



Diverse Academies



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**Minutes of the Academy Committee meeting held  
on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
Skills Audit and Team Improvement Plan Discussion: 4.00pm-4.30pm  
Main Agenda 4.30pm  
Via MS Teams**

Governor name	Initials	Governor category	A = absence
Mrs Lynn Weeks	LW	Chair of Academy Committee	
Mr Pete Edwards	PE	Vice Chair of Academy Committee	
Mrs Jean Bish	JB	Appointed AC governor	
Mrs Emily Scales	ES	Appointed AC governor	A
Dr Rushna Nawaz	RN	Appointed AC governor	
Mrs Emma Bevan	EB	Appointed AC governor	
Mr Derek Smitheman	DS	Staff Governor RPA	Left 5.48pm
Mrs Sharon Savage	SS	Staff Governor YPA	Joined 4.45pm Left 5.52pm
Vacancy		Parent Governor	
Vacancy		Parent Governor	

In attendance:

Staff name	Initials	Role	
Mrs Lucy Spacey	LS	Executive Principal	
Mr Gareth Letton	GL	Executive Principal	A
Mr Courtney Hoop	CH	Principal YPA/RPA	
Mrs Emma Paine	EP	Clerk and Advisor	

Item No	Item	Action (as recorded on the agenda) Action by who/when if appropriate
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Skills Audit and Team Improvement Plan Discussion</b></p> <p><b>The Chair explained</b> guided Academy Committee governors to the information received through completion of the Skills Audit. The Principal confirmed there was a strong Academy Committee with a variety of skills that could be identified from results of the skills audit. Areas for improvement were identified and discussed.</p> <p><b>The Chair suggested</b> succession planning should take place through the Team Improvement Plan. Terms of office were due to end in the next academic year.</p>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mrs Scales suggested by email, she wished to continue for another term of office.</li> <li>- Mr Smitheman suggested he would step down from the role of staff governor.</li> <li>- Mr Edwards suggested he would be happy to continue with the Vice Chair role.</li> <li>- Mrs Weeks suggested she would remain as Chair for another year.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Chair suggested</b> Link roles are alternated annually, to provide Academy Committee governors with a more comprehensive understanding of link areas. Steps would be put in place for the new academic year.</p> <p><b>The Chair explained</b> training on Preparation for Ofsted had been provided by the Trust. The Chair suggested a plan should be prepared to support Academy Committee governors. It was confirmed a monitoring visit would take place this academic year with full inspections beginning in September 2021.</p> <p>It was agreed that further discussion on the plan would take place prior to the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</p> <p>Academy Committee governors suggested training should be undertaken in respect of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ofsted preparation training specific for special schools</li> <li>- Unconscious Bias training (Diversity and Inclusion)</li> <li>- Deeper understanding of operational and strategic training and what questions are good to ask. The Clerk advised National Governance Association provides guidance on these areas. Further information would be provided for Academy Committee governors to support this. The Clerk would ensure feedback would be provided to the Head of Governance regarding the training requested.</li> <li>- Broad and balanced curriculum and legal responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk suggested the Principal could provide training relating to the curriculum and this was agreed. The Principal suggested Academy Committee governors provided questions to form a starting point for the session.</p> <p>The Principal suggested a three-year training programme was prepared to provide an idea of direction for training.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked</b> for information to be updated in the Team Improvement Plan.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: The Clerk updated the Team Improvement Plan and provided information relevant from National Governance Association.</i></p>	
RPA/YPA/031/20/21	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	



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	Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Mr Letton due to work commitments and Mrs Scales due to personal reasons.	
RPA/YPA/032/20/21	<p><b>Safeguarding Culture and Compliance</b> Discussion regarding safeguarding took place. The discussion was confidential and therefore recorded separately.</p> <p><b>National Online Safety</b> The Principal confirmed parental involvement was required to complete the accreditation. Steps were being put in place after the Easter break to complete the Certificate.</p>	
RPA/YPA/033/20/21	<p><b>Update following central training: Preparation for Ofsted/Personal Development</b> Academy Committee governors confirmed the training [provided by the Trust had been informative. However, separate sessions would have been beneficial as it was recognised the training was rushed for both sessions. It was suggested Ofsted Preparation training should be provided specifically for special schools. <b>The Chair suggested</b> a plan was to be put in place in preparation for an Ofsted visit.</p> <p><b>Special Schools Data Training</b> <b>Mr Edwards confirmed</b> the training was good and praised the Principal for the training provided. Mrs Spacey briefly updated on the discussion that had taken place between the Executive Principals and Principal during the training and confirmed steps were in place for adequate and clear reporting of data.</p> <p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Advisory Group (National Governance Association) feedback</b> - <b>Mr Edwards provided feedback</b> on what had been discussed in the group attended and confirmed a focus on SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) was suggested to be a priority alongside safeguarding. <b>Mr Edwards provided feedback</b> on what had been suggested during the webinar by NGA (National Governance Association) in addition to information relating to the SENco (Special Educational Needs Co Ordinator).</p> <p><b>SEN (Special Educational Needs) Training (DAT (Diverse Academies Trust))</b> <b>Mr Edwards explained</b> the seminar presented by Mrs Trusseller was informative and included information on how young people and parents can participate. <b>Mr Edwards asked</b> how this can be facilitated in Special Academies.</p>	AC 12/05/2021



