

**ESSA ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

MEETING HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 9.30AM

Present: Christine Edge, Nic Ford, Julia Pilkington, Jordan Turner, Patrick Ottley-O'Connor (Interim Principal) and Andrew Cooper (Management Team Director)

In attendance: Andy Peet (Deputy Principal), David Mole (Finance Director) and Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

Nic Ford in the Chair

PART 1

1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES

1a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Paul Davidson, Ismail Kala, Neelam Arshad and Anwer Patel.

1b) LGB Membership Update

The Interim Principal welcomed Jordan Turner, the newly elected staff governor to his first meeting. Mr Turner has worked at the academy for four years and is the Assistant Strand Leader for Science.

It was noted that Neelam Arshad has been re-elected as parent governor.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed:

- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

No declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest were made in respect of the items to be discussed at the meeting however, Nic Ford declared that he was now a parent governor at another school and would need to amend his Register of Business Interest form accordingly.

Action: Clerk to send Register of Business Interest form to Nic Ford.

4. EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT & STUDENT WELFARE

4a) Principal's Report

4ai) Principal's Report

The Principal presented his report and said that visioning had now taken place and all measures introduced subsequently had been centred on the vision and values of "All Will Succeed". There had been an increased drive to improve standards at the academy.

It was explained that there had been over 70 students who had been without I-pads and some of these had been out of commission for up to 6 months. Systems have now been put in place whereby students who had previously misused the I-Pads collect them in a morning and hand them back in at the end of the day. A governor asked whether this system impacted on completion of homework. The Interim Principal replied that it did but this still represented an improvement as previously the lack of I-Pads had impacted on both homework and classwork. There were now just seven students collecting I-Pads daily on a long-term basis. It was explained that there were still some issues with students forgetting to charge the I-Pads. A member of staff had suggested that booster leads could be provided in each classroom.

Data and target setting needed reviewing and this would become a focus for Strand leaders. It was noted that there has been an improved process around target setting.

Punctuality to lessons has become a concern. It was explained that in the previous year there were only two lessons per day but this year there are four which has impacted on movement between lessons.

It was explained that the PMR system had not been robust. The system used previously had been Blue Sky but the targets set had not been strong enough as all staff had been given the academy target which was unattainable. This year the targets for PMR were focused on the target groups (Pupil Premium and Most Able) and around the particular classes that staff teach. The Deputy Principal explained that the process was now more robust as there was now consistency. All staff have been given three targets, the first one relating to student achievement in two of the classes that they teach and a second target relating to the wider effectiveness looking at the impact of their leadership role. For those staff without a leadership role, their second target looks at their contribution to the academy overall. The third target relates to further professional development around teaching. The Deputy Principal explained that the targets were now smarter and feed into the Academy Improvement Plan.

Each half term there would be a capture of KPI'S which would then be reviewed by the SLT against the overall Academy Improvement Plan. From this the CEO would create a scorecard with the purpose of keeping the data live and creating a continuing process. A governor asked whether all staff were on board with the changes. The Interim Principal replied that there was one briefing session per week during the Friday afternoon session. At these sessions there had been between 40 to 50 nominations for rewards for staff for what they had done to support each other. The staff governor added that regular meetings have helped pull staff together and communication is now improving. A governor asked whether the Senior Leadership Team was cohesive. The Deputy Principal replied that previously there had been confusion and an overlap of roles but now there is a daily 10 minute briefing session for the Senior Leadership Team which helps to build communication and has led to greater consistency. The Interim Principal explained that the SLT had previously been working in silos but now the system was more about collaborative leadership and entrepreneurship and SLT roles have been realigned.

The CEO explained that lack of communication had been the biggest issue raised by staff with inconsistent messages being given. Following the realignment of SLT roles staff were now hearing consistent messages and were more on board because they understand the direction the academy is taking and there is greater clarity and direction. The Interim Principal added that that the SLT had been criticised in the initial staff questionnaires and explained that although there were still some challenges, the middle leaders had been empowered. Weekly meetings of the Trust Senior Leadership group take place and they had agreed that the middle leaders needed to be given more time in order to lead. This additional time would come from the SLT who would now have more teaching time. The Interim Principal pointed out that in the previous academic year the SLT had not taught at all. This year the Assistant Head Teachers were teaching for around 15 to 20% of their time and this would increase to 40%. A governor pointed out that this would give the SLT more credibility and would also empower middle leaders to own the data and their own CPD.

