

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SAMWORTH CHURCH ACADEMY GOVERNING BODY HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON TUESDAY 19th MARCH 2024 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Nick Linney (NL) (Chair), Jane Lewis (JL), Lisa McVeigh (LM), Caroline Whitty (CW), Jo Hall (JH), Val Leivers (VL), Jo Yardley (JY) and Mark Parkin-Coates (MP).

IN ATTENDANCE: Donna Barnes (DB)(Clerk), Ellie Slack (ES), Carl Bennett (CB), Jack Thurkettle (JT) and Azaan Faisal (AF). Ian James (IJ) and Chris Vallance (CV) item 5.

OUTSTANDINGS (In date order)

13/05/20	SCAOT Structure and Funds CW
19/03/24	Skills Audit DB
19/03/24	Healthy Eating included in Principal's Report LM
19/03/24	Risk Register CW/NL/LM

CONCLUDED Are listed on the last sheet (In alphabetical order)

1. **Talk with Governors:** Mrs Chambers, parent of a Year 9 student was in attendance for this item of the agenda. Mrs Chambers stated that overall, both she and her child are happy with their experience of the academy. Reports sent home and parents evening are useful, although the larger set up compared with primary school format is slightly daunting. It was suggested more information could be shared to help prepare year 7 parents on what to expect. Some issues with cooking lessons were mentioned and dishes needing to be finished at home. ES confirmed the issues were caused by a problem with the fans which has been resolved. Mrs Chambers commented on the variety of food on offer and that her child enjoys the full range. Her child has recently enjoyed a visit to a football ground and the School of Artisan Food. When asked about the pricing for these trips, she said they seem fair and referred to the value that wider curricular experiences offer. Mrs Chambers explained that she had chosen the Academy as she went to the predecessor school, it has a good reputation and is local so offers her child independence. LM responded briefly to some of the comments during the meeting and made notes so that a more detailed response could be shared by email following the meeting.
2. **Prayer:** JL led attendees in a prayer.
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Jo Yardley (JY) to join at approx. 4pm.
4. **Declaration of Interest:** None.
5. **Major Topics:**
 - a. **Attendance and Behaviour**
The link between attendance and behaviour was highlighted by governors and the urgency to improve both emphasised. Governors were keen to hear what actions and impact has taken place since the last meeting. NL stressed the importance of the leadership team getting top side of the issues in order to resolve them. LM explained that since she has taken over line management of attendance she meets with the attendance lead weekly to monitor the strategies and interventions, such as tutor meetings with students and year team meetings with families. Checks are in place to make sure the meetings are being carried out by staff, and there is some powerful information starting to show the impact. The end of term usually sees a dip in attendance with FFT data supporting this trend therefore proactive action is being taken to discuss this with families where there is a pattern of this previously. Claire Barber is visiting weekly to support and share best practice. More detailed analysis will be sought and used to improve attendance through working with the 3rd party company, "Impact Ed". JH commented positively on the increase in rigour. LM confirmed that Luke Braybrook, our attendance lead, is taking on board all of the advice available to him and it is helping to identify what to focus on. LM referred to the difficulties of engaging with some families and the need to target the students in these situations to try to make them want to attend school.

JY joined the meeting at 3.45pm.

NL referred to the great allies available through the MAT and asked CB what the biggest challenge is with behaviour. CB responded that it was good to have support from others who have been through similar struggles and that the clear direction will help to improve, the only concern is how long this will take and whether sufficient impact can be shown before the next inspection takes place. The weekly visits have helped to raise the profile and recognise that greater challenge is necessary. CW asked about return to school discussions with students and whether they take place. LM confirmed they are happening but not for every absence which is not what we want, staff are being challenged when they don't take place.

The importance of challenge was discussed, the next step is to extend this and normalise challenging each other. There are plans in place to create additional training time for staff to focus on 'Our Way' and adaptive teaching which will be complete by May half term. The uniform focus and change to having one entrance have quickly shown improvements. There is an increasing level of challenge towards sanctions by some students and some low levels of defiance, often supported at home. LM suggested the solution to this issue will be to show that it won't be accepted and to provide a calm and orderly place where students want to attend. One of the biggest excuses nationally for non-attendance is children are too tired from the weekend. LM confirmed that boundaries are being pushed but that it is a tricky balance and to push harder may result in increased complaints. Governors agreed this should not stop challenge and to continue regardless, in order to make progress. LM explained that Claire prides their success on doing the basics well without fail with all staff aligned.

