



Alderman Jacobs Primary School (Academy Trust)

****Audit and Risk Committee****

Wednesday 11th May 2022

MINUTES

Key:
Trustee Questions
School Improvements

Governors Present: Joel Combes (Chair), Cathy Carlisle (Headteacher) Laura Holland (LHO) Sadie Wiles (SW) Thomas Claxton (TC)

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

Meeting commenced at 5.31pm

1	<p>Welcome and Apologies Joel Combes (JC) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from Eleanor Gunn (EG), Laura Hemmaway (LH). Thomas Claxton (TC) will be arriving late.</p>	All to note
2	<p>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cathy Carlisle (CC) - Husband has completed landscaping work. Daughter has a contract as a temporary midday supervisor / TA. ● 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. 	All to note
3	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting (9th February 2022) Minutes agreed as a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by LHO and seconded by JC.</p>	All to note
4	<p>Agreed Actions Updated All previous actions have been completed.</p>	All to note
5	<p>Internal Control</p>	All to note



	<p>Trustees were advised that, as recommended, this will be a standing agenda item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of External Auditor • Appointment of Responsible Officer for Internal control <p>We have already appointed our external auditor and responsible officer but will be included as prompts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Officer Reports <p>The report has previously been shared with trustees and has been available on the drive since April. The first visit was in the first term of the year, the 2nd visit is scheduled for the end of this month. The plan next year will be to schedule the visits to fit better with trustee meetings. This was focused on the risk register, as previously agreed by the Trustees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Focus- Risk Register/Safeguarding <p>Trustees were advised that on point 8 of the agenda the risk register has been reviewed following the governance review recommendation. We have included a couple of other points. MacIntyre Hudson have reviewed the register and are happy with it.</p> <p>The Leadership of Safeguarding Checklist was shared with trustees prior to the meeting. Trustees were advised that an external safeguarding review will be taking place at the end of June</p> <p>ACTION: Headteacher to confirm dates with Amy Ure (AU).</p> <p>Trustees were advised that the checklist is in preparation, and is rag rated. There are a few amber areas:</p> <p><i>Substance misuse</i> - it's not something you would expect in a primary school setting.</p> <p>* <i>Recommendation for a Safeguarding noticeboard</i> - this should now be green as there is one in the SEN HUB</p> <p>* <i>Can the Governing body describe their coordinated offer of early help.</i> There was some uncertainty so there was a suggestion that CC could create a crib sheet. Trustees agreed this would be really useful.</p> <p>ACTION: CC to create a crib sheet.</p> <p>* <i>Prevent Action plan to be published.</i> Trustees asked if this just means putting on the website. Yes, one of the DDSL will ensure this is published.</p> <p>*<i>Roofing/flat roofing</i> - Trustees were advised that we do not have a flat roofing risk assessment. Potentially contractors may access the flat roof but they would carry out their own risk assessment. Trustees asked if the site</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
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	<p>manager/staff ever access the flat roof. Yes, they have had to on a few occasions. Trustees felt that a risk assessment should be in place. ACTION: Flat Roof Risk Assessment to be put in place.</p> <p><i>*Admin areas - these will be included in risk assessment.</i></p> <p><i>*Procedure in place to vet visitor speakers to ensure they do not pose a risk of radicalisation. There was discussion around the need for a policy/procedure. Within a primary school children would not be left alone with a speaker, staff would know what actions to take and usually the visit and topic of discussion would be planned. But all agreed that a statement would be useful.</i> ACTION: CC to include a statement, within a policy.</p> <p>Everything else was RAG rated green. An external audit will be done by LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) Trustees agreed it is very thorough and are happy with the areas of risk and evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFSA Returns. Trustees were given a summer term update. Since the last meeting no returns were required. The school is preparing for the Summer Census and BFR3y return. Trustees asked if this is something the school have been asked to report on. Yes, EFSA was in the handbook so again has been added as a standing agenda item to show we are meeting all KPIs. <p>Governors are happy with all internal control. Trustees asked when the next Responsible Officer visit was. It's in May, and is conducted virtually. JS sends what it is needed a week prior to the date, they go through and review, returning the report a couple of weeks later. So we should have the report for July's meeting.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming SLAs for review <p>Upcoming SLA document was shared with the trustees prior to the meeting. Trustees had previously asked that any SLAs > £10,000 be brought to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees were advised that the school is happy with the service level they are receiving from both Judicium and Access Education. JS is liaising with the account managers to ensure the best possible deal. Trustees asked if these contracts were over 1year. It was confirmed they were 3year contracts. The costs detailed are for 3years. Trustees asked if the</p>	