Further to the projected overspend moving forward which showed a deficit of £400,000, the Interim Principal reported that he and the CEO had managed to identify £100,000 of savings and had allocated an additional £25,000 to CPD, with £20,000 of this to the Teaching Alliance to strengthen the coaching programme for middle leaders (Outstanding Teacher Programme and Improving Teacher Programme); £30,000 had also been found to plug the shortfall due to the academy being unsuccessful in its bid to continue providing food to Bolton Muslim Girls School.

The Interim Principal reported that there were still some issues regarding teaching standards because of some teaching techniques were not being practised. The CEO added that technology was not a simple fix solution to drive improvement and the reality was that outcomes had not been as good as they should be. A governor asked how this could be monitored going forward. The Interim Principal replied that a new approach to work scrutiny had been introduced and the focus of CPD was around improving standards. Staff had

now been given the toolkit to use productive pedagogy. Earlier in the term there had been a whole staff session on staff owning their own CPD. The CEO added that the name Central Services has been removed and changed to Support Services and there was now an instant response to classroom related issues from the IT and site teams. At a union meeting an issue had been raised over health and safety issues not being addressed; this has now been rectified and the building is now safe.

The Interim Principal said that he would like to put the following proposals forward to the Trust Board as two teaching areas were not fit for purpose. In the One World Strand, which includes languages, there were three classes being taught in one teaching space which was presenting difficulties for learning speaking and listening skills which had been the weakest areas in respect of outcomes in languages. The Interim Principal advised that walls needed to be erected in this area. The other priority concerned technology as the only technology taught was food technology taught in the academy and there were only three cookers available to be used for these lessons. The Interim Principal explained that there was a good teaching team in technology but they were being hampered by the lack of facilities. It was noted that a bid for £40,000 to improve teaching in this area had been rejected by the Board last year. The Finance Director added that some of the work to improve the infrastructure of the department had been carried out last year.

Agreed:

- That the CEO take these proposals forward to the Board.

The quality of teaching had improved but it was noted that there was still some inadequate teaching.

A report detailing the current progress of Year 11 students was discussed. It was explained that for Attainment 8 there was a target of +2.5 but currently this measure stood at -1.5. Regular Raising Attainment and Progress meetings were held in each faculty to look at the barriers to learning and look at how these could be removed. It was noted that the “no barrier” grade on the report was an aspirational target. The Progress 8 no barrier grade target was +0.25, with the actual in October being -1.15 and -0.25 in November. A governor asked whether this data was also split down into subject areas. It was confirmed that this was the case. A governor asked whether students were aware of their targets. The Interim Principal explained that they were aware, however they did not fully understand them and they were still talking about flight paths. He added that during drop-ins to lessons he did not get a sense that children understood where they were and where they were going. The CEO added that targets needed to be more focused so students became aware of specifically what they needed to do to improve.

The Interim Principal reported that a developmental approach was being used to improve leading and this would enable a fuller picture of the quality of teaching to be built up. It was noted that previously staff had only had one observation per year. He added that all staff should be on a support plan in order to improve.

A governor asked for an example of barriers to learning which had been identified. It was explained that in science barriers that had impacted on progress had included poor attendance; in addition some children had not had any science lessons in Year 7, and this had been followed up by only one lesson per week in Years 8, 9 and 10. This barrier had been recognised and the curriculum delivery has been altered. A governor asked whether there were particular curriculum areas which were impacting on attainment. The Interim Principal replied that all Strands were being given an additional one and a half day's leadership with English and maths receiving 3 hours. It was noted that there were some staffing issues in science. The Interim Principal confirmed that Strands where problems had been identified were being worked with. He added that there was a need to deal with children individually regarding their barrier to learning and gave an example of one boy who had been missing a third of his maths lessons due to a regular hospital appointment being held during that particular lesson. Although the day of his appointments could not be changed the time of his appointments had been varied so that they are not always during his maths lessons.

