

**ESSA ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

MEETING HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2019 AT 5.00PM

Present: Jordan Turner, Nic Ford (Chair), Paul Davidson, Ismail Kala, Farook Atcha and Martin Knowles (Principal).

In attendance: David Howarth (Finance Director), Andrew Cooper (CEO), Jennie Sidebottom (Assistant Principal), Rachel Rowland (Sports Centre Manager- Item 2). Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body) and Ivan Wadeson (prospective governor).

Nic Ford in the Chair

PART 1

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Masud Kala.

Membership

The Chair gave an update on the prospective Sponsor Governor appointment. Ivan Wadeson had agreed to join the LGB and was awaiting official appointment by the Trust Board.

Appointment of Vice Chair

Agreed:

- That Paul Davidson be elected as Vice Chair.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent Form

Governors were requested to complete the revised Governance Services revised eligibility and privacy consent form.

2. Finance/Budget Report

2a Budget Monitoring Report (including income streams)

The Finance Director reported that at the end of January there was a favourable balance of £15,800 for learning resources and additional funding had since been received. The staffing budget showed an overspend of £15,600, this variance related to ICT equipment which had come out of the staff development budget. The academy had received £44,300 additional funding on 1 February in relation to the “Little Extras” in the Chancellor’s budget. The ICT costs have now been moved back to the ICT budget which has addressed the variance.

As at the end of January only £14,000 had been spent on supply teaching. It was noted that the £64,000 on non-teaching supply had been used to cover for the vacancies.

The premises budget had been overspent by £48,000 to date, £11,000 of this was due to the change of utility company which resulted in a back declaration of VAT having to be carried out. The Finance Director explained that a credit from this was expected and this would be around £9,000, he added that the other variance was around the winter bills. He added that the budget was overspent for the year to date but not overspent against the overall budget.

The year to date variance showed £46,800 overspent, however going forward the Local Authority would be invoiced for the additional students from the PRU, and also the “Little Extras” grant money had not been included in the figures.

The Principal explained that he had been part of a working party to look at the provision for permanently excluded children in Bolton. It was explained that all the provision in Bolton was full, so Essa’s Ivy Cottage with its highly trained staff had been offered as a provision. The Principal explained that three students had been taken charging £66 per day each for 12 weeks, once they are due to be considered for a place at another school, they would have had 12 weeks of education. The Local Authority had since asked the academy to take a further two students. A governor asked whether there was capacity to take the additional children. The Principal explained that this would work out at around £50,000 and the Local Authority would be invoiced once the children were at the end of their placement. The CEO asked what the feedback had been from the Local Authority. The Principal replied that the feedback was positive in that the academy had been asked to take on more children and the children were enjoying the provision. The Local Authority were also interested in using some of the central services building as a Local Authority PRU facility. A governor asked whether this was because of the quality of provision. The Principal replied that the academy has Ivy Cottage with the behaviour team based there and also forest school trained staff. The students would be tested so that a full profile of the student could be gained. The Principal added that this had gone well and pointed out that it was for Key Stage 3 students for one off incidents which had led to permanent exclusion.

A governor asked what the £28,000 of equipment had been spent on. It was explained that this had been spent on Smart and Smit boards and the infrastructure around them.

2b Finance Proposal

A proposal to increase the cost of catering provision was presented.

It was explained that there had not been any increase of price for 5 years. It was proposed to increase the price of some of the items. Once approval has been given by governors this would then go out to parents. The Finance Director explained that only some of the high volume items would be increased by either 5p or 10p. It was explained that there was currently a gap of £17,000 between catering income and expenditure and the proposed increase would generate around £14,000. It was explained that the students entitled to free school meals would still get the full meal deal. It was noted that 49% of the students were entitled to free school meals.

A governor asked how the price increases had been arrived at as some of them had been increased by different percentages. The Finance Director explained that a decision had been taken not to put the increase on all items because this would create a significant profit. Careful consideration would be given on how to present the increase positively to parents.

