

Standards Committee
4:30pm, Wednesday 7 October 2020

a virtual meeting held via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Present: (Directors) | Keith Bernstone (Chair), Tim Fisher (Vice Chair), Derek Bell, Julie Cornelius, Dean Judson, Sam Hirst |
| In attendance: | Nichola Peaker, Head of School, Hurworth School Nick Lindsay, Head of School, Longfield Academy John Armitage, Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Tracey Curtis, Governance Partner, AVEC Partnership |

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Description of Discussion</u> | <u>Action</u> |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | <p>The Chief Executive Officer highlighted housekeeping arrangements to ensure the smooth flow of the meeting, including ensuring microphones remained on mute when not speaking, the use of the chat facility to ask questions and the raising of a hand to gain attention.</p> <p>A round of introductions took place for the benefit of all present.</p> <p>Election of Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to elect a Chair to the first meeting of the Standards Committee in Autumn Term 2021 <p>Directors RESOLVED that Keith Bernstone was elected Chair of the Standards Committee of Swift Academies to the first meeting of the Committee in Autumn Term 2021.</p> <p>Keith Bernstone in the Chair.</p> | |

2 Election of Vice Chair

- to elect a Vice Chair to the first meeting of the Standards Committee in Autumn Term 2021

Directors RESOLVED that Tim Fisher was elected Vice Chair of the Standards Committee of Swift Academies to the first meeting of the Committee in Autumn Term 2021.

3 Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present

Directors were informed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that *the quorum for each of the committees was three voting directors*. Six (6) Directors were present.

4 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

No apologies for absence were reported. All Directors were present.

5 Notification of items of urgent other business

- items that the Standards Committee of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

No items of urgent other business were notified for consideration at the end of the agenda.

6 Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests

- a) complete / review the Register of Interest

Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the Register of Interest to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members or Directors and/or members or Directors and employees. A register should be completed annually and updated during each academic year where circumstances change.

- b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting

Directors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting. No declarations of interest were received.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

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7 **Record of Approvals**

• **Standards Committee, June 2020**

A draft Record of Approvals of the Standards Committee June 2020 had been circulated to Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the circulated Record of Approvals of the Standards Committee June 2020, were approved as a true and accurate record of the communication and should be signed by the Chair. The Trust Business Manager would retain the approved signed minutes.

Chair / Trust
Business
Manager

8 **The Rydal Academy**

- a) Head Teacher Report
- b) Education Development Partner Report
- c) SEF/Action Plan

The Head Teacher Report, Education Development Partner Report, and SEF/Action Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher (John Armitage) discussed with Directors and those present the content of the circulated Head Teacher Report. Directors' attention was drawn to the report for information in respect of pupil numbers, attendance and exclusions. Directors were informed that due to the partial closure of the school between 20 March 2020 and June 2020, and for the duration of the reporting period this section of the report remains unchanged. At the point of partial closure, due to Covid-19, attendance was up 0.2% when compared to the same period in 2019-2020.

Directors raised queries in respect of fixed term exclusions and noted four pupils with repeated fixed term exclusions in 2019-2020 when compared to two pupils in 2018-2019. The Head Teacher reported that reporting was different and now included the number of pupils where physical abuse of staff had taken place.

The Head Teacher reported that 16 pupils of The Rydal Academy would be self-isolating from today (Thursday, 7 October 2020), which created the opportunity to apply for laptops from the Department for Education in order to support pupils remote working.

Attainment and progress

Directors were informed that the data contained in the circulated Head Teacher Report remained unchanged from the previous report: national EYFS assessments had been cancelled due to Covid-19.

Directors were informed that staff were in the process of preparing pupils for Phonics Testing. Children had returned to school in September 2020 but had not moved on as would have been expected had they remained in school. However, many had retained the knowledge previously taught.

Directors sought clarification whether interventions were planned to support Key Stage 2 pupils who had not met the phonics standard. The Head Teacher confirmed that interventions were in place for some pupils in order to embed phonics and develop fluent readers. Subject Leads had completed an to identify pupil gaps between the previous and revised curriculum.

