

**ESSA ACADEMY  
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY****MEETING HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2019 AT 5.15PM**

**Present:** Nic Ford (Chair), Paul Davidson, Masud Kala, Ivan Wadeson, Fatima Harris and Martin Knowles (Principal).

**In attendance:** Adeel Sahi (Finance Director), Jennie Sidebottom (Assistant Principal), Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body) and Gary Whiting (Senco).

**Nic Ford in the Chair****PART 1****1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Jordan Turner and Farook Atcha.

**Membership**

The Chair reported that Fatima Harris, who was also a governor on Essa Primary Academy Local Governing Body had been elected as a parent governor. The Principal had approached her as her daughter had just started. In response to a question from the Chair the Principal confirmed that he had canvassed all parents and Mrs Harris had formally applied.

**Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

Gary Whiting Trustwide SENCO presented a report on additional needs.

It was reported that the largest expenditure with regard to SEND was staffing.

The SEND matrix project was explained. There was a move away from a teaching assistant being attached to one student in an aim to promote independence and in preparation for a life beyond school. It was explained that teaching assistants were not being directed by class teachers and had not received training. The staffing costs for teaching assistants was reported as being high cost and low impact.

It was explained that the solution to this issue was the SEND matrix which has 20 strategies with a teaching and learning focus. The matrix was launched with the teaching assistant team and then with the faculty leaders. The faculties would be

responsible for quality assuring the initiative initially. The reviews from the teaching and learning review had all been positive. Outstanding practice had been seen in science and English and the practice for maths had been amended. It was reported that the impact of the initiative was an increase of 10% on the progress figures for the SEN K children and a 250% increase in the attainment score for the SEN K and EHCP children. The Chair pointed out that from the end of Year 10 to Year 11 there had been a huge improvement from a low starting point, however, the students were half a grade off in Progress 8 and almost a grade away in English. He added that it would be interesting to see the data from the current Year 10 to see how the gap was closing. The SENCO explained that there would be a widening gap because the number of students on the SEND register had doubled because of different thresholds having been applied. There were now more appropriate diagnoses for the SEND students. He added that -1.45 to -0.5 was a significant improvement. A governor asked how the gap could be closed even more. The SENCO replied that there was a need to get to know the children's needs. Strategies had been put in place which were being used by teachers. Differentiation was now a priority. The VP explained that the curriculum pathways had not been engineered correctly. One of the Year 10 students would be taken off the geography GCSE course and would be entered for travel and tourism. This issue has now been addressed at Year 8.

The Chair commented that the gap for progress should start to close. The VP agreed and explained that if the students were on the correct pathway the gap would close. The Principal added that it was remarkable what had been achieved in a short time. Although Year 10 presents a challenge the legacy was now over. Lower down the school there had been more applications for EHCPs being submitted. This had resulted in more funding and more teachers of a higher quality being appointed. Teachers were embracing the good practice in the classroom.

The SENCO explained that the largest category of SEND students was for cognition in learning. He added that the challenge was around managing the gap, and this would be done through proper diagnoses and support being put in place. The Chair advised that the progress for these children needed to get to 0. He added that there was a need to look at how they were baselined when they were admitted in Year 7 and this evidence also needed to be provided as some of the children might have been on a starting point which was too high. A governor asked who determined the children's starting points. It was explained that this was based on how they finish primary school, and this must be accepted because it comes from published data. The SENCO added that he could look at the anomalies between the SATs and the CAT tests. A governor asked what happened with the students who join the school higher up and asked whether they were assessed on point of entry. It was explained that they would arrive with data from their previous primary school, but they could be reassessed for an EHCP or SEN K. The INA children are assessed on entry. A governor asked whether a home language assessment takes place. The VP explained that the INA children answer questions in their own language and then they are interpreted.

