann has been duly elected by parents/carers of Hurworth School as of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a Parent Governor of Hurworth School. To note that General Governors Victoria Stone and Tracey Metcalfe details with regard to their appointments had been circulated to the Directors prior to the Board meeting and approval was now sought to their appointments.</li> <li>e) To note the appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGB's during the 2023-24 Autumn Term.</li> </ul> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the above report be noted and that the appointments of General Governors Victoria Stone and Tracy Metcalfe to Hurworth School be approved.</p>	<p>Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p> <p>Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p>
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<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback from Finance and Resources Committee:</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee provided feedback from the meeting of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.</p> <p>He advised that Directors at the Finance &amp; Resources Committee had considered Swift Academies Annual Accounts and Financial Statements for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and audit findings report period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and recommended to the Board for approval.</p> <p>It was noted that staff costs had increased, although they remained aligned to the national of 78%; and the in year deficit was expected to be circa £80k which is entirely due to the legal expense costs of the cyber incident. It was noted there were no significant audit findings.</p> <p>At the time of reporting to the Finance &amp; Resources Committee reserves were reported to be circa £500k, however the reserves position would be updated once the final accounts were received from Clive Owen Accountants.</p> <p>The report of the Directors and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2023 for Longfield Trading Limited were also considered and were recommended for approval at the Longfield Trading Company Board meeting on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.</p> <p>It was noted that the Annual Internal Assurance report was a clean report and Directors had discussed the internal audit work programme for the current year. Directors had requested that this include a review of fixed assets and capital budgets.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer had provided an update with regards to the management accounts. It was noted that the year-end outturn report predicted a slight deficit in line with the budgeted position. A key variance in the accounts was due to the Teacher Pay Grant, with the unfunded difference having been budgeted for.</p> <p>There was one recommendation for the Hurworth Risk Register which was to adjust the likelihood of occurring and gross risk figures regarding the recruitment of Governors at Hurworth in line with the other academies in the school.</p> <p>Directors noted the capital update report from the Trust Business Manager.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the report back from the Chair of Finance &amp; Resources Committee be noted.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback from the Standards Committee:</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Standards Committee provided feedback from the Standards Committee held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. It was noted that the Head Teacher's had provided comprehensive reports to the Standards Committee, copies of which were retained on file.</p>	

### Longfield Academy

The Head Teacher had advised the committee on Ofsted Priorities setting out the progress/impact achieved. It was noted student numbers intake had dropped for Year 7 entry in 2023/24.

Attendance figures which were noted to be higher than the national average. Work continued to monitor and address support measures and interventions to improve attendance further.

Year 11 results were noted to be good. The Chair of the Standards Committee advised that the verified progress 8 scores were not available at the time of the Standards Committee, however now he was able to advise the Board that Longfield Academy had been ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Darlington for Progress 8 with the figure being virtually flat at -0.09. The Board of Directors wished to pass on their congratulations to Longfield Academy for their results achieved in challenging times, during the IT disruption.

The Ofsted monitoring visit on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 was noted to have been positive; potentially there could be a full Ofsted Inspection in the Summer Term.

It was noted recruitment and retention of staff is of high priority at Longfield, to enable high quality of teaching and learning.

### Hurworth School

Pupil numbers were strong in Sept 2023 and SEN (Special Educational Needs) numbers have increased.

Attendance was above the national average and the school continued to focus on attendance figures via interventions and strategies that will be implemented to improve attendance further. There had been an increase in the number of racial incidents and several elements have been implemented to combat and educate further, for example hate crime assemblies and hate crime workshops.

The previous year 11(2022-23 academic year) attainment results and current Year 11 predictions were noted.

Quality Assurance remains a key priority at Hurworth School with pace, stretch and challenge for all students. There is continued work being implemented to ensure maximum impact of the change in KS3 to mixed attainment teaching. Reading provision and opportunities are being developed further.

### The Rydal Academy

The committee had noted there had been a smaller intake into Reception 2023/24. Attendance had increased, with persistent absenteeism down.

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

There was a high volume of safeguarding concerns and need. Summer term parents' questionnaires indicated no major issues.

Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the report back from the Chair of the Standards Committee be noted.
- b) That the Head of School and Head Teachers be thanked for all their hard work.

12.

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

The CEO (Chief Executive Officer) updated the Board with regards to Trust Development. It was noted that the TUPE consultation with Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College (QE) was due to launch, with a meeting scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 with Trade Unions and all QE staff invited. The Chairs of Swift and QE and senior representatives from both Boards and respective leadership teams in attendance. A measures letter had been sent from the Chair of Swift to the Chair of QE. It was noted due diligence information from Swift Academies had been forwarded to QE in preparation for their Board's approval.

A public consultation had been launched by QE. **Directors questioned what the responses had been?** It was reported back that there had been limited response to date with were no major areas of concern.

It was noted with regard to the Governance arrangements it would be important to maintain the clarity of the different role of the Board and Local Governing Bodies.

The CEO reported that the ICO (Information Commissioners Office) case as a result of the Cyber Incident was now closed.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the CEO's report be noted.

#### **a) Trust Development – Due Diligence**

A copy of the due diligence questionnaire which had been forwarded to QE for their completion was noted by the Board of Directors.

#### **b) Scheme of Delegation –**

Directors reviewed the December 2023 Scheme of Delegation

Directors **RESOLVED** that the Scheme of Delegation be approved.

#### **c) Trust Development Plan –**

Directors reviewed the December 2023 Trust Development Plan.

