



Alderman Jacobs Primary School (Academy Trust)

****Trustee Meeting****

Wednesday 15th March 2023

MINUTES

Key:

Trustee Questions

School Improvements

Governors Present: Cathy Carlisle (Headteacher), Elaine Crane (EC), Laura Holland (Chair), Tom Claxton (TC), Sadie Wiles (SW), Joel Combes (JC), Laura Hemmaway (LH), Eleanor Gunn (EG)

In Attendance: Jocelyn Sumner (Finance and Operations Manager), Amy Ure (Governance professional)

Meeting commenced at 6pm.

1	Welcome and Apologies Laura Holland (LHO) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Laura Hemmaway (LH) will be running late. Apologies received from Andrew Pattison (AP).	All to note
2	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Carlisle (CC) - Secondment to SOKE education Trust as CEO. Husband provides Landscaping services. Daughter has a temporary contract for Midday Supervisor Laura Holland (LHO) - I am a Trustee of another Trust (OWN Trust) in Peterborough. I am also an associate Trustee for SOKE Trust but have no voting rights. Joel Combes (JC) - Wife, Sarah Combes is a teacher in school. Sadie Wiles (SW) - CFO of OWN Trust Elaine Crane (EC) - Oldest son works for MacIntyre Hudson, who audit our school accounts. SW is no longer a Governor of Nene Valley Primary School.	All to note
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting (11th January 2023) Minutes of the previous meeting were shared with trustees prior to the meeting. All agreed were a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by LHO, seconded by SW	All to note
4	Agreed Actions Updated All completed satisfactorily. SW had already completed her Safeguarding training but this was done outside of the National College. EG arrived 6.02pm LH arrived 6.02pm	All to note

5	<p>Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy Accounts Return 2021-22 shared with trustees for information only to confirm it has been submitted. Trustees wanted to thank JS. View My Financial Insights (VMFI) This was shared with trustees prior to the meeting. The online tool was recently updated from the 21/22 academy account return. The data shows a summary of insights, giving an assessment of data compared with similar schools to enable trustees to review and stimulate discussions and support any decision making for 23/24 budget setting. Trustees were made aware that we have gained a red and amber RAG status. Amber being Administrative Supplies which we are not sure why. Trustees suggest maybe it's because of price increases. Trustees have concerns (from experience) that the reports are not factually correct. All agreed data is skewed because we do not know what other schools are doing. We have not gone over budget and it is all in line with the school's strategic plans. Mid-Year Budget Review Mid-Year budget review was shared with trustees prior to the meeting. Keys have been used along with annotations highlighting any budget changes. Trustees were reassured that we can still balance the budget without impacting anything particular. Trustees challenged the increase in staff expenses with less increase in income. Trustees reassured that the expenditure/income overall do balance. Trustees questioned the ASC income which has decreased significantly. Trustees were advised that it is still covering costs. This is likely to be the new level following COVID. Trustees asked if there were any ASC staff on temporary contracts. No, it would be hard to employ on a temporary contract for just a few hours and we couldn't run it any cheaper. As long as it continues to make money it is a valuable service. Even at a slight loss we could consider using Breakfast club income to substitute. ASC is not as profitable as it once was and so it needs to be monitored. Trustees questioned the increase in salary costs. We had budgeted 4% for support staff awards; the average has been adjusted to 6%. This is because staff on a lower grade received a higher increase than those on a higher grade. Trustees asked if there were concerns that money would be left over. Trustees were reassured that if we spend based on the spreadsheet the account is balanced. <p>Further discussions took place with regards to projects which were on hold just to ensure we could afford them.</p> <p>Trustees are happy with the recommendations and agree to the budget being adjusted.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that the monthly Management Accounts are always available in the drive so that everyone has the opportunity at each of the 6 meetings in the year to ask questions if they have any. Overall trustees were advised things are on track, any projects delayed will go ahead, this was to ensure we could afford and factor in any changes as they came along. Trustees were invited to raise any further questions.</p>	All to note
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	<p>Trustees asked if there had been an increase in utility costs. No, although water has gone up significantly. Trustee asked if the invoices paid were actual or estimated to ensure costs were correct. They are actual. There was discussion with regards to gas & electricity caps for schools which come to an end in April. Utilities will be monitored but there is money in the budget. JS was thanked for the financial update.</p> <p>JS left at 6.18pm JS.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the budget and what would happen when joining SOKE. There have always been plans in place to spend funds and the suggestion is that we look at having some of the 'nice to have' things done. Consideration was given to some projects to improve toilet facilities for staff. Suggestion is that we could put in a security & safeguarding CIF bid to create a safer office space and a family meeting room (not within the school building) and incorporate toilets into that. It's not a high priority and would be difficult to evidence a security problem, so would likely need a financial contribution from school.</p> <p>Trustees asked what sum we are looking at carrying through to the new trust. Around £460,000 would be carried over. Trustees challenged how that money would be used, could it be 'ring fenced' and we specify what it can be spent on. No, It would go into a central pot. Majority of the SOKE schools put in similar amounts. Trustees asked for an update on the swimming pool cover & sports area? The recommendation was that we needed planning permission. Unfortunately, other things have taken priority. Trustees asked if there is anything that the PE teacher might need. There is a trim trail upgrade being installed.</p> <p>Another option would be stage lighting that has not been budgeted for. This came down as part of the electrical project. If there is money we could look at replacing it with modern stage lighting. Not a priority but would be an investment.</p> <p>Trustees also advised that there is contingency built into the current fire/electrical project. Some additional work will hopefully be carried out to include: external lighting, wiring for plug in car port, swimming pool changing room ceiling/lighting replacement. So we can see what we can get out of the contingency.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to utilise any funds to support and improve the school facilities.</p>	
6	<p>Policies to review</p> <p>Policies along with a policy review proforma were shared with trustees prior to the meeting.</p>	All to note