Agreed:

- That the proposed catering increases be approved.

3G Pitch

The Finance Director explained that the lifespan of the 3G pitch had been cut short as it had not been brushed at all in its first 6 years. It was noted that there had not been any refresh fund built in to the budget.

It was explained that there had been a small hole in the pitch which had cost £600 to repair. The Finance Director added that all the pile on the pitch was currently flat and to extend the life of the pitch rubber infills would need to be purchased at a cost of between £18,000 to £20,000. Notts Sports had been asked to test the pitch and they had advised that there was no way of rectifying the damage. Pitch 1 was in the worst condition and pitches 2 and 3 still had some life but need some infills.

It was reported that the estimated cost, detailed on page 15 of the report, included site clearance. It was suggested that the pitch could be moved to the primary site on the square to be used on the banking, not for sport. A governor asked whether the pitch was so degraded that it would not be sellable. The Finance Director confirmed that the work needed to be carried out and explained that Notts Sport offer a fast track funding scheme whereby the pitch could be paid for over five or seven years. If the purchase was made over seven years this would cost £30,000 per year. A governor asked whether the academy generated income from the pitch. The Principal explained that it would get to a point where the academy would not be able to hire out the pitch and this

would mean a loss of income of £50,000. The cost of the work would enable the academy to generate more than £50,000 which would help to offset the cost. The Principal added that money would be put aside for a refresh fund. A governor commented that the pitch was very popular with the community.

It was also proposed that the unused grassed area next to the 3G pitch be turned into three other pitches. This was the area where the rubble from the previous school was landscaped. It was explained that the plan was to get the three pitches in use while the existing 3G pitch was being resurfaced. A governor pointed out that with three additional pitches this would allow the school to use it for PE lessons. The Principal added that there was a shortage of football and sporting activities in the area. A governor asked how many people were being turned away. The Principal replied that there were quite a lot turned away from football. A governor asked how much was charged for use of the pitch. It was explained that the charge was £90 for a game. The Principal explained that he wanted to get a whole club using the facility. A governor asked how much funding was available for the project. The Finance Director replied that this would need to go to Board and they would decide. A governor asked whether the academy could apply for grant funding for the project. It was explained that if this was possible it would be match funding. A governor asked why this company had been asked to provide the quote. The Finance Director replied that it was the only company that the academy was aware of that did the fast tracking.

Agreed:

- That the LGB recommends to the Board the work to resurface the 3G pitch and the installation of the additional three pitches,

Governors thanked the Finance Director for all his work as this would be his last meeting as he would shortly be leaving the academy.

3. HR REPORT (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.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed:

- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair requested an update on the ICT infrastructure issues. The Principal reported that Jo Atherton, Principal at Essa Primary Academy had taken over the line management of Paul Gartland ICT Manager and weekly meetings were being held. The Trust would shortly move over to a whole Trust email system.

It was reported that there were individual CPOMS systems at each school and these were not linked as there are Apple servers at Essa Academy and Windows servers at the primary academy. The Principal explained that significant work on the infrastructure was required.

It was reported that the Vice Principal also meets with the ICT Manager on a weekly basis. There were still some issues with ICT in science, although Health, English, Maths and humanities were fine. The staff governor commented that in science every room was now usable. It was noted that the ICT Manager now carries out the snagging on a weekly basis.

It was reported that the lease ends soon for a lot of the Mac suites and two of them were coming towards the end of their life. The Principal added that the academy might keep some of the Macs. It was explained that some staff were only using windows on the Macbooks. The Chair commented that governors had previously been told that teachers only wanted to use a Mac.

An audit of the mobile kit has been requested to include phones, radios and I-pads to see what was in place and what is needed.