<p>13.</p>	<p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Trust Development Plan be approved.</p> <p><b>Head of School/Head Teacher Updates (verbal updates)</b></p> <p><b>a) Longfield Academy</b></p> <p>The Head Teacher of Longfield Academy updated from the report provided by the Chair of the Standards Committee (Minute 11 above refers).</p> <p>The Academy continued to focus on Ofsted priorities. It was noted recruitment was proceeding well for the Science department and more Teaching Assistants had been employed.</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that suspensions and permanent exclusions had increased. Timely interventions, proactive strategies and support continue to be offered to pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion. It was noted there had been a significant increase nationally with regards to behavioural issues and suspensions and permanent exclusions.</p> <p><b>b) The Rydal Academy</b></p> <p>The Head Teacher of The Rydal Academy updated from the report provided by the Chair of the Standards Committee (Minute 11 above refers).</p> <p>It was noted that pupils were being encouraged to practice more times tables, with 'Times Tables Rock Stars' a sequenced programme of daily times tables being reintroduced.</p> <p>As previously reported growth is double the national rate in most year groups. It was noted that with regard to the Reception intake this Academic Year, the baseline was lower for that cohort of pupils.</p> <p>With regard to personal development 'pupil voice' was being used and a personal development charter was being developed.</p> <p>It was noted nursery numbers were increasing. From April 2024 there would be a new Government initiative with some free hours of care, therefore there may be scope to add to provision provided at The Rydal Academy.</p> <p><b>c) Hurworth School</b></p> <p>In the absence of the Head of Hurworth School who had submitted her apologies, Directors noted the report provided by the Chair of the Standards Committee (Minute 11 above refers).</p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p><b>Approval of Annual Accounts and Financial Statements for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023</b></p> <p>Directors gave careful consideration to the following, which are held on file:</p>	

- a) Audit Findings Report period ending 31 August 2023
- b) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

It was noted that all actions from last years' audit findings report had been completed.

The accounts were subject to minor changes following the Finance & resources Committee. Directors recommend that the accounts were to be approved.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report and Financial statements for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 be APPROVED.

**15. Longfield Trading, Report of the Directors' and Financial Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

Directors gave careful consideration to the Longfield Trading, Report of the Directors' and Financial Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, a copy of which is held on file.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reported that the Longfield Trading financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 had been reviewed and approved by the Directors of Longfield Trading at their meeting held today on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the Longfield Trading, Report of the Directors' and Financial Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 be APPROVED.

**16. Management Accounts**

The Chief Financial Officer provided a detailed Autumn Term report on the financial position of the Trust. A copy of the report was retained on file.

The committee considered financial updates, the 2023/24 management accounts, progress against Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), cash flow forecast and balance sheet.

The CFO advised that in the year-end outturn report there was predicted to be a slight deficit in line with the budgeted position.

The Chief Finance Officer stated that a key variance in accounts was due to the Teacher Pay Grant following confirmation of a 6.5% increase in Teaching pay and confirmed the unfunded difference had been budgeted for.

Directors noted the Academy Trust Handbook updates for 2023.


Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The CFO's report be noted.



	<p>b) The Management Accounts summary for September 2023 be noted.</p> <p>c) The KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) be noted.</p> <p>d) The cash flow be noted.</p> <p><b>17. Risk Registers</b></p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board of Directors to the following Risk Registers:</p> <p><b>a) Hurworth School</b></p> <p>There was one recommendation for the Hurworth Risk Register which was to adjust the likelihood of occurring and gross risk figures regarding the recruitment of Governors at Hurworth in line with the other academies in the school. This had been proposed by the Finance &amp; Resources Committee and was now included in the copy held on file for this meeting.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Hurworth School Risk Register be approved subject to the above amendment.</p> <p><b>b) Longfield Academy</b></p> <p>No new amendments were proposed to the Longfield Academy Risk Register.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Longfield Risk Register be noted.</p> <p><b>c) The Rydal Academy</b></p> <p>No new amendments were proposed to the Rydal Academy Risk Register.</p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that The Rydal Academy Risk Register be noted.</p> <p><b>d) Swift Academies</b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer reported upon the Trust Risk Register which details the higher risks across the Trust. <i>Directors requested that the Rag rating for Longfield Academy be changed to amber to reflect the current Ofsted rating.</i></p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Swift Academies Risk Register be amended as detailed above.</p> <p><b>18. Internal Audit Areas for Focus – Recommendations from Finance &amp; Resources Committee</b></p> <p>Further to minute 10 it was noted that the Finance &amp; Resources Committee had recommended that the internal audit programme should focus upon a review of fixed assets and capital budgets.</p> <p><i>Directors also advised that the Reserves Policy was also an important area to review.</i></p>	CFO
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<p>22, 23,24 and 25</p>	<p><b>PART C: Business Items for Information only/circulated previously</b></p> <p><b>Head Teacher's Reports: Longfield Academy, Hurworth School and The Rydal Academy</b></p> <p>The Board of Directors noted Longfield Academy, Hurworth School and The Rydal Academy Head Teacher's reports.</p> <p><b>Directors RESOLVED</b> that the Longfield Academy, Hurworth School and The Rydal Academy Head Teacher's reports be noted.</p> <p><b>PART D: Concluding Items</b></p> <p><b>26. Approval of documents for inspection</b></p> <p>Directors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the agenda, supporting documents and approved minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.</p> <p><b>27. Date and time of future meetings:</b></p> <p>Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024, The Rydal Academy</p> <p>The meeting concluded at approximately 4.00 pm.</p> <p>These minutes were approved by the Chair of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies as follows:</p> <p>on: <u>22.3</u> date</p> <p>Signature: <u></u></p> <p>Print Name: <u>DBELL</u></p>	<p>Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p>
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