Curriculum planning – staffing and class sizes

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated Head Teacher Report for information in respect of the Curriculum Offer and Extended Curriculum Offer.

Directors were reminded that the curriculum structure at The Rydal Academy had been redesigned with timetabling of all subjects to be taught regularly across each term.

Education Development Partner Report

The Head Teacher provided Directors with an overview of the Autumn Term meeting with the School Improvement Partner, Gabrielle Reddington. The focus of the meeting was reported as Subject Leader development through deep dive interviews with targeted staff and subject areas including PSHRE, PE, RE and MFL.

Safeguarding and Well-being

The Head Teacher drew Directors' attention to the summary of change within the Safeguarding and Well-being section of the circulated Head Teacher Report.

SEF / Action Plan

Governors were informed that the narrative contained in the SEF / Action Plan had been updated from September 2020. Changes to the document were highlighted yellow. The Head Teacher discussed with Governors the content of the circulated SEF / Action Plan.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated SEF/Action Plan and information reported was noted.

During this item Nichola Peaker entered the meeting.

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Hurworth School

- a) Head of School Report
- b) Education Development Partner Report
- c) SEF / Action Plan

The Head of School Report, Education Development Partner Report, and SEF / Action Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head of School (Hurworth School) presented to Directors and those present the content of the circulated Head of School's report, drawing attention to the summary of change within each section.

Pupil numbers / attendance and exclusions

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A summary of change was provided as follows:

- the school continues to be over-subscribed which has ongoing implications for finance, staffing and resources. Whilst as many improvements have been made as possible to date, the physical limitations of the building continue to present challenges on a day to day basis: the school needs to continue to explore additional funding opportunities to try and improve this.
- During the 2019-2020 admissions process, large number of LAC and pupils with an EHC applied to Hurworth both of which will have ongoing support implications for future years. For the first time in its history, the school did not reach distance criteria for admissions and not all applicants in associated areas received a place at the school, meaning that the demographic of the school will change if this pattern is repeated longer term. The school may need to review its admissions criteria.
- Attendance figures continue to be below national but are improving so current strategies seem to be paying dividends. An external review is providing further support in this area.
- Permanent exclusions to July 2020 remain extremely low.
- The School has continued its policy of ensuring high standards even though the number of FTE's have been reduced in number compare to the same period of time in the previous academic year.

Attainment and Progress

It was reported that in Key Stage 3, pupil performance in lower school is also strong across the board (March 2020). Year 9 – English is on target 97% and Maths 88%. In Maths, of the 16 students below their target 9, are one sub level below and 7 are two sub levels below.

Year 8 – English on target 99%, Maths on target 94%.

Year 7 – Baseline tests currently being undertaken in order to allow target setting to take place.

Negative threads and actions to address these were reported as English, Maths and the Open Progress 8 declined between 2018 and 2019. English performance is being viewed as a blip given the previous historical performance. A complaint was made to OfQual with regard to the exam marking in the summer. Both departments are monitored closely at both data and curriculum half termly meetings.

Governors were informed that:

- pupil's educational outcomes have dipped significantly in some subject areas during summer 2020 and led the schools progress to be negative.
- The performance of science although improving still needs significant support and monitoring
- Geography and V Cert PE are areas to monitor as it has now not fulfilled expectations for two years. Business studies results dipped significantly this year.
- Recruitment to EBacc remains below national levels, however there has been an increase upward in the current Year 10.

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- The performance of boys had decreased significantly and needs to be fully analysed and addressed. Disadvantaged pupils have also not made expected progress.

Curriculum Development

Governors were informed that 'read and watch' lists had been prepared for each subject to encourage pupils wider reading and independently deepen their own understanding of a subject area. These have also been uploaded to departments curriculum webpage.

Departments had also designed 5 year learning journeys which would be displayed in classrooms so they can easily be referenced and links between topics highlighted.

Further curriculum trust meetings are scheduled throughout the year. The next meeting would take place on Thursday 5 November 2020 with a focus on SEND / Barriers to learning.

All departments had created Key Stage 4 knowledge organisers which would be given to pupils at the beginning of a unit or topic. ILT's for each year group had also been created and adapted to be retrieval based.

