

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting  
held in the School  
Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 6.00pm**

**Present:** Dr J Powell (Chair) Dr B Naylor  
Dr M Pobjoy Mr G Ellis  
Miss H Pike Miss L Crossley  
Mr C Harte Mrs L Worville  
Mr N Jones

**Apologies:** Mr I Colling (Head Teacher) Mrs L Aird  
Mr N Arnold Dr C Leitmeir  
Mr J Bilson Dr N Dixon  
Mr N McLaren-Dobbie Mr I Brown

**In Attendance:** Mr T Hollis (Deputy Head)  
Mrs L Martindale (Deputy Head)  
Miss J Coleman (Member)  
Mrs W Willie (Clerk)

**ACTIONS:**

1.	<b>SEN visit to be arranged with Mrs Martindale</b>	<b>Mr Harte</b>
2.	<b>Skills audit forms to be sent to new governors</b>	<b>Mrs Willie</b>
3.	<b>Verbal submissions within the Complaint's Policy to be queried with Browne Jacobson</b>	<b>Mr Colling</b>
4.	<b>TOR to be finalised</b>	<b>Mrs Willie</b>
5.	<b>Health &amp; Safety Policy to be finalised</b>	<b>Mrs Willie</b>
6.	<b>Chairs' minutes to be put onto GovernorHub once finalised</b>	<b>Mrs Willie</b>
7.	<b>KCSIE declaration to be completed on GovernorHub</b>	<b>ALL</b>
8.	<b>Comment on Scheme of Delegation from BJ to be sent to Mr Colling. Scheme of Delegation to come back to governing body</b>	<b>Mrs Willie/ Mr Colling</b>

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

Dr Powell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Miss Jemima Coleman, newly appointed Member of the Academy Trust, who is a teacher at Magdalen College School, Oxford. It was confirmed that Mrs Sheila King, Staff Governor, had resigned with effect from 18 November 2022. Apologies as noted above which were accepted. Mr A Stanton was noted as absent. The meeting was quorate.

**2. Declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda & notice of any amendments to the Register of Interest**

None.

3. **Presentation by Ellacotts LLP, Auditors**  
**Ratification of Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2022**

Mr Slater, Partner Corporate Services, and Ms Shackleton, Manager Corporate Services, were welcomed to the meeting. All governors had been provided with the draft Annual Report and the Audit Results Report to the Board of Trustees prior to the meeting.

Mr Slater stated that there were no significant changes which impacted on the accounts and asked that governors advise if there are any amendments to the Trustees' information. The accounts are ready to be signed with everything in line with the Academy Trust Handbook. Mr Slater briefed on the accounts with the following highlighted:

- It is a clean, unqualified report with no issues arising.
- There has been a positive movement in funds of just over £3 million.
- The majority of movement is due to Section 106 funding.
- Lettings income reduced due to Covid but this is increasing again to pre-Covid levels.
- Staffing costs have increased with additional agency costs, which is in line with the increase in staff numbers and other academies.
- The fluctuations in the Local Government Pension Scheme are not of concern. **Mr Ellis asked what measures are in place should this fall.** Mr Slater explained that the school's report did not flag up any issues. The Trust should, however, be aware of the budgeted contributions.
- There are no incidences of irregularities to report.
- No Related Party Transactions or Declarations of Interest to report.
- There is a healthy carry-forward of £880,000.
- It was noted that the Chairs' attendance table in the report is the attendance for the Audit & Risk Committee, not the Chairs' Committee. To be amended by the auditors.

**Mr Ellis referred to the reserves policy, which is one week's salaries, and asked if the auditors have examples from other academies.** Mr Slater advised that usually it is two to three months of salaries, as well as ring fenced money for future projects. The school's policy of holding one week's salaries is low but the school has significant funds.

**Audit Results Report to the Board of Trustees Year Ended 31 August 2022**

Ms Shackleton briefed on the Audit Results Report which had been circulated and confirmed that they are issuing a clean unqualified audit opinion.