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Proposed by LHO, seconded by SW • Complaints Proposed by LHO, seconded by EG Invacuation SW propose, LH second • Site Security Unfortunately this policy and policy review template was not shared prior to the meeting. Trustees were advised that there were no changes made to the policy. Proposed by LHO, seconded by JC • Staff Induction Proposed by JC, seconded by LH • Appraisal Proposed by LH, seconded by JC 	
7	<p>Educational Standards</p> <p>i) Headteacher Report Headteacher's update report was shared with trustees prior to the meeting. It was drawn to the trustees attention that the point in objective 1 (reading Deep Dive) should have been removed as this hasn't taken place yet. The report was summarised for trustees. Behaviour - is still challenging and was discussed in detail. Trustees were advised that Specialist teachers from the Access & Inclusion team were invited in to review practices - the outcome was really good. They reviewed the nurture provision and were really impressed - which is reassuring. There is still a level of exclusion/suspension reflective of the behaviour but they were supportive of all the strategies and agree we are doing everything possible, as did OFSTED. One recommendation was to introduce more temporary reduced timetables. These require parent agreement. All, apart from 1, have been able to facilitate a reduced timetable. Trustees asked if these children have EHCPs. Yes some, it was agreed as long as the EHCP is considered and their needs catered for. Trustees asked if there were any financial implications with reduced timetables for those with an EHCP? Yes, they can take away the EHCP funding. Reduced timetables should be for an initial 6wk period but are usually longer. The child's needs and provision need regular review. The alternative is permanent exclusions. Trustees were also made aware that a couple of children need special school places, the parents want that but there are no special school places for them. Trustees noted that there was one permanent exclusion which has been rescinded. Trustees agree that the school is doing everything possible to manage behaviour.</p> <p>Attendance - is slightly higher and is continuing in the right direction. Trustees asked for clarity on New Road opening classes. In September they will be opening a class in years 3 & 4 and the LA will be considering a year 1 & 2 class. Trustees saw this as a real positive to alleviate pressures. Trustees noted from the recent safeguarding monitoring visit which focused on persistent absence; it's evident that the systems the school have in place are really robust and there is not much more the school can do. Trustees questioned if the 'soft' letters were too soft. It needs to be a</p>	All to note