A governor asked how the SLT knew what was going on in the classroom. The Principal explained that the right people with the right skill set were in place. They would drill into the books to see if there is consistently good work across the school. A governor asked whether the use of the initiative was consistent between teachers and teaching assistants. The SENCO replied that there was around 70% coverage and added that some staff might need additional guidance. He added that teaching assistants were responding positively.

A governor asked whether the brief conversation between the teacher and teaching assistant always takes place. The SENCO replied that this did not always take place at the start of the lesson but teaching assistants were building up a relationship with the teaching staff. The staff who were not following the programme were being targeted. Positive feedback had been received from teaching assistants as they were on board with the initiative.

## **2. Finance/Budget Report**

### **2a Budget Monitoring Report (including income streams)**

The Finance Director reported on the monthly monitoring report and the indicative budget for the following year.

It was reported that the year to date variance was better than had been reported last month. The reason for this was that some items had been posted there that should have been capitalised. Under the previous systems the capitalisation may have been done at the end of the year. The Finance Director explained that once these items have been removed from the budget it was healthy.

The Finance Director agreed to provide a more user-friendly monitoring report ready for the next academic year.

It was reported that some additional funding had been received since the start of the year and this included a clawback for permanent exclusions which had led to an increase of £28,100.

The Finance Director explained that it appeared as though some of the budgets were overspent they had been balanced by underspending in other areas. For example, the staffing budget had decreased by £184,672 while the supply staff budget had increased by £151,503. The Principal explained that the graduate teachers, four teaching assistants, had been on a daily rate contract and had been included in the supply budget. There was also an agency worker who had been doing some graphic design but now they have been employed permanently. It was explained that the teaching or absence supply cover for this year would be around £50,000 to £60,000 this year compared to £240,000 in the previous year. There were now more staff in school and there had been only one long-term absence, with the member of staff having been absent since Christmas.

There would also be some savings on recruitment costs as there would not be an introduction fee payable to the agency because the staff would have been at the school for a year.

The Finance Director explained that a lot of items in the ICT budget should be capitalised. A governor agreed and said that it was important that capitalised items should be taken out of the budget. He added that if the costs net off then he would not have any concerns about it.

The Principal explained that the academy had made a commitment for 20% PPA to help reduce supply costs.

A governor asked whether the utilities payment was consistent all through the year. The Finance Director confirmed that it was and added that he would expect the savings to show in the autumn.

It was explained that the other employment costs referred to redundancy and recruitment.

The Principal reported that he would be meeting with the middle leaders as they would need to bid for capitation for next year's allocation. This would make them reflect on what they need the money for.

A governor asked whether the academy uses bulk purchasing. The Principal replied that this had not happened previously with each faculty ordering their own resources. It was planned that orders would go direct to companies to procure supplies. It was noted that the DfE was encouraging schools to work together and create procurement hub. A governor advised caution with this as it could be expensive. A governor asked if it was planned to purchase along with the primary school. The Principal agreed that this was the plan as the Trust would have greater buying power.

The Finance Director reported that the budget for 2019/20 was in the early stages of planning, however it looked like there would be a surplus of £320,000 because of the additional pupil numbers. The academy had been funded on 894 pupils and next year there would be 962 on roll. This had resulted in the General Annual Grant having increased by £419,000.

The Teachers' pension contributions would be increased from next year. The DfE had agreed to subsidise this for one year. The academy would receive additional income of £188,000 which offsets these costs.

The pupil premium grant was slightly increased when compared to the current year.

The budget had allowed for all staff to receive the 2% cost of living rise and progression. The Principal explained that if a member of staff does not progress up the scale it is because the children have not progressed as they should; there was no budgetary constraint.

The Principal explained that the Central Services recharge had been decreased during the year to 5%. This had been agreed by Trustees. The school was now paying the staff directly. A governor asked whether this had led to any savings. The Principal explained that there had been 11 staff in Central Service and there was a HR Director as well as a HR Manager. The HR Director has now left and has not been replaced and a member of the finance team who had left had also not been replaced. There had been four hours of cleaning every day in the building which has now reduced, and the CEO has gone from full-time to part-time.

