

EASTGATE ACADEMY**Minutes of the meeting of the Local Governing Body****Wednesday 22nd April 2015 at 5.15pm, held at Eastgate Academy**

Present: Melanie Wellard (Chair), Jeremy McManus (Vice Chair), Louise Gayton, Ann Higgins, Brian Ellett (Parent Governor), Wendy Darrell (Staff Governor), Linda Hothersall (Principal).

In Attendance: Duncan Ramsey (Consultant Principal), Mary Farr (Business Manager), Alan Evans (Finance Director), Deborah Hinks (Clerk).

In Part attendance: Peter Howard (Upper KS2 Team Leader).

The meeting was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted by Guy Pyle and Danielle Flores-Yallop.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2015 and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

P3: The wording of the ADP objectives has been written out in full on the new Principal's Report for ease of reference, as requested by the Chair.

P4: Following on from her Link Governor Report on the Single Central Record (SCR), Ann Higgins reported that all the Safeguarding Link Governors from the 5 Trust academies had met in April with a view to sharing good practice. The Trust HR Manager, Rosy Lord, had attended the meeting and confirmed that she would be auditing the SCR termly. There would be Trust-led Safeguarding training in November and were plans for CEOPs training for governors too.

4. The Mastery Curriculum and its implementation

Upper Key Stage 2 Team Leader, Peter Howard, presented governors with an overview of the proposed new Mastery Curriculum to be introduced from September 2015 (*Assessment and New Curriculum at Eastgate Report*, attached to the Minute Book). He suggested that Eastgate Academy were 'ahead of the game' compared to other schools, as a result of proactive input from Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, and the fact that top-down planning using Assertive Mentoring was already in place at the academy.

The Chair, Mel Wellard, wanted to know how the staff felt about the new changes. The Team Leader reported that it was felt to be a positive step forward

as staff had always believed and expected that every pupil could achieve.

The Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, interjected that the academy staff were fully engaged with the new system well ahead of time but that governors ought to be aware of the fact that some parents may be concerned that their children are not being pushed on to the next year's work. He suggested parents would need to be re-educated about the new parameters and the principle of exploring a topic in depth in order to establish solid understanding.

Governors wanted to know how they would be able to monitor the results of the implementation of the Mastery Curriculum. The Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, explained that governors would be looking at the proportion of pupils who were working at age-related expectations, with a view to the children leaving the academy ready for learning at secondary level. Two measures would be monitored: attainment and progress. Together these measures would indicate how many pupils were working at age-related expectations and the percentage of pupils making expected progress. Targets would be set for both. He reported that the Trust would be working on the reporting mechanisms for these new measures.

Governors discussed the benefits of the new method, agreeing that the new emphasis on supporting pupils to fully master the curriculum rather than accelerating them to move 'on and up' was a positive move designed to enable pupils to fully embed and retain knowledge and understanding.

Governors enquired as to how the new measures would affect league tables. The Consultant Principal explained that the accountability measures had not yet been published and were still subject to consultation.

Principal, Linda Hothersall, reported that the datasets would only be available termly so governors would not be receiving the data as often as had been the case previously at LGB meetings. Governors expressed concern as to how they would discover impending issues with less frequent data. However, the Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, suggested that governors could ask to be shown how many pupils are on track to be 'secure', how many are making expected progress and that the Trust could arrange for its academies to cross-moderate each other's judgements.

Governors asked what the new curriculum would look like in September and whether a presentation on this would be forthcoming for governors. The Principal, Linda Hothersall, explained that further details were being discovered as the weeks progress and that topic areas would be decided henceforth. She expounded that the academy had been invited to work in partnership with St. Nicholas' Chapel project team so Year 5 and 6 planned to visit the chapel forthwith. The Chair, Mel Wellard, suggested that positive public relations and press opportunities should result from this liaison.

Peter Howard was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting (5.55pm).