The Interim Principal explained that there would also need to be some catch-up for lost curriculum time next year but this would not be as bad as in the current year. He added that a review would take place with the SLT to look at whether the number of lessons delivered in each subject was at an appropriate level. The Interim Principal explained that action had been taken to have a smaller cohort for Triple Science which would consist of the most able students in Year 11. A governor requested that a case study be provided for some of the students to show the impact of interventions.

It was noted that some students with Special Educational Needs were doing better than other students because they have wrap-around provision. It was also noted that there were 25 students missing from the progress board because they did not have any data from Key Stage 2. These students would be added at a later date.

Agreed: That the Principal's report be noted.

4a) Draft SEF

The Interim Principal explained that the SEF and Academy Improvement Plan would form the focus for agendas for the QA meetings. Previously the Senior Leadership Team had not been involved to the same level in the creation of the SEF. It was explained that the Academy Improvement Plan has now been aligned with the Primary Academy Improvement Plan. A former HMI had been commissioned to review both the SEF and Academy Improvement Plan. A first draft of both these documents had been included with the papers for the meeting. The SEF judged the Academy as Requiring Improvement.

A governor pointed out that there was not any attendance or in-class behaviour data included in the SEF. The Interim Principal explained that data had deliberately been kept out of the SEF; he added that attendance currently stood

at 95.1% but was improving. A new system to monitor in-class behaviour was being used. There was now an opportunity to reward positive behaviour. The staff governor said the process of recognising positive behaviour gave more of a community feel to the process and the number of positives had increased over the last two weeks. There had been a focus on rewards for attendance during assemblies. The Interim Principal said that he would push for judging the academy as being good for behaviour, however behaviour for learning was an issue and this was mainly around passive compliance. He added that staff needed to make sure that there was active learning in lessons.

The Interim Principal agreed to provide governors with an updated SEF which would be RAG rated and would include data.

4a) Draft Academy Improvement Plan

It was explained that the Academy Improvement Plan was a draft document which tied together PMR, the SEF and the quality of teaching. The Interim Principal explained that the academy had been in danger of going into Special Measures because the level of direction had not been clear but now staff are behind the vision and values.

A governor noted that one of the areas for development was to develop governance. The Interim Principal said that he felt supported by governors from a distance. He added that currently there was not a link governor for safeguarding in place due to the resignation of the previous governor with this responsibility; there does not need to be a link governor for every Strand but there needs to be someone in place where there are key issues. This area would be looked at during the governor training session which could also look at vision and values. It was also explained that there needed to be more challenge from governors and they should also be providing a steering role.

Ofsted could recommend a PPG review or a governance review and this would be seen as an example of good leadership and management if this had been carried out prior to a recommendation having been made. It was noted that a governance review had taken place previously and a PPG review was being carried out by a NLE through the Teaching Alliance. Following discussion it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a further governance review as this would inform a governor development plan which could then be built into the Academy Improvement Plan. The CEO explained that there were two areas of concern regarding governance one being to what extent the Local Governing Body holds the Principal to account, and this includes whether governors test the performance management process to provide triangulation. A further area was the overseeing the financial performance of the academy. It was explained that the Pupil Premium Grant had been spent appropriately but not effectively has there had not shown an impact. The CEO added that the Local Governing Body needed to hold the Principal to account by focusing on whether money had been well spent.

A governor pointed out that a report circulated with the papers for the meeting showed that 68% of staff had received pay progression following the performance management process and pointed out that this had not been quality assured by governors and this was not a robust enough process. The CEO said that governors should question whether they were satisfied that a rigorous process had been applied. He added that processes had been tightened up this year in respect of the quality of teaching, the Pupil Premium Grant and the ownership of CPD. It was explained that using the policy set last year 68% of staff had received pay progression and only one member of staff had gone through the threshold although several had applied. It was noted that in the previous year not all staff had been given a mid-year review and the process had not been robust. It was planned that targets would be reviewed mid-year as the data would be more accurate. The Deputy Principal pointed out that in the past the academy had not always gone down the strict line management route for performance management but now this would be carried out through line management links. Also in the past the reviewer has not been asked to make pay recommendations. It was suggested that a pay sub-committee of the Local Governing Body be set up next year to scrutinise a sample of the recommendations and go through the accompanying evidence. The CEO recommended that a pay sub-committee be put in place to tighten the process. It was explained that this year's performance management process was a pilot which would be reviewed again in the spring term.