A governor asked whether any allowance had been made in the utilities budget for the increased pupil numbers and asked what this might mean for the building. The

Principal explained that the budget had been based on 962 pupils but there would actually be 996 this September. The Local Authority Director of People had written to the Regional Schools Commissioner and has demanded that she visits Essa to see the good work that is being done at the school. The school has now got back the £320,000 that had already been spent on the building.

The Principal explained that the academy had been creative with the space and could not take any more pupils without further building. A governor asked whether the budget provides enough space for 1000 children. A governor asked what the governors' role was with regard to the budget. It was explained that the budget is agreed at the July Trust board meeting. Once this is finalised a copy would be provided to governors.

The Finance Director reported that he was trying to create a refresh fund for capital expenditure. The Principal explained that no money had been set aside for replacement and things were now coming to the end of their life. Going forward a significant chunk of the surplus would be set aside.

A governor asked what would happen long-term with the teachers' pension contribution. The Principal explained that the DfE were planning to change the funding formula to allow for this. A governor expressed a concern that an additional £200,000 might need to be found from the budget for the pension contributions next year. The Finance Director reported that the DfE wants schools to provide them with a three-year budget. He added that the year 2021/22 might be a year of concern financially.

The Principal commented that what the new Finance Director has produced in a short time was very reassuring and it shows that the hard work in reducing staffing costs was paying off.

### 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 5 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

It was noted that the SRE framework had been delegated to the sub-committee. The Principal advised that governors needed to bear in mind that some areas included in the policy would need to be handled sensitively. The Principal reported that he had met with members of Bolton Council of Mosques and had explained that there had

been some miscommunication with rumours circulating. The Principal explained that a meeting would be arranged to show examples of the SRE curriculum that the school would be delivering. He explained that with regard to the school providing free feminine hygiene products this was being done prior to the government initiative and this was not part of the curriculum. The Principal explained that all the material regarding the SRE curriculum was on the website so that parents can check it. The Principal pointed out that one of the five areas that parents can withdraw their children from is the session on domestic violence. The Principal added that he believed that all children should be educated on this area.

**Agreed:** That Mrs Harris join the Standards and Curriculum sub-committee to provide a community perspective.

#### Sub committee reports

Mr Davidson, the Chair of the Standards sub-committee, reported that the sub-committee had had a valuable session on mental health issues.

## **5. EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT WELFARE**

### **5a PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

#### Sports Centre update – 3G build

It was reported that the 3G pitch was in the process of being built, the grass was currently being laid and the pitch was due to be operational by the end of the month. It was noted that the pitch was of the FIFA standard. The Principal explained that for an additional £1,000 rugby could also be played on it. He added that this was important so that there could be diversity in the sport offer. It was planned that there would be a grand opening in September. The Principal reported that he would try to get a player from Manchester United to open it. It was noted that the pitch was fully booked up for the next year apart from one one-hour slot on a Friday evening. A governor asked how the revenue would be shown in the budget. The Principal explained that the sports centre was part of Essa Education which is part of the business arm of the Trust. It was explained that if the pitch hadn't been replaced there would have been a loss of £40,000 revenue per year, however, the cost of the new pitch was £40,000 for five years.

#### Sports Hall business case

It was reported that the netball court in the sports hall was the wrong size, so the academy was unable to offer netball. The sports centre manager had contacted local netball groups who had made expressions of interest and had said that if there is an upgrade they would use the facility. The Principal pointed out that the uptake of sport by girls was poor and was even poorer in Great Lever. By offering netball this would encourage more girls to take up the sport. The cost of the upgrade was £20,000 and this would need to be paid for upfront. This would be a one-off capital investment for the court which would have a lifespan of between 10 and 12 years. The Principal explained that the only netball pitch on site which was the right size is up the hill. The pitch that is currently marked out for netball has been marked out in the wrong size for netball and tennis. A governor asked whether the company who could do the work was a reputable company. The Principal confirmed that they were reputable and