A governor questioned what the top-slice figure was currently. The CEO replied that it had reduced as a lot of work had been done in this area and was currently just 5%. The CEO explained that the costs were the same, but work had been done to look at what elements needed to be kept separately and what could go to the schools. The Principal had picked up the line management of the Sports Centre and catering. The CEO added that he had tried to future-proof the system if other schools joined at a later date as they might want the back office service. He explained that it made sense that ICT and estates teams are managed by the principals.

5. EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT WELFARE

5a PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal reported that Ian Lane, the School Improvement Professional, commissioned by the Local Authority, had visited the school on 11 February. The Principal explained that Mr Lane leads a MAT in the North East. The report highlighted significant strides forward. He said he would judge PBDW as outstanding as the school is the highest attending school in the south of Bolton.

The quality of teaching and learning had been summarised in the report. The Vice Principal commented that this was consistent and there was a lot more engagement from children. The CPD was well tailored to what the teachers need, particularly the NQTs. The QA cycle was very rigorous, and IRIS was being used by 99% of staff with them sharing this with each other. The Chair commented that teachers were often reluctant to be videoed and to get them involved to that level was incredible. The Principal explained that only two out of 71 teachers had opted out of being recorded and more and more teachers were sharing their videos with each other. The staff governor pointed out that there had only been an uptake of 15% last year before the Vice Principal had started at the school. The Vice Principal explained that staff have realised how helpful this is when it is used properly.

The quality of teaching was judged as being 70% good or better this term compared to 60% last term, this was due to two NQTs moving up to Good. The aim was to move this to 80% good or better by the summer.

The CEO reported that the teaching review carried out by the Alliance for Learning had picked up on the improvements, but they had said that assessment was inconsistent. Although there is a marking policy faculty leaders were devising their own. The sub-committee would pick up on this at the next meeting. It was explained that the next step was to produce data on a page in the form of a press release.

The Principal reported that the academy was at a point where the quality of the teaching judgements was accurate. Ian Lane had found that the SLT team was strong and the middle leaders were growing rapidly. The data systems in place were robust and the academy has a good data manager. There was a move to having a summary of a class on a page to provide a visual reminder of who is on target and who is below targets. There is an expectation that teachers have this document in lessons to draw their attention to those students who are not achieving and to provide a focus for teachers. The Principal explained that Lucy Yeomans who leads the NQTs has said that all 15 of them would pass their NQT year. The Principal added that Ms Yeomans was passionate about assessment and she would be the bridge between the teaching and learning team and the outcomes team.

Gary Whiting, Senco across the Trust had also met with Ian Lane who had been complimentary about his leadership in the area. It was pointed out that it is the teacher's responsibility to get the equipment in the classroom for the children. The Senco was confident that there would be 8 EHCPs in September. It was noted that there had not been any for the three previous years.

The Principal reported that he had met with Jodie Milburn about the Gatsby benchmarks and said that he was confident that the school was in a good position to meet them.

The risks were that the academy was looking at broadly the same outcomes as the previous year due to legacy issues. Key Stage 3 was secure with the teaching being strong. Languages was one area that would affect the Ebacc bucket as the current Year 11 students had all been forced to study a language. Also, the head of MFL and another teacher, who had told the students that they should do the higher paper, had left. It was later found out that it was only appropriate for nine of the students to take the higher paper. The Principal explained that children who were studying with the teacher who had just joined were loving studying languages and were making good progress. The other teacher was struggling and would be going onto a support plan.

The Performance management mid-year reviews were due to take place in the following week. The Principal explained that if a teacher fails their second performance management this would trigger a support plan. He added that a stern conversation had been held with some teachers to inform them of this, however, it was only three or four teachers who were at risk.

The Principal explained that there were legacy issues with German and Spanish. In French there was a really good NQT. A governor asked what was happening with

Urdu. The Principal replied that this was looking promising, however, the uptake had reduced to one class and it is looking like only a small number would opt for it. There would need to be a discussion around whether to teach it next year. If the uptake is not good the teacher good potentially end up with a 50% timetable.