CV and IJ joined the meeting at 4.20pm.

NL brought CV and IJ up to speed with discussions that had taken place so far, highlighting that attendance and behaviour are a major topic on the agenda due to them being the most important challenges. All agreed that both are a priority and are linked, it was noted this is echoed through the staff updates and the message is consistent. LM reported that year 7 attendance is strong and better than this time last year, but this is not the case for higher year groups. Resilience is an issue which is a struggle when parents aren't enforcing at home. There is a reward event planned next week. NL asked for advice on what governors should do if they see something that needs challenging. LM confirmed that governors should share concerns with a member of staff so that they can deal with it appropriately taking any personal needs into consideration. NL stated that governors are looking to the executive leaders to manage the school out the problems and the huge role they play, although they are not on their own. Everybody must be on board and the executive leaders must lead by example with high standards which will be challenging. The importance of knowing the aspirations that are solution focussed with a sense of urgency and transmitting this message throughout the academy was discussed along with the potential timeframe for the next Ofsted inspection. CB, IJ and CV all noted the support from the MAT was helping and that they were pressing on with the task in hand.

CV and IJ left the meeting at 4.40pm.

6. FINANCE REPORT:

- (a) **Financial Statistics** – ES presented the February dashboard and confirmed this matches the management accounts shared with governors. There are timing variances with some funding streams but nothing of concern. The agency and supply spend is being monitored. Premises spend is higher than budgeted for this time of the year due to some remedial works but there are no concerns. Due to the additional costs of two new behaviour mentors, highlighted to governors at the last meeting, this will reduce the surplus from 157k to 154k. This will continue to be monitored carefully. ES has worked closely with Sarah Perry to make sure the March budget reforecast matches the information presented to the board and they will meet again to

talk through the cash at bank figure to ensure this is consistently reported. ES to update following this meeting but confirmed there are no concerns.

- (b) **Cash Flow** – As per the dashboard.
- (c) **Capital Expenditure Requests and Pending** – None.
- (d) **Opportunity Trust Performance** – ES referred to the value of investments on the dashboard for February - £1,745,000.
- (e) **Academy+** - ES referred to the funds raised as per the dashboard explaining that a recent sum of £500 has been donated. VL reported that the £50 challenge is well underway and that she had met with the new marketing person who had joined the group at their last meeting. VL to set up further regular meetings with a view to preparing some potential bids for major donors. The CRM system is up and running and now shares current funds raised. VL explained the deadline for the £50 challenge will be extended to encourage donations to keep coming in. The Tesco Stronger Starts scheme results are now in and resulted in Academy+ winning the highest prize of £1,500.
- (f) **Net Zero Carbon 2030** – ES to provide an update at the next meeting.

7. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** held on 5th February were accepted as a true record and were signed by NL.

8. **MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING:**

- (a) **Catering Review:** ES talked governors through the 'Catering Pricing Review' document shared prior to the meeting. ES highlighted the research carried out with supermarket pricing and other local schools. ES proposed that prices are increased by 6.9% increasing the cost of a main meal and meal deal by 20p each which would reduce the deficit in catering by a further £10k. Governors asked student leaders what their view was, they responded that it was positive this was done in two phases as opposed to in one increase and they understood the need for it to be reviewed. Governors supported the proposal. ES confirmed this will be communicated and implemented after the Easter break. **CONCLUDED.**
- (b) **SCAOT Structure and Funds:** CW provided an update on the ongoing process to gain CIO accreditation with the Charities Commission. The new legal advice has been much more comprehensive, and it is hoped the application will be resubmitted within the next month. **OUTSTANDING.**
- (c) **Governor Benchmarking Visit:** LM confirmed the visit to West Grantham Academy is set to take place on Monday 8th July. **CONCLUDED.**
- (d) **Governor Training:** The NGA skills audit was revisited and a simple way to complete it had been identified. The audit will be emailed to governors for completion and NL asked that this is completed and returned to DB by email within 5 days. **CONCLUDED. OUTSTANDING as Skills Audit DB.**
- (e) **Management Accounts:** Circulated to governors with the Principal's Report. **CONCLUDED.**

9. **LEGAL MATTERS:** None.