A governor asked what was being done about the position of substantive Principal. The CEO replied that previously a professional company had been engaged to undertake searches for suitable candidates on behalf of the academy; only one candidate had come forward and this had been through the CEO's own contacts. The CEO explained that there was not enough confidence in the available contacts and he has ended the contract with Veredas and was looking into using Hays as an alternative search. He explained that the recruitment issue has arisen because the academy has had a long period without a substantive Principal. The Interim Principal said that his contract had been extended to the end of the academic year and added that if an appointment has not been made by September he would be able to provide consistency until the right person is in place. The CEO explained that finding the right person would be a challenge as the academy is not in an easy catchment area and could potentially have a Requires Improvement judgement from Ofsted; in addition there have been several Principals in place since 2013. The CEO added that before undertaking the recruitment process he would need to be confident that an appointment could be made.

Agreed:

- That the Local Governing Body commission a review of governance.
- That all governors be asked to consider whether they would take on the role of Safeguarding Governor in the interim period.

4 aiv) Draft Updated Pupil Premium plan 2016/17

The Deputy Principal reported that the strategy document for the disadvantaged children entitled to the Pupil Premium grant which had previously been circulated has been updated to reflect the more up-to-date data.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

4avi) Pupil Premium Spending Plan 2015-16 Progress Review

Agreed: That the report be noted.

5. FINANCE AND RISK

5a) Budget Report 2016/17

The Finance Director provided a budget report showing the financial position at the end of September 2016. It was noted that the academy was currently being audited and the year-end accounts were being finalised. It was explained that the budget was showing an underspend of £28,000 at the end of September; this was mainly due to a large underspend in staffing because staff pay increases had been included in the budget but would not be going through payroll until October/November.

The Interim Principal explained that in the original budget approval had been given for EAL Literacy and Numeracy for the PBL Strand but following advice it was suggested that this be de-coupled from PBL. It had also been suggested that there should be three lead practitioners; however, these posts had not been built into the budget. It was explained that one lead practitioner could be appointed immediately and up to four temporary one-year TLR3s could be appointed on a fixed term basis as this would be a cheaper option. Following these appointments a review of the structure could take place. A governor asked whether the Interim Principal was confident that staff had the ability to fulfil these new roles. The Interim Principal confirmed that he was confident that staff would be able to fulfil these roles; he added that a Lead Practitioner would have a £15,000 increase to their and this would represent a budget saving on the previously planned structure. The CEO advised that going forward he would recommend using time-limited small allowances as he felt the current structure was top-heavy with a lot of staff being on the leadership scale. A governor asked whether there was sufficient money available in the budget for the proposed positions. It was confirmed that there was money available.

Agreed:

- To appoint one Lead Practitioner and up to four temporary TLR3 posts for one year.

The Finance Director reported that there was also an underspend against the premises occupancy budget due to electricity charges which would be moved to the previous year's accounts.

It was noted that expenditure on curriculum resources was high in September. A governor asked whether Strands received their own budget and asked how they could have overspent their budgets. The Finance Director explained that they were given a 12 month budget and the budget was only overspent in terms of the month to date. The Interim Principal explained that a contingency budget which he held had been created and this would not be used to support Strands which were overspent as had previously happened.

A report detailing debtors and creditors was also provided. The Finance Director explained that a couple of the debts were from the previous year, one of which would be written off because this was a grant which had not been received.

The Finance Director explained that the cost for larger items would be allocated over several months. A governor asked for an example of this. The Finance Director said that one example was the Progresso licence which cost £16,000; he said that payments would be allocated over the year so that a better idea of expenditure to date could be seen.