5. Principal's Report to Governors (including Academy Development Plan, Achievement Tracker/Progress to Targets and Behaviour & Attendance

The Principal, Linda Hothersall, drew governors' attention to the new format *Principal's Report to Governors*, as discussed in the previous meeting (attached

to the Minute Book). Initial focus was placed on Section 1.3 of the *Progress to Targets* section of the report outlining the academy's priority to 'make teaching consistently good or better'. Further details of the discussion are reported under Agenda item 6 below '*Presentation on Staff Performance Monitoring*'.

The Principal guided governors through the Levels of Progress figures documented in the report, indicating that the academy was on track to achieve its forecasts.

She alerted governors to the academy's concern over EYFS, intimating that goals were not currently being reached though progress was good. Staff Governor and EYFS Team Leader, Wendy Darrell, reported that she would be moderated on the 24th April and would forward the general result of this exercise to governors forthwith. Principal, Linda Hothersall, indicated her wish that Duncan Ramsey also looks at whether the academy is expecting too much of its EYFS.

WD to forward notification of result of EYFS moderation in April.

Responding to governors' concerns, the Consultant Principal explained to governors that EYFS would be a separate report within Ofsted and that the 'Good Level of Development' measure was made up of two judgements: attainment and progress. For an 'outstanding' grade, both would have to be close to the national comparator. He continued by saying that if one stage was judged lower than another, it would have an impact on Ofsted's view of Leadership and Management.

The Principal, Linda Hothersall, reminded governors that the DfE had recognised that pupils' attainment levels were very low upon entry to the school, with speech and communication being the biggest issue.

She then drew attention to the new three year outline Academy Development Plan 2015-2018 at the back of the report, asking for governor feedback and comments to be forwarded to her within the next two weeks.

Governors to forward feedback & comments on ADP by end of first week in May.

Vice Chair, Jerry McManus, challenged the Principal over the attendance figures, drawing particular attention to the levels of Persistent Absence over recent periods. The Principal reported that attendance continued to be a key priority at the academy and that whilst ill health had negatively affected attendance recently, the academy still expected to get close to its target of 97% by the end of the summer term. She indicated that in the past when attendance levels had fallen, they had tended to stay dropped, but encouragingly attendance figures had increased again over this last period. The Business Manager, Mary Farr, explained that during Period 3, there were 28 pupils absent but that this had been due to illness not holiday. She reported that the academy still refused to authorise holiday, instigating fines for those disregarding the rule. However, some schools within the cluster were not imposing fines, which she felt might have an effect on which school parents chose for their children going forward.

6. Presentation on Staff Performance Monitoring

Referring to Section 1.3 of the *Progress to Targets* section of the Principal's Report, Linda Hothersall stipulated that 'Teacher on a Page' had brought good results in terms of improving teaching and had increased confidence amongst staff. She presented governors with the sheets used to grade observations and explained that Teacher on a Page helped cater for those teachers who found formal lesson observations difficult to deal with, thereby providing a fairer

assessment of staff performance.

It was reported that seven teachers were identified as good teachers through lesson observations this academic year. One teacher identified as a nervous teacher on observations had been identified as good through Teacher on a Page. Two teachers were currently being helped with short-term plans: one for teaching & learning and behaviour and one for learning environment.

Governors wanted to know how many observations took place. Linda Hothersall replied that three were undertaken by the Principal herself as part of the performance management system but that informal drop-ins happened several times a week. She expanded by saying that book scrutinies were done weekly and that each half term, the leadership team took stock of the observations and gradings. The Vice Chair, Jerry McManus, asked to come along to the next book scrutiny.

LH to invite JM to next Book Scrutiny.

The Chair, Mel Wellard, requested feedback on staff performance patterns over the academic year with a view to seeing progress and development. Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, agreed that it would be useful to know in which areas teaching was strong or less strong but that, to protect the anonymity of teachers, this might best be done in detail by one governor such as the Chair, rather than at LGB level. He advocated an end-of-year summary as being most appropriate for the LGB indicating, by way of example, that 80% of teaching was graded good or better.