10. **SIGNING & SEALING:** None.

11. **STANDARD ITEMS:**

- (a) **Academy Aspirations:** As included on the agenda.
- (b) **Principal's Report:** LM referred to the reports shared for January and February. Despite other schools commenting on difficulties to recruit, the academy is in quite a strong position. Attendance and behaviour remain the key focus and as a result other initiatives are on pause. Two nominations have been submitted to the Jamie Oliver School Awards, one for the work that Jen Walker has been doing with Project Flavour and Leiths and the second for the catering team. Governors agreed that the item 'Healthy Eating' should be added to the Principal's Report and removed from the agenda. **OUTSTANDING as Healthy Eating included in Principal's Report LM.**

(c) **IT Development:** DB stated there was no update to share at this meeting, work continues to implement the changes in the capital expenditure request approved at the last meeting. NL asked student leaders what their perception of IT, the response was positive.

(d) **Policies:** The following policy was proposed by LM following review, and was subsequently approved by Governors:

- Attendance Policy

DB referred to changes made to the Risk Register following feedback and asked if this could now be approved. CW, NL and LM agreed to meet separately to discuss. **OUTSTANDING as Risk Register CW/NL/LM.**

(e) **AAB:** JH referred to notes shared and the focus at the last meeting which was PE. The next meeting will focus on Music. The data was shared in the new format which has helped to present and interpret the data in a better way than previously. Clarification was shared with governors on the bursary student group reported at Key Stage 5.

(f) **Student Leadership Feedback:** Student Leaders reported on their recent achievement of raising over £1,300 for Comic Relief. LM referred to the water bottle project and the Diocesan Conference 'Listen Up' taking place next week where student leaders will be speaking. LM continues to meet with student leaders fortnightly and handover preparations are underway. CW suggested that training is reviewed to help inform future training. LM confirmed that Year 12 students are already involved with Citizens UK.

(g) **Link Governors Reports:**

- i. Christian Distinctiveness – Approximately 55 members of staff have now completed an NPQH qualification provided through the Church of England, funded through the Department for Education. The programme 'NPQ Flex' as a result is now being modelled in other areas which is a remarkable achievement. JL reported on the Citizens UK - listening campaign and pupil voice on safety at the academy and wider community. There are two regular volunteers working with Alex the Chaplain who are helping to set up an Alpha youth group after the break. The academy is also working with the Diocese on their Flourish project.
- ii. Data Protection (GDPR) – JL confirmed an audit had taken place and there were no concerns to report.
- iii. Leadership/Management – NL referred to the issues that are time sensitive and that the team need to focus on these. NL thanked CB for his contribution and attendance at the meeting.
- iv. Health & Safety – JY reported meeting with the site manager in January which included a visit to Heatherdene and there are no concerns. The next visit will focus on checking fire records.
- v. Safeguarding – VL confirmed that a meeting had taken place to iron out issues raised in a recent audit. VL reported that she had carried out an audit and everything was in order. VL referred to some training recently attended which focussed on children missing in education and was excellent, resources have been shared with Adam Cave and Luke Braybrooke. Further enquiries are being made on the policy for storage of confidential files as many schools are now using CPOMS which stores records electronically.

12. **MATTERS FOR THIS MEETING:** None.

13. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF BUSINESS:** None.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MINOR TOPICS:** NL shared his apologies for the May meeting and requested that JL chair the meeting in his absence. JH and JY shared their apologies for the May meeting. DB checked availability with remaining governors to ensure that the meeting would be quorate.

15. **DATE, VENUE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

Tuesday 14th May at 11am

Dates of Future Meetings:

Wednesday 12th June, 3.15 to 4.45pm – Strategy Event.

Tuesday 16th July at 3pm

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.