**Key Areas of Risk**

Ms Shackleton briefed on the key areas of risk noted from page 5 onwards.

**Dr Powell asked if schools ever become not a going concern.** Mr Slater responded that there had been one school with a worrying level of reserves due to overspending. **Dr Powell asked if this causes schools to be shut down.** Mr Slater said no, schools would be issued with a Financial Notice to Improve by the Education, Skills & Funding Agency (ESFA). **Dr Powell asked when governors should be concerned.** Mr Slater stated that it would be a concern if reserves were seen to be reducing over several years, with the key being accurate budgets and management accounts.

## **Recommendations to Management**

The following areas were responded to:

### **3.1 Member Records**

*It was noted that one of the current Members does not appear in the list of members on Getting Information About Schools on Gov.UK*

Mrs Willie clarified that Mr Andrew Anderson is no longer listed as a Member, as he had resigned on 29 September 2022 and was removed from the listing. This was noted by the auditors.

### **3.2 VAT**

*It was noted that the return for the quarter ended July 2022 was submitted six days late.*

Mr Lenhan explained that he had discussed this with the Finance Manager. This issue was picked up before the summer break, but because the VAT return falls after the summer, this was done on 5 September.

### **3.5 After Date Invoices**

*It was noted that three invoices were not treated correctly and should have been included as prepayments/accruals as at the year end.*

Mr Lenhan asked what the measure is for this and was informed by the auditor that it is from 0.5% to 1.5%.

### **3.6 Accuracy of Purchase Ledger**

*It was noted that the account balance for Anglian Water at each statement date had been input to the purchase ledger as an invoice in error.*

Mr Lenhan explained that the utility company combined the invoices and the wrong figure was picked up in error by a member of staff. This has been addressed with the Finance Team.

## **Summary of Audit Differences**

### **4.2 Unadjusted Misstatements**

*Being reversal of support staff pay uplift accrual*

Mr Lenhan commented that he feels it was correct to award the pay increase for support staff. The auditor said this was not triggered because the pay rise had not been agreed. The pay award needs to be considered that it has not been accounted for yet. The auditor confirmed that this is in the accounts, it has not been removed. It was agreed that this information be left in the accounts.

**Mr Ellis referred to the table on page 16 'Our Communication Plan' and the item 'Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit' and asked if any material weaknesses had been found.** The auditor confirmed none had been found and that they would be reported if the auditors had found them.

The auditor advised that there had been an increase in cybercrime and phishing emails being sent to schools, as well as ransomware attacks, and that audits will require more emphasis on IT. Mr Lenhan confirmed that a Cyber Audit had been undertaken and staff have had cybercrime training. Mr Lenhan added that the school has complied to the RPA's requirements (the schools' insurance provider) and has done everything it can to safeguard its systems. **Mr Ellis asked if it should be included in the Trustees Report that a Cyber Audit has been completed.** The auditor confirmed this is mentioned in the governance report and recommended that not too much information be declared in the report.

The auditor clarified that having only seven points in the report, with no repeat points and no high level points is very positive. With no further questions raised, the auditor confirmed they would action the points highlighted and finalise the accounts.

#### **Approval of Annual Accounts 2021-22**

It was proposed that the accounts be approved by the Full Governing Body (FGB) subject to any minor amendments. All governors voted in agreement with the proposal, motion carried.

Dr Powell thanked Mr Slater and Ms Shackleton for their presentations and Mr Lenhan and the Finance team for their hard work in preparing the accounts. Mr Slater, Ms Shackleton and Mr Lenhan left the meeting.

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting held 13 September 2022 & Review of Action Points**

The minutes having been circulated were agreed as a true copy and signed for filing.

##### **Review of Action Points**

Please refer to the table above for new/outstanding actions. The following was reported:

- Mr Harte is arranging an SEN visit with Mrs Martindale. **Action: Mr Harte**
- Skills audit forms to be sent to the new governors. **Action: Mrs Willie**

#### **5. Minutes of the planning meeting held 1 November 2022 & Review of Action Points**

The minutes having been circulated were agreed as a true copy and signed for filing.