A governor asked for an update on pupil numbers. The Finance Director replied that the Academy would be funded next year on 852 students. A governor asked whether this was in line with predictions. It was explained that this was a few more students than had been predicted as it had been estimated that more students would have left to attend the UTC than had actually done. A governor asked whether exit interviews were held with parents if their child were leaving to go to the UTC. It was confirmed that these took place. It was noted that the UTC was currently consulting to become an academy for students from Year 7 to Year 13.

A governor asked what was being done in regard to marketing in order to fill the available spaces. It was explained that a coding project had been put in place to draw in more able students. North Star had also been engaged to work on marketing but the impact of this service could not yet be measured. The CEO explained that the Trust had entered into the contract with North Star in June. The Finance Director added that this was a costly process and they had been paid £24,000 from the Trust budget. A governor asked what was provided for this amount. It was explained that it had been a concern that neither of the schools were over-subscribed. Another area was to develop the awareness of what the academy does as it does not have outstanding outcomes. They had also been engaged to improve the websites and provide a newsletter. It was noted that there had only been one newsletter this term and none from the primary academy. In order to increase marketing the Interim Principal said that he had met with the leader of Bolton Council of Mosques and inter-faith leaders. A meeting for local primary Head Teachers had also taken place.

The CEO explained that this type of contract should not be entered into unless there were clear Key Performance Indicators and due diligence having been carried out. A governor asked what else North Star had done in regard to marketing. It was explained that they had made some videos and managed the academy's social media. A governor asked how long the contract with North Star was in place. It was confirmed that it would run until the end of June.

Action: CEO to send North Star presentation to governors.

The Interim Principal said that a review of licences and contracts was taking place and these would not be renewed unless they were still required. A governor asked whether all contracts would be brought to the Local Governing Body for approval. The Finance Director said that any contract over one year and all contracts worth over £10,000 would be brought to the Local Governing Body.

The Finance Director informed governors that there would be a reduction in income next year due to changes in funding and there would also be increased costs, particularly in respect of teachers' salaries.

A governor questioned the relationship between the Local Governing Body and the Trust board in respect of decision making. The Interim Principal agreed to discuss this matter with the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

The Finance Director suggested that there could be a link governor for finance.

Agreed: That Christine Edge become the Link Governor for finance.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

5b) Admission Consultation Report

It was reported that the Trust has to consult on the Admissions criteria and there was a requirement for Essa Academy to consult this year as it had been over seven years since it previously consulted. It was noted that there were also proposed changes to the Essa Primary admissions policy. The Trust Board has approved a draft policy which has gone out to consultation which would run until 19 December. Consultation has taken place with the Local Authority and other admitting authorities and also with parents. The key areas of change to the policy were around the over-subscription criteria to include prior attendance at Essa Primary Academy as a priority and also eligibility for the Pupil Premium grant. For the primary academy the over-subscription criteria now includes attendance at Essa Nursery, eligibility for the Early Years Pupil Premium and also for children of staff employed by the Trust.

It was noted that the Local Governing Body could also respond to the consultation.

Agreed: That the Admission Consultation Report be noted.

6. HR UPDATE (*Confidential item*)

This item was designated as confidential under Article 125 of the Articles of Association for the Academy *thereby excluding the information from that which is to be made available to any interested persons.*

7. GOVERNANCE

7a) Approval of Policies

7ai) Appraisal Policy

A governor pointed out that the policy does not mention the role of governors in respect of quality assurance. It was agreed that this could be added into the policy to re-inforce it for next year.

Agreed: That the appraisal policy be adopted and implemented.

7aii) Policy Implementation Report

The key action from this report was for the CEO to work with the Interim Principal to ensure that policy implementation is carried out correctly.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

7b) Governor Review and Training 2016/17

The CEO proposed that he meets with the Interim Principal to agree a suggested programme to support governor development and establish a plan for governor training.

Action: The CEO to bring a training plan to the next meeting.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business raised.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting take place on Tuesday 31 January 2017 at 9.30am in the boardroom at Essa Academy.

10. CONSENT TO ABSENT GOVERNORS

It was agreed that consent be given to all governors who were absent from the meeting.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association for the Academy the following matter be designated as confidential:

Minute Number 6

The meeting closed at 12.08pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____