



## Alderman Jacobs Primary School (Academy Trust)

### Audit & Risk Meeting

Wednesday 9/2/2022

### MINUTES

#### Key:

Trustee Questions

School Improvements

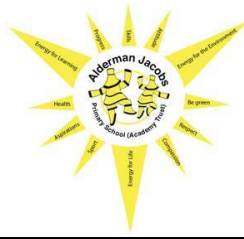
**Governors Present:** Cathy Carlisle (Head Teacher) Joel Combes (Audit & Risk Chair),  
Laura Holland (LHO), Sadie Wiles (SW)

**In Attendance:** Jocelyn Sumner (Finance & Operations Manager) Amy Ure (Governance Professional)

Meeting commenced at 5.32pm

1	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> JC welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Laura Hemmaway (LH)	All to note
2	<b>Declaration of Pecuniary Interest</b> Cathy Carlisle (CC) - Daughter carries out temporary midday / TA work Laura Holland (LHO) - Trust Member of Alderman Jacobs School (Academy Trust) Director (Trustee) for another Academy Trust (OWN trust) Joel Combes (JC) - Wife, Sarah Combes is a teacher in school Sadie Wiles (SW) - CFO of OWN Trust, Governor of Nene Valley Primary School.	
3	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting (20/10/2021)</b> The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by LHO seconded by JC.	All to note
4	<b>Agreed Actions Updated</b> No actions from the previous meeting.	All to note
5	<b>Internal Scrutiny (Attached)</b> The Internal Scrutiny report was shared with the Trustees prior to the meeting. This report was from the last term of the academic year and a supplementary report was provided. There were three 'low risk' issues identified. Two have now been resolved and the third, reference to a balance sheet is still being worked. We are still waiting on the opening	All to note

	<p>balance journal from the auditors to bring the balance sheet up to date. We are able to add previous years figures for comparison. The issue remains orange as JS is investigating how to split the reserves by restricted and unrestricted funds. The software supplier has not been able to help with this. JS is able to categorise Ledger codes by restricted and unrestricted fund codes and needs to audit the current codes and investigate how to determine the split in the balance sheet totals.</p> <p>Trustees asked if it would cause problems if you were unable to separate them. No, it's not particularly useful and would not make a big difference but this document is submitted to ESFA at year end. So it needs to be done.</p> <p>Trustees were informed that a further audit visit will take place in the 1st term of this year. They will look at the risk register as well as the areas covered in the internal scrutiny submission which was agreed in the Autumn Trustee meeting. They will then report back. Trustees asked for clarification on if there were any major questions highlighted on the submission. We selected two aspects from 7 key areas in the hand book, to ensure the risk register is robust and not missing anything major that we need to look at and Safeguarding. Trustees asked if they are coming in March will this be reported on in July. Yes.</p> <p>Trustees were advised that as agreed from the last meeting the Internal Scrutiny Report was submitted to ESFA on time.</p>	
6	<p><b>Staff Pay</b> This was brought to the Trustees for comment.</p> <p><b>** Confidential Minutes**</b></p> <p><b>Support staff pay - NJC</b> Trustees were made aware that Support staff pay increase negotiations are still ongoing. There is a change to the national living wage which affects staff on NJC scale 1 &amp; 2. Those staff will get a temporary uplift to match the living wage. The budget covers the pay increase.</p> <p>Trustees asked if we had applied the £1 annual pay increase to teaching staff who have had a pay freeze, over 12months. If not those affected could have their pension drawings affected. This had been published on NAHT.</p> <p><b>ACTION: JS to explore this further but it seems quite manageable.</b> Trustees agreed the increase should be applied where it affects pension drawings.</p>	<p><b>Note to all</b></p> <p><b>JS</b></p>
7	<p><b>Surplus Spending</b> This was listed for fuller discussion as our reserves are in excess of the current policy. We can consider a change in the policy reserves. There were lots of discussions around how that money could be spent. There are projects where we hadn't budgeted enough to get the specification we wanted i.e. Outdoor PE area or other building projects.</p> <p>Trustees were asked to consider the current behavioral challenges across school. The impact of COVID means that staff absence is high, we have an</p>	



	<p>influx of EHC children and are having to move staff to support those children. The effects of these staff absence levels feel significant, especially at leadership level. There are long waiting lists for ADHD and Neurodevelopment assessments, which will also have an impact. <b>Trustees asked if there was a solution, could you bring in extra staff.</b> Over the next 5 years this will be considered. We have more money coming in per pupil, PP and SEN top up and so already the budget forecast is looking significantly different with those additional monies. We need to look and plan what our staffing needs are and site projects look like. <b>Trustees suggested looking at temporary contracts, to get staff in now. Although they did acknowledge that temporary contracts are not attractive.</b> Trustees were advised that teaching assistants have taken on extra hours on short term contracts. <b>Trustees asked if this will no longer be an issue once isolation requirements come to an end.</b> Yes, it would certainly help. The biggest impact is the 10 day isolation.</p> <p>Trustees were also referred to the School Resource Management Self-Assessment tool (SRMSAT) dashboard and benchmarking resources which have previously shown we had a high % of expenditure for staff costs in comparison to other schools, but we are now back to average. <b>We also spend a lot more on the building compared to other schools with similar characteristics. This is acceptable as part of strategic decisions and plans. It was agreed that the balance of investing in the site (to maintain and improve the building and school facilities) and staff resources (to relief current pressures expected to continue for some time) to continue to be competitive needs to be reviewed as part of the mid-year year budget review and the planning process for the 2022-2023 budget forecast.</b></p> <p>Trustees agreed with the increasing impact from lock down on behavioural/SEN and COVID staff shortages we are not in a position to discuss the surplus.</p> <p><b>ACTION: CC/JS to look at the structure and budget.</b></p>	<b>JS/CC</b>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Summary of meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good discussion around pay</li> <li>• Further talks needed around surplus money</li> </ul>	

The meeting closed at 6.02pm

Signed as a true record: ..... Date: .....

Joel Combes (Chair)

**Date of next Audit & Risk Meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 @ 6pm**