A tutor revision programme has been created to ensure pupils are confident in how to use the different strategies for ILT's and exam revision. Year 7 through to Year 10 focus on a different strategy each half term, while Year 11 have a weekly task which also explores the creation of revision timetables, time management and stress, for instance. Departments had created 'How to Revise' page which would form part of a Revision ToolKit for Year 11.

Cross curricular knowledge links are being explored by departments and would be developed further in the next academic year.

There is a large focus on remote learning, with an audit being completed currently by staff, parents and pupils to identify improvements. Plans are in place for each tier of lockdown. Individual pupils who are self-isolating are sent work via e-mail each day. Microsoft Teams would be used to provide online support where a bubble was to close.

Education Development Partner Report

Directors were informed that the focus of the Autumn Term visit had been the development in the Student Support Team. Activities had included discussions with the Senior Team, support team – behaviour, rewards, attendance and disadvantaged strategy update.

Directors' attention was drawn to the recommendations contained in the circulated Education Development Partner Report. Recommendations would be acted upon by respective members of staff across Hurworth School.

Safeguarding and Well-being

Directors were informed that a further 10 students at Hurworth School with Education Health and Care Plans, and all within the same year group.

It was reported that respective members of staff had received Level 3 refresher training in July 2020 with three further members of staff receiving Level 3 training for the first time.

Coronavirus update

The Head of School provided Governors with an overview of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the staff, pupils and parents of Hurworth School. Pupils and staff were reported to be engaged in school activities and content to be in school again.

SEF / Action Plan

Directors' attention was drawn to the summary pages contained with the SEF for information, which identified strengths, areas for development and significant risks across quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management.

Directors sought clarification whether the cancellation of exams in 2020 and the use of Centre Assessed Grades was problematic for those departments at Hurworth School who had been identified as under performing previously. The Head of School confirmed that work had commenced with science, geography and business studies departments a long time prior to partial school closure and that alternative evidence was in place to indicate improvements. Examination results would have verified respective departmental work. However, staff were reported to be convinced that pupils would have achieved more had examinations taken place.

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Longfield Academy

- a) Head of School Report
- b) Education Development Partner (EDP) visit report (Autumn Term 2019)
- c) SEF / Action Plan

The Head of School Report (Longfield Academy), Education Development Partner visit report, SEF / Action Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head of School presented to Directors the content of the circulated Head of School Report, SEF / Action Plan and Education Development Partner visit report. Drawing particular attention to the summary of change.

Pupil Numbers / attendance and exclusions

The Head of School reported that Longfield Academy continued to be undersubscribed with a number of year groups particularly low. Directors were reminded that a number of Permanent Exclusions had taken place since Longfield School became part of Swift Academies in order to

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address inappropriate behaviour across the school. Parents were understood to be opting to have their children education at other secondary schools in the area.

Transition

Governors were informed that a Transition Coordinator had recently taken up post at Longfield Academy and was already working closely with primary feeder schools.

The Head of School informed Governors that Longfield Academy wanted to be recognised as innovative and identify best practice in other schools to support the pastoral needs of pupils, bridge any divide and prevent a dip in performance for Year 7 students. The impact of this work would be measured over time

Attendance

Directors were informed that attendance had improved more than academic attainment. Robust processes were in place to address pupil absence. External agencies were reported to have praised the procedures in place at Longfield Academy.

Permanent Exclusions

There had been 6 Permanent Exclusions in 2019/20; Permanent Exclusions are 0.6% of school population which is slightly above the national average. Permanent exclusion was only used when all else failed and all incidents/interventions/support/strategies etc. are clearly documented. The school continues to work constructively with the Vulnerable Pupil Panel for Darlington as its Permanent Member for Secondary Schools and is hopeful to see a reduction in 2020-21.

Fixed Term Exclusions

It was reported that overall Fixed Term Exclusions had decreased but it was acknowledged that a small cohort of pupils had received more than one fixed term exclusion. Help and support were in place for this cohort to address any issues as a priority to ensure that the number of fixed term exclusions reduces. The Educational Development Partner had identified that fixed term exclusions were high across Longfield Academy and that oppositional defiance was regularly a factor

Internal exclusions were reported to be served within the community of Longfield Academy to ensure that pupils are able to access the same work as they would have completed in lesson.