7. Link Governor Monitoring Feedback

Vice Chair, Jerry McManus, presented his Link Governor report on the Mastery Curriculum and end-of-term data, as attached to the Minute Book.

Governors had also been provided with details of Guy Pyle's Link Governor visit to observe how the weekly Key Stage meetings work in tracking targets (attached to the Minute Book).

8. Management Accounts 2014/15 and progress towards budget for 2015/16

Business Manager, Mary Farr, presented the management accounts to the end of February 2015, indicating that the March accounts were only just being completed (*Income and Expenditure Accounts Feb 2015*, attached to the Minute Book). She reported that a balanced budget was expected at the end of the year.

She informed governors that the academy's bids for an allocation of the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) had been presented to the Trust Finance & Resources Committee on the 13th April. Two out of three bids had been approved – the barrier system for the car park gates and the boiler replacement.

Circulating the Paper on the draft 2015/16 budget (attached to the Minute Book), the Business Manager reported that income had increased overall by £83,266 since 2014/15, which was mostly the result of adjustments made to general Norfolk education funding. She highlighted that additional income was expected through SEN cluster funding and that government sports' funding would be paid for the last time during 2015/16.

Governors noted the anticipated expenditure increases due to rises in NI and pension employer contributions and cost of living increases to salaries. They also acknowledged that the draft budget for 2015/16 took into account the priorities outlined in the Academy Development Plan. The Finance Director, Alan Evans, reiterated the importance of this being the case.

The Business Manager, Mary Farr, drew governors' attention to the fact that, at 71.86%, staff costs as a percentage of income were in line with Trust expectations. She also intimated that meeting the Trust's reserves targets too would open up the potential to bring the infant classes into the main building, as previously discussed at LGB meetings. The Principal, Linda Hothersall, added that this project would naturally need to be costed thoroughly in terms of its likely impact on raising standards.

The Consultant Principal, Duncan Ramsey, congratulated the academy for being an academically high-achieving school that simultaneously managed strong control over its budget finances, a view very much echoed by the governing body.

9. Review of the Academy Risk Register

The Business Manager, Mary Farr, outlined the background to the Academy Risk Register, highlighting the top five areas of risk, as attached to the Minute Book. She updated governors on recent steps taken to mitigate the key risks, including ensuring that the new laptops incorporated encryption software. She reported that the updated Disaster Recovery Plan was now in place.

The Principal stated that she would be willing to buy into Norfolk Governor Services training, should governors so wish. The Chair, Mel Wellard, informed governors that she had been tasked by the Trust Chief Executive to investigate various governor training offerings and that she anticipated a mixture of in-house and external provision would be instigated.

Governors discussed the principle of assigning each risk within the Risk Register to a particular governor. However, it was decided that this would not be necessary as governors had already been assigned to the various Academy Development Plan priorities and the various risks would align with these areas.

Ann Higgins left the meeting at this juncture (7pm).

The Finance Director, Alan Evans, recommended that the Risk Register was reviewed by governors every six months and that the risks should be reflected in the Academy Development Plan.

It was agreed that the Academy Risk Register reflected the key risks currently faced by the academy and the document was thereby approved by governors.

10. Any Other Business

Governors reviewed and approved the Code of Conduct for Governors document circulated with the Papers prior to the meeting (attached to the Minute Book).

Linda Hothersall informed governors that Residents' Parking Permits may come

into force within the academy's neighbouring area.

Brian Elflett left the meeting at this juncture (7.04pm).

Governors were reminded to contribute £10 to the Governor Fund, as agreed at an earlier meeting.

Governors to contribute £10 each to the Governor Fund, as agreed.

The Clerk informed governors that the Trust had secured a trial use of the Norfolk Governor Services' GovernorHub and that governors would thereby be invited by email to join the service.

Vice Chair, Jerry McManus, enquired as to whether there had been any 'correspondence with the Chair' from parents and suchlike. The Chair indicated that there had been none.

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15th July 2015 at 5.15pm.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.