	<p>school was happy with the software. Yes the finance and budget software link together, we know how to use them. Judicium offers a good advisory service, there were issues with payroll but we have made it work and they provide the reports we need. Trustees asked what/if there was an alternative service. For a large school it would be difficult to change unnecessarily. They are expensive but they provide a better service. Trustees agreed from what they have seen that Judicium is better than the previous service provider. Trustees asked if they also do the payroll. Yes, but it is outsourced under their contract but the school liaises directly. Trustees asked if they specialise in education or general payroll. We don't know as they were contracted directly from Judicium. Trustees asked if we had encountered any problems with them. No, although we did have to pay to produce a report, which we were surprised by. Trustees asked if we had encountered problems with the payroll in terms of cost of living increment being backdated. No, we had no issues.</p>	
7	<p>Health & Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citation Audit Report <p>A H&S audit and action plan was shared with the trustees prior to the meeting. Citation has now merged with our previous provider. A second visit has taken place but we do not have a report yet. JS has created a response to actions. Trustees said this was very good and thanked JS. There are a couple of ambers to note (these will be green):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Staff to complete 'slip/trips training'- this is now included in the induction checklist. *Banisters - this is ongoing, plans are in place for the work to be carried out. Work was delayed due to the company having covid but it is planned for the summer holidays. Trustees asked what work will actually be carried out. Banisters rails are coming out and the spindles are being moved over to eliminate the ability for pupils to climb them. It's not a H&S issue legally but whilst changing the bannister it makes sense to change this risk. * Pool checks - these were being done but were on paper. <p>*Fire doors - There is a CIF bid in place and we are still waiting for the outcome, which should be announced soon. If it's not successful we have plans in place to resolve the issue ourselves. Trustees asked if there are any cost implications with any of this. No, we have budgeted for it. We are not sure how much the stairs will cost. We have £25,000 in the asset management plan for this. Fire doors have been budgeted for but they have also been incorporated into the electrical and safety CIF Bid. To be compliant we need to compartmentalise parts of the building, so it's not a drastic job.</p>	All to note



<p>8</p> <p>TC arrived 5.35pm</p>	<p>Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Register <p>The risk register was shared with Trustees prior to the meeting. This document has been reviewed and additional risks included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Successions risk - lack of chair *Staff off for longer term absence, the impact that would have. <p>Trustees asked how they can tell which risks are 'additional'. They are not clearly marked but the following risks have been added: 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13</p> <p>Thomas Claxton (TC) arrived 5.53pm</p> <p>An example was given 2.13 we have a medium risk as the likelihood of it happening is low, but if it did happen it would be costly. Trustees asked if the risk score is prior to mitigation. Yes, it is. It's included in the CIF bid and we have a plan to remedy the risk. Trustees felt that it would be worth showing the score after mitigation.</p> <p>Risk 1.18 was discussed. Trustees asked what would happen to the board, where do we stand if we don't have a board, can you operate as an Academy. Not very well, it would raise flags with the regional school commissioner. This would be flagged when GIAS is updated and our plan would be a rotating chair while we recruit. Trustees discussed the risk around having a small board, lack of commitment to attending meetings and a number of long-standing trustees terms coming to an end at the same time. They feel that the impact/risk should be higher.</p> <p>ACTION: CC to review the risk of 1.18</p> <p>Further discussion took place around the DFE preference to have smaller proactive boards. Trustees have concerns regarding newly recruited trustees attendance, if those are taken out the numbers are low and there are big challenges recruiting new members. There was discussion around the difficulties recruiting/engaging parent trustees, even with them receiving full chair engagement/training and support. Various routes to recruit have been explored. We have approached local companies, written to local businesses offering talks, presentations to the council, local magazines and attendance at local events. So in terms of recruitment we are always thinking about it.</p> <p>ACTION: CC to add a score following mitigation to all identified risks</p> <p>All in agreement that they are happy with the Risk Register.</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
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9	<p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respiratory Infections policy <p>This policy replaces the COVID risk assessment.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the policy, they felt that it was confusing and contradictory. Trustees examined the content of the policy discussing the guidance around working from home, staying at home and that the policy is actually advising staff to stay at home. Trustees asked what other schools were doing? The policy is based around recommended guidance from Citation and Public Health that the COVID risk assessment should be replaced with a respiratory illness policy. Trustees asked if Judicium has a policy or if they have reviewed this policy? No, Judicium advice is still around work from home if you can, if unwell stay at home.</p> <p>There was further discussion around the Burgundy book and pay. It was felt that the policy basically says you're not well, stay at home, it leaves you open to malingers.</p> <p>All concurred that the policy should be reviewed.</p> <p>ACTION: CC to revisit the policy and this will be reviewed over email.</p>	All to note
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	All to note
11	<p>Summary of Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk audit changes Discussion of procurement - upcoming SLAs Discussion regarding certain levels of risk Policies to be reviewed 	

The meeting closed at 6.05pm

Signed as a true record: Date:

Joel Combes (Chair)

Date of next Audit & Risk Committee: TBC