Attainment and progress

The Head of School expressed his disappointment with arrangements in 2020 and the cancellation of examinations as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Head of School commented that had examinations taken place, Longfield Academy would have been able to challenge other schools traditionally seen as good performers across Darlington.

Quality Assurance / Education Development Partner Report

Governors' attention was drawn to the content of the Education Development Partner Report. The Report identified what needed to take

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place over time in order to drive forward the quality of standards and education. While we were not able to have 'deep dives' which had been the intention., the report was able to verify the internal verification systems for departments and also offer some bespoke support for Maths, English and History as well as useful sessions on Remote Learning and the We Are Longfield life-skills Curriculum.

Safeguarding

Governors had been updated with the Department for Education Guidance in respect of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) from September 2020. The Guidance had been shared with all staff and training delivered via a live link on Microsoft Teams. A number of dates and times had been identified for Members, Directors and Governors to receive Level 1 Safeguarding training and an update in respect of the KCSIE guidance.

Directors commented that Longfield Academy had commenced on a journey in order to raise standards, the Head of School and Leadership Team were praised for their work to date and acknowledge the work that was being undertaken for the pupils and community.

The Head of School agreed that Longfield Academy was better than it ever had been with a 50 year history of relative failure. The Head of School and Senior Leadership team would continue to explore what was not going right and ensure staff are working to support pupils.

Procedures are in place at Longfield and staff should be encouraged to adhere to them in order to make a difference. The Head of School and Senior Leadership Team would ensure staff were held to account.

11 Chief Executive Officer's Report

- a) Scheme of Delegation
- b) Trust Development Plan

The Chief Executive Officer's report, Scheme of Delegation and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that Risk Assessments had been prepared in July 2020 in readiness for return in September 2020. The return of the staff and students at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year had gone as well as could have been hoped.

Condition Improvement Funding had been confirmed to replace the fire alarm system (£167,000) and replace flat roofs (£240,000) at The Rydal Academy. A total of £1,280,000 Condition Improvement Funding had been approved across Swift Academies.

MAT Development: Autumn Term 2020

The Autumn Term 2020 MAT Development Session is planned to take place from 5pm on Wednesday 21 October 2020 and will be led by Gabrielle Reddington with a focus on what Governors and Directors can expect during an Ofsted visit.

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Scheme of Delegation

It was reported there were no changes to the circulated Scheme of Delegation.

Trust Development Plan

Governors were informed that the Trust Development Plan had been reviewed and updated by the Executive Leadership Team and would be considered by the Board of Directors for approval when they next meet in Autumn Term 2020 (Friday 13 November 2020). Changes to the Trust Development Plan were highlighted yellow in the circulated document.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Chief Executive Officer Report, Scheme of Delegation and Trust Development Plan and information reported was noted.

12 Policies for approval / review / information

For review & approval (please note any changes highlighted in yellow)
Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Complaints Policy, Biometrics Policy
Data Retention and Destruction Policy, Online Safety Policy

Directors RESOLVED that the Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Complaints Policy, Biometrics Policy, Data Retention and Destruction Policy and Online Safety Policy were approved and adopted with immediate effect and should be made available on the Trust website.

13 Concluding items

Any urgent other business raised under item 5

No items of urgent other business had been notified.

14 Approval of documents for inspection

Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.


15 Date and, time of future meetings (all from 4:30pm)

- Wednesday 3 March 2021
- Wednesday 16 June 2021

These minutes were approved by the Standards Committee of Swift Academies as follows:

Mar 10, 2021 (date)

signature (Chair):


[Keith Bernstone \(Mar 10, 2021 11:16 GMT\)](#)

name: Keith Bernstone

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Swift Academies Standards Committee minutes 7 October 2020

Final Audit Report

2021-03-10

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Created: | 2021-03-10 |
| By: | Sophie Bainbridge (sophie.bainbridge@avec-partnership.com) |
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-  Document created by Sophie Bainbridge (sophie.bainbridge@avec-partnership.com)
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