5b Sub-Committee Report

The Chair reported that the meeting had been positive. The sub-committee had previously had concerns about English but now it looked to be in a better place. A lot of work had taken place in English around addressing the gaps. There were also some concerns around the high prior attainers. The progress of the children entitled to the Pupil Premium was looking strong and was better than those children who were not entitled to the Pupil Premium.

The sub-committee had looked at the different curriculum pathways and had focused on curriculum and not the outcomes. It was noted that the academy would have a reduced number of students achieving the Ebacc but there was more chance that those taking it would achieve it. The Chair added that the curriculum was looking secure and positive.

The Principal reported that there had been 81% attendance at last week's parents' evening and a further 6% of parents had asked to meet with staff at a different time. For the rest of the students, packs had been posted home with a follow-up telephone call.

The Principal reported that an enrichment option of one period per week had been added to the timetable. This was for either the combined cadet force, Duke of Edinburgh Award or the Sports Leader Award. The Principal added that 90 students would be doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award next year and the minimum that they would get would be at the bronze level. It was explained that the Combined Cadet Force already runs in the school. The Principal explained that the Young Leaders Award was a Level 1 qualification which would give the students exposure to leading and this was something that they could include on their CVs. The Chair commented that all the opportunities tie into the new Ofsted requirements on the curriculum.

The Chair proposed that as there had been some issues with the other sub-committees not being quorate, the number of sub-committees be reduced to two. The Chair also reminded Chairs of the committees that reminders for the meeting needed to be sent out in advance of the meetings. It was proposed that finance remains an agenda item on the full LGB meetings and the other committees to be Standards and Effectiveness and Behaviour and Attendance.

Agreed:

- That the sub-committee structure be amended and reduced to two: Standards and Effectiveness and Behaviour and Safeguarding.
- That Chairs of the sub-committee liaise with the CEO's PA regarding agenda distribution.
- That Mr Wadeson join the Behaviour and Safety sub-committee.

5c Approval of Policies

Whole School Breakfast Club

The Principal explained that a breakfast club runs in school from 7.30am, and a policy was proposed should there be any issues. Once the policy has been ratified it would go on the website.

Agreed:

- That the Whole School Breakfast policy be approved.

SEND Policy

The Principal explained that Gary Whiting, Senco across the Trust, had done a lot of work on the policy. The Principal added that this was a clear transparent policy which would be put on the website once approved. It was noted that there needed to be a SEND link governor.

Agreed:

- That the SEND policy be approved.
- That Mr Wadeson becomes the SEND Governor.

Sex and Relationships Education Policy

Lucy Gallagher reported that the SRE policy had been drawn up in line with the new national guidance. It was noted that there had been some issues with parents withdrawing their children from lessons, however, it was noted that children cannot be withdrawn from health and relationships lessons. There were currently 54 children on the withdrawal register, however after explaining the curriculum at parents' evening five parents put their children back into lessons. It was noted that there had been some concerns raised in the community, however, it had been explained that all curriculum plans are age-appropriate and there would be a spiral curriculum from Year 7. It was explained that the curriculum was available on the website.

A governor commented that the SRE curriculum had been updated and covered some topics that parents feel uncomfortable about. Ms Gallagher explained that schools have to cover FGM by law and after 2020 parents would not be able to withdraw their children from lessons. A governor asked whether the academy was working closely with parents on this. The Principal confirmed that the academy was working closely with parents, a coffee afternoon had been held and good feedback had been received.

It was explained that there were about 13 or 14 children in each year group who are withdrawn from SRE and the academy has to provide alternative work for these children and also provide staff for them. It was noted that there were only two children in Year 11 withdrawn from the lessons, with the majority of children withdrawn being in Years 7 and 8.