explained that they had said that if the quote is approved they could carry out the work on 5 August. It was anticipated that the maximum income generation was £46,000. A governor asked what bookings the sports centre was currently getting. The Principal replied that they were mainly getting bookings for five a side football and some badminton. This was generating around £20,000. The Principal added that Essa is renown for football, however, there was a need to diversify and also to get girls into sport. A governor asked whether other areas of funding could be accessed. It was explained that the sports manager was looking into the sugar tax and was looking into other options. A governor asked whether money would be put aside for a refresh if the project is approved. The Principal confirmed that it would be.

**Agreed:** That the upgrade to the netball court be approved.

#### ICT Refresh business case

IT was reported that two Mac suites had been replaced. The two original ones which had been bought in 2010 were coming to the end of life. The next IOS upgrade would come out in September or October and there was a danger that the original suites would become ineffective. The Principal reported that he had spoken with Imran Bhikha who advised not to run the upgrade, however with the Adobe suite there would need to be upgrades for it to function properly. The new Head of ICT and the ICT Manager had looked into the issue. The Principal explained that he had asked why the academy could not move to Windows suites as these were coming in at a similar price. The Principal advised that two refreshed computer suites were required to complete the ICT update.

Governors were presented with 4 different options to consider.

The Principal explained that the academy still uses I-pads for photography and graphics and there was a stronger demand up there for industry standard Macs. Approval of the project would need to go to the Trust board for approval. The Chair commented that there was need to upgrade but there was also a need to be smarter in how the upgrade was carried out. It was explained that there were two suites of new I-Macs available. If there were two suites of PCs for Business this would be a cheaper option. The Chair commented that there appeared to be a significant bias towards Apple products and suggested that staff needed to think more rationally about what was required. The Principal invited the Chair to visit the Academy to meet with himself, the Head of ICT and the network manager.

It was reported that the IT network team from Smithills School was carrying out a review of the IT leadership team.

The Principal explained that the new head of IT and Business had wanted Windows as this is what is in the workplace.

**Agreed:** To delegate to the Chair who would present the recommendations to the Trust Board.

#### Music to IBEC business case

The Principal reported that a music teacher had requested teaching in the IBEC, which is a glazed classroom. The Principal explained that no-one else wanted to teach in there because of the acoustics. If music was being taught in there, students would be able to see other students playing and performing. There would need to be a small

amount of building work to build two music practice rooms at a cost of £5,000. A governor asked whether students would mind being seen while they are practising. The Principal replied that music is a performance subject. Although there would be staff passing the room, other students would only see them on the handover. A governor asked whether this might disrupt the librarian. The Principal explained that the room was sound-proof and the planned practice rooms would also be sound-proofed. The classroom was not attached to any other classroom.

It was explained that the Art faculty was currently affected by music and it would suit them if music moved. It would also put music in the heart of the school. The Chair agreed that it would give a message that the arts are important at the academy. A governor asked how many students at the academy took GCSE music. The Principal explained that the Bolton Music service had said that 9% of students were exposed to music but at Essa it was 21% as there was more exposure to music. The music teacher had been at Essa for just a year and the current Year 8 have had quality teaching and there were now ensembles and bands in place. The uptake for music would start to increase because students were enjoying the subject more.

**Agreed:** To relocate music to the IBEC centre.

#### Teaching and Learning review

The Teaching and Learning review had been discussed at the sub-committee meeting. The Chair congratulated the Principal and the senior leadership team and explained to governors that the report showed great progress across the board.

The key areas to be looked at next year were: the lack of progress for high prior attainers; SEND – although this was an improving position it was still not where it needed to be. Progress for boys was also identified as a weakness. It was noted that there was a large cohort of boys at the school. The Principal explained that the review had discussed a literacy need and this was something that runs through all these areas. The Principal explained that there was currently an Acting Head of English in place. Literacy would be a continuing focus, and this was an area that governors needed to be mindful of.