##### **Review of Action Points**

Mrs Martindale clarified that she had put together a response relating to police searches based on the guidance with a copy available in reception.

#### **6. Confidential minutes of the planning meeting held 1 November 2022**

The minutes having been circulated were agreed as a true copy and signed for filing.

##### **Review of Action Points**

There were no outstanding actions.

#### **7. Master's Report**

A report dated December 2022 had been circulated and taken a read. Mr Hollis thanked governors for attending recent interviews. The following update was provided:

The Premises Team are under a lot of pressure, with concerns the team have had coming to fruition. The team are working hard to address issues across both sites.

Governors' attention was drawn to point 5 'Complaints.' Ongoing complaints are putting increased pressure on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). There are a lot of safeguarding concerns that are being dealt with and governors' support is appreciated. **Mr Jones asked if any particular trends had been identified.** Mrs Martindale advised that the key areas are domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, with grooming online and in the community, County Lines and substance abuse. It was added that parental substance abuse is leading to neglect of children who are moving onto child protection. Mrs Martindale stated that the staff are stretched in dealing with the high number of issues.

Mr Hollis explained that there appears to be a different level of challenge from parents compared to pre-pandemic. The biggest concern now is returning to a normal school

and attendance being a normal expectation, with school rules also being normal. All staff are working hard to maintain the high standards. **Miss Pike asked if more low-level disruption is being seen as well as parental challenge.** Mrs Martindale said yes and that they are trying to ensure there is consistency and parity. There is no tolerance of unacceptable behaviour but parents are not agreeing with sanctions and are challenging the school. Miss Pike commented that this is a national trend. Mrs Martindale said that at the recent E&W Pastoral meeting governors discussed sending out a message from governors to parents on behalf of staff. Mrs Martindale expressed she is feeling very vulnerable in dealing with the complaints and allegations being received. **Dr Powell stated she would be happy to write something to go out to parents and asked what the best way to address this would be.** Mrs Martindale stated that staff need to feel empowered to follow the policies. Dr Powell thanked Mrs Martindale for all she has done as she has taken the brunt of the responses from parents and appreciates the commitment from staff and asked that thanks be passed on to other senior leaders. Dr Powell added that parents are often trying to shortcut the complaint's process by copying local MPs, etc, into their emails.

Mr Hollis asked that governors bear this issue in mind during governor visits, as it would be beneficial in making staff feel supported. Mr Jones commented that a governor had come into school to give staff the opportunity to raise issues but no one had turned up to speak with the governor. Dr Powell advised that this had been for all staff, not directly for senior leaders. Mr Hollis added that staff need to be validated, endorsed and supported in the work they do. **Mr Jones asked if staff are feeling overwhelmed.** Mrs Martindale said that although there are lots of staff to deal with pastoral issues, staff are overwhelmed. Mr Colling and SLT have been extremely supportive and how to share the workload and work effectively has been discussed with Mr Colling.

Mrs Martindale advised that she had spoken to students about attendance and they have low expectations in regard to attending school. There is a divide between students who enjoyed being at home during the lockdowns and do not want to be in school and those who want to be in school. However, the majority of students are fine and want to be in school.

Miss Pike suggested that a governor goes through the complaints with SLT to gain a greater oversight of the complaints and how the policy is working. Dr Powell added that the policies go through the committees and the committees need to be aware of the content of the policies when they are adopted. Dr Pobjoy stated that he has seen a similar situation in the universities, with a rise in complaints since Covid, as well as issues being noticed in policies when they are put into practice.

**Dr Naylor asked if there is anything governors can do to engage with parents.** Mrs Martindale said that feedback from the parent questionnaire is that the school needs to communicate more. Staff are making a conscious effort to meet face-to-face with parents at the first stage of a complaint to help parents feel heard. Mr Hollis added that governors' presence would be welcomed at events such as parents' evenings. Governors discussed attending events. Dr Powell explained that governor visits will be identified from the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and allocated within the committees. Governor visits are to be scheduled from January to July and will be reviewed at forthcoming committee meetings.