The new policy contained a proposal that for students who are taken out of the lesson the work and learning space needs to be provided by the parents after they have registered at school. It was explained that from next year there would be a timetable of lessons to be provided. It was noted that same sex relationships had presented an issue to parents. The Principal explained that the academy was not imposing views and it had been written into the policy that SRE would be taught from a non-faith perspective. A governor asked where the teaching space for the children would be. It was explained that this would be off-site. A governor asked what would happen if a parent did not turn up to take their child off-site for this lesson. The Principal replied that in this case the academy would have to provide a space. He added that he was encouraging parents to come into school to have the conversation. The Chair advised that the spiral curriculum should be with policy so that parents can withdraw their children from certain parts of it and requested that an appendix to the policy be provided. A governor also suggested that something clearer needed to be put in place around parents providing and supervising their child.

Agreed:

- To delegate powers to the sub-committee to agree the details of the SRE policy.

5d Personal Development & Behaviour and Welfare

It was reported that attendance currently stood at 96.6% with persistent absentees being around 8%. The Principal explained that both attendance and persistent absenteeism was significantly better than the national average. The rate of persistent absenteeism in the previous academic year had been 16.4% and this had reduced to 7.9% for the autumn term. At the attendance network meeting it had been discovered that Essa Academy had the best attendance in South Bolton. The Principal explained that the improved attendance was due to teachers being in school every day delivering good lessons. A lot more fines had been issued and there had been some prosecutions for non-attendance. All applications for leave during term time had been turned down by the Principal. The Principal explained that last year he had turned down 150 requests for absence in term time, but this year had only had to refuse 20 requests as parents were understanding that this would not be granted. Governors were pleased to note the excellent progress on attendance.

The number of fixed term exclusions had refused and there had not been any permanent exclusions this year for persistent disruptive behaviour. The only permanent exclusions this year had been for one-off events. The Principal added that elsewhere in Bolton 47% of permanent exclusions had been for persistent disruptive behaviour.

The Principal added that Early Help offers were going in earlier and a lot of reward points were being given out. He explained that there was still a lot of work to do but this was moving quicker than expected. The Principal explained that the difference that Gary Whiting, Senco, had made was huge. A governor asked whether it was planned to use him in the same proportion going forward. The CEO explained that initially the idea had been to see how this would work in practice and explained that the system works well and is very effective across the Trust as he is on the SLT at both the

primary and secondary academies. There would be two children with EHCPs coming from the primary to the secondary in September so he would be able to work with the secondary academy as he was already aware of their requirements.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal reported that offers had gone out to 180 for places at the Kings Leadership Academy. These places included around 25% of the first choice offers. The Principal explained that the academy was still in the consultation window, however places had been offered and they have advertised for a Deputy Head Teacher. They had not attended the Bolton Head Teachers group and had not engaged with them.

In addition, surveyors were already working on the field at the back of the school and consultation was due to start about the 1,100 place school.

The Principal reported that Essa Academy had also been allocated 180 students for September and these were either first or second choices. He added that he expected that there would be some appeals for the academy as the school reputation was getting better and community facilities were being improved.

The Principal reported that he had still not heard anything from the Regional Schools Commissioner about the funding since October, however the DfE had been up to discuss places with the Local Authority and the Local Authority had advocated the places at Essa. The Principal added that it was possible that there might be 30 appeals for places which would increase the intake to 210. The Principal explained that the school had been built to take 900 pupils but there would be 1000 on roll in September which would be too large a number for the size of the school. The £2M which had been bid for was to expand the stairwells, canteen and changing rooms. The Principal added that there was a need locally for the places. It was noted that the Local Authority had already commissioned the architects and it was anticipated that the Trust should get the £345,000 back to put in the reserves. The Principal added that the academy could not continue to take more students through appeals because there was not enough room. The CEO explained that the DfE seemed to be challenging the Local Authority on whether the placement predictions had been correct. He added that the Local Authority Assistant Director for Education and Learning was fully behind Essa Academy getting the money refunded.

7. CONSENT TO ABSENT GOVERNORS

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

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:

- That the date of the next meeting be as follows:

Tuesday 11 June at 5.00pm

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed:

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

Minute Number 3

The meeting closed at 7.05pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____