The Vice Principal reported that a curriculum audit of every faculty leader had taken place and they were also looking at their schemes of work. This would then feed into the priorities in the development plan. It was explained that Lucy Yeomans, Assistant Head Teacher, also line manages English and she would be the expert in this area.

The Chair pointed out that a lot of the Year 11 students were suffering the legacy of three-hour lessons. In the long-term the school should start to see some improvement but in the short-term the school was still playing catch-up. The Principal explained that the academy would advertise nationally for a Head of English in September. He added that the salary and the PPA offer should attract a quality field. If it doesn't then the post would be re-advertised in the new year ready for the following September. The Vice Principal reported that the English department were looking at introducing phonics as a set lesson weekly and would also be looking at reading different articles as students generally did not have the love of reading.

It was explained that as the students will get 150 hours more of English teaching over the five years than the average school a lot more should be able to be done with it. An ex-journalist and an NQT would be starting in the department in September. The

Principal explained that the English department should have spent a lot more to purchase what the children want to read.

The Chair commented that the progress of children entitled to the Pupil Premium Grant was a concern but now their progress was looking better than the progress of the children not entitled to the grant. He added that this was a huge achievement. It was explained that Jane Taylor was responsible for this area and through the correct interventions the gap has been closed. A governor commented that a lot of the areas highlighted in the review had been identified in the school development plan which showed that the school had identified the right areas. The Chair agreed that this was an encouraging starting point.

The Principal commented that the science predictions were robust as were maths, however English was one area which could go either way.

Governors received copies of the latest GCSE predictions and also a copy of the new Ofsted framework.

### SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was presented to governors. The Principal explained that this was something that he was going to present at each meeting.

**Weaknesses:** MFL as the legacy outcomes do not look promising and also the Head of MFL was going on maternity leave. A Teach First teacher and an NQT had been appointed to the department. The Principal explained that the department had been overstaffed in order to keep the class sizes down in Year 10 and 11. The better teaching was having an impact in Year 7 and 8 and it was expected that the long-term picture would be healthier.

Literacy and High prior attainers were also included in this category

There were a lot of part-time staff in the Health and PE faculty, some of whom were not offering additional sports. An NQT had just been appointed to the department and they were already setting up clubs. Now that the additional facilities had been agreed this should be improved.

Lucy Yeomans was going to lead on assessment and this was an area that she is passionate about. As there would be fewer NQTs at the school she would be freed up to do this work. It was explained that the Planning for Progress scheme is about making the difference based on assessment.

The threats identified had already been discussed. A governor questioned whether the Kings Leadership Academy had been included in this area. The Principal replied that the King's Academy was continuing with its build and it had taken down the fencing. Thieves had broken into the substation and had caused £500,000 worth of damage. It was explained that the builders should have notified North West Electricity that the substation was vulnerable. As a result of this damage Essa Primary Academy had to close for a full week as it did not have any electricity. The Principal pointed out that the King's Academy was offering a narrow curriculum with no drama, languages or IT. A governor suggested that as the King's Academy would be using the site as a

temporary measure that Essa could possibly take over the temporary building in two years' time.

The Principal reported that 12 appeals for places at Essa were going ahead in the following week, for eight of them the parents had put down Essa as first choice, but they had been given King's Academy. The Principal said that he anticipated further appeals, however, the academy was full for September.

The Principal explained that it was planned to repeat this exercise at every meeting and this would include an update on each area.

#### 5c Approval of Policies

##### Complaints Policy

It was reported that the Complaints Policy had been checked by Hill Dickinson.

##### **Agreed:**

- That the Complaints Policy be approved.

#### **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There had not been any items of Any Other business raised.

#### **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 meetings for the next academic year be as follows:

Tuesday 10 September 2019 at 5.00pm

Tuesday 5 November 2019 at 5.00pm

Wednesday 4 March 2019 at 5.00pm

Tuesday 16 June 2019 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 7.25 pm

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_