#### **8. School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2022-23**

The final SIP had been circulated and was proposed for approval. Dr Powell clarified that the SIP will form part of the Senior Staff Reports presented to committees. Miss Pike commented that the Personal Development section looks particularly strong. **Dr**

**Naylor asked if there is anything in the SIP which will address the issues discussed this evening.** Mrs Martindale said yes, actions within the SIP will help move complaints, etc, forward. It was agreed that the SIP be adopted as presented.

## 9. Committees

### a) Committee Membership & Committee Chairs

The finalised committee structure had been circulated and will be effective from 1 January 2023. It was noted that membership of the Health & Safety and Audit & Risk committees is low.

Dr Powell explained that Mr Bilson is happy to continue as Chair for each of the three E&W committees, but has suggested that other governors chair the Pastoral and Teaching & Learning committees. Mr Ellis raised the issue of having a separate chair for the Finance & Resources Committee, adding he is happy to continue chairing the Health & Safety and Audit & Risk committees. Governors were asked to consider if they wished to chair any of the committees.

### b) Committee Reports – *minutes to be taken as read*

All committee minutes were taken as read with no questions raised.

#### • Education & Welfare

Mr Harte advised that the Senior Staff Reports are very comprehensive.

- Curriculum & Standards (27 September)
- Pastoral (16 November)
- Terms of Reference (TOR) – *for approval, no changes*  
The TOR were approved as presented.

#### • Personnel (4 October)

- Pay Committee (1 November)

#### • Health & Safety (18 October)

Mr Ellis stated that a lot of work has been done by the premises team with lots of effective reporting now in place.

- Terms of Reference – *for approval, no changes*  
The TOR were approved as presented.
- Health & Safety Policy - *for approval*  
An updated policy had been circulated and was adopted as presented.
- Register of Health & Safety Risks  
The Register is currently being drafted.

#### • Finance, Resources, Audit & Risk (15 November)

Mr Ellis reported that three audits had been completed, one of which was the Cyber Audit. Mr Ellis stated that the areas for the internal audits need to be approved. The finances are in a good position.

- Terms of Reference – *for approval, no changes*  
The TOR were approved as presented.
- Appointment of Auditors – *agreement to retender*  
It was proposed by the committee that the school re-tenders for auditors for the next financial year. All governors voted in agreement with the proposal, motion carried.

#### • Chairs' Committee (29 November)

Minutes to be circulated once finalised.

**Action: Mrs Willie**

*(Miss Pike left the meeting)*

**10. Compliance**

**a) Scheme of Delegation**

Mrs Willie advised that Browne Jacobson had reviewed the document with comments received only yesterday. Mrs Willie to refer these comments to Mr Colling with the document to be brought back to governors. **Action: Mrs Willie/Mr Colling**

**b) Behaviour Policy**

Mrs Willie confirmed that the updated Behaviour Policy had been agreed via email by the governing body and has now been published.

**c) Management Accounts**

Accounts for Period 2 had been made available on GovernorHub.

**d) Risk Register**

Mr Colling and Mr Ellis are currently working on the risk registers.

**11. Governance**

**a) Safeguarding Update**

There was no additional information to be shared.

**b) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Declaration**

All governors to complete the declaration on GovernorHub to confirm they have read the KCSIE 2022 statutory guidance. **Action: ALL**

**c) Governor visits**

- Mr Ellis, H&S Visit, 22 July 2022
- Mr Brown, opportunity for staff to meet with a governor, 7 October 2022

Completed visit forms are available on GovernorHub.

**12. Headteacher's Performance Management (HTPM)**

Mr Harte reported that this had been successfully completed in October. Objectives were reviewed and new objectives were set.

**13. Health & Safety**

No health and safety issues were reported.

**14. Any Other Business**

None.

**15. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 21 March 2023 6.30pm**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Dated.....