	<p>supportive process. The challenge is when the school has referred to the LA and they reject the referral.</p> <p>Trustees asked if there had been any negative effects following the teacher strikes. The school had to close the classes affected. There was a year 6 class affected, but cover was prioritised as it's an exam year. Trustees asked if parents who had children off due to strikes had pulled out siblings. No, the impression is that parents were supportive of the teacher strikes and we haven't received any complaints.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the dates on the exclusion - internal/exclusion data. Trustees were reassured the data is correct, but the dates are wrong. ACTION: EC to make RI aware</p> <p>The chair made trustees aware that following a letter they received from school there is a child who will not be sitting their SATs this year. Trustees were advised that the child is currently working below the standards of the test. New guidance is that Trustees need to be informed.</p> <p>Trustees were invited to raise any further questions. Trustees felt that it's really positive to see HLTAs taking on more and subject leaders taking more responsibility. This was also picked up by OFSTED. It's great to see them taking ownership of their own progression, wanting to further their own knowledge and development.</p> <p>ii) Strategic Plan for Improvement The Strategic plan for improvement was shared prior to the meeting. The updates have been reflected within the headteachers report. Trustees noted that we are in the last year of a 3 year plan. They asked if there were any concerns or areas that won't be achieved. Nothing major, a couple we wanted to do but for various reasons they have been moved back.</p> <p>iii) Minutes from Achievement Committee & Audit & Risk Committee - Jan 2023 (attached for review only) No issues raised.</p> <p>iv) AJS noted of visit (for information only) The aim of the visit was a deep dive of art. The school was due another visit just after OFSTED but this has been delayed till summer. Trustees asked if we still find the advisor's visits helpful. Yes, he is also the advisor for SOKE.</p>	EC
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	<p>that the children will have consistency until a teacher is appointed. Trustees asked how recruitment is going. TA interviews - candidates were really good. Teaching position - one is coming for a visit and we have another hopeful.</p> <p>Trustees were mindful of the dysregulated behaviour and the need to keep everyone safe noting the increase in pupil suspension and staff injuries. Trustees asked if staff feel supported. When staff spoke to OFSTED they said they felt supported and content with the actions taken and that they still love working with the children. Trustees noted that one staff member was bitten. They asked if this was a child in nurture. No, they were in the classroom. This is a child with complex needs and has additional support. Trustees reminded that the additional support is being funded by the school.</p> <p>Trustees agree all the school can do is follow the behaviour policy. Trustees asked if some of the surplus could be utilised to recruit staff to support those children. No, it's not sustainable.</p> <p>Trustees were reassured that we are not in isolation and behaviour issues are regional.</p>	
11	<p>School Resource Management Assessment Tool</p> <p>The School Resource Management Self- Assessment Tool Checklist was shared with trustees in advance for feedback/comments. The submission was based on all the things we do. A copy was shared so trustees know that it has been submitted within the deadline.</p>	All to note
12	<p>Trustee Training</p> <p>Trustee training completed by trustees on the National Colleague up till the 1/3/23 was shared with trustees.</p> <p>All trustees have completed SG & Prevent. Still some with KCSIE outstanding.</p>	All to note
13	<p>OFSTED outcome</p> <p>** See Confidential Minutes **</p>	All to note
14	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AP terms come to an end April 2023 <p>DFE recommendation is not to have staff trustees but our current Articles of Association allow this. All agree that it's good to have a trustee staff member with the knowledge they have.</p> <p>ACTION: LHO to approach AP to see if he wants to continue.</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>LHO</p>

	LHO also advised that as discussed at a previous meeting she will be in contact with a new parent governor to complete paperwork. All happy with this.	
15	Summary of Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed Mid-year budget • Ratified policies • Discussed behaviour issues, solutions and processes in place. • Discussed Wellbeing 	All to note

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Signed as a true record: Date:
 Laura Holland (Chair)

Date of next Trustee Meeting: Wednesday 17th May 2023 @ 6.15pm