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	<p>- Mrs Bevan explained this had been a focus of discussions in the Teaching and Learning Link Visit that had taken place. Brief discussion took place regarding how this can be facilitated with appropriate students/pupils.</p>	
RPA/YPA/034/20/21	<p><b>Declaration of interest and any changes to be advised</b> The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors reported that a declaration of interest in respect of Mr Edwards voluntary work had been submitted to the Declaration of Interest Register.</p>	
RPA/YPA/035/20/21	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021</b> The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair. Electronic signature authority was previously provided.</p>	
RPA/YPA/036/20/21	<p><b>Matters Arising</b>  <b>015/20/21: Absence of D Smitheman</b>  <b>The Chair confirmed</b> the issue had been resolved. The explanation provided was accepted.  <b>016/20/21: National Online Safety training</b>            Training had been completed by Mrs Weeks and Mrs Bevan.  <b>021/20/21: Completion of ERM review Comments</b>            This had been completed and returned.  <b>021/20/21: Remote Learning Report</b>            The Chair confirmed this had been received.  <b>024/20/21: Policy appendix amendment: Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)</b>  <b>The Chair confirmed</b> the EYFS Policy appendix had been rectified and confirmed with the Principal.  <b>025/20/21: Skills Audit Completion</b>            Discussion regarding the Skills Audit had taken place prior to the start of the meeting. Suggestions for training had been provided.  <b>028/20/21: Response from Trustees Report</b>            Academy Committee governors thanked Trustees for the response provided and it was agreed the Chair would ensure a letter of thanks was prepared for staff with the inclusion of the Trustees comments.  <i>Post Meeting Note: The letter was prepared and circulated with staff.</i></p>	
RPA/YPA/037/20/21	<p><b>Principals Update</b>  <b>GDPR</b>            The Principal confirmed fact style reminders are provided to staff with low level information. It was confirmed low level incidents had been identified, with steps being put in place to resolve the issues.  <b>The Chair asked</b> whether steps were in place to ensure no further incidents occur. The Principal confirmed this.</p>	



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### Health & Safety

The Principal explained no complaints had been received. A minor incident had taken place. Brief discussion took place. Information was provided regarding the changes being made to the management of the site, in line with the Trust.

**Mr Smitheman asked** whether grounds maintenance would continue to take place through the Local Authority. The Principal confirmed this would continue.

Mrs Spacey provided brief information regarding the review of contracts to ensure value for money.

### Staff and Pupil Well-being

**The Chair was concerned** for the mental health and wellbeing of staff in both Academies due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and pressures caused.

**The Chair asked** how the mental health survey by the trust is being followed up?

Mrs Spacey confirmed the survey was collective and information would be shared with Principals. Steps were in place for areas identified by the Trust. The Principal explained concerns regarding response rates.

**The Chair had asked** by email what further can be done to support staff who are struggling?

**Dr Nawaz asked** whether any staff had been absent due to mental issues?

Brief discussion took place with Mrs Savage providing background information regarding issues that had arisen and steps put in place to resolve any staff anxieties relating to Covid-19.

### Attendance

The Principal confirmed attendance at Redgate Primary Academy was sitting at 92% and similar at Yeoman Park Academy. It was confirmed these figures are above national average. Brief discussion took place regarding the steps in place with parents support pupils/students effective return to school.

### Review Development Plans

The Principal confirmed a review of the Academy Improvement Plan had taken place. **The Chair requested** the document was shared with Academy Committee governors. The Principal confirmed this would be available at the next meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

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### **Confirmation of Admission Policy for forwarding to Local Authority**

The Clerk advised Admissions were provided by the Local Authority and therefore determined differently. The Principal confirmed admissions were received from ICDS (Integrated Child Disability Service).

The Principal explained there may be changes required from the Local Authority once the refurbishments had been made.

### **Website/rebranding information update**

The Principal advised websites had been reviewed with improvements being made. Discussions were taking place regarding a change to the Academies logos. Mrs Spacey confirmed content of websites had been evaluated and updated.

### **Update on laptops received from the community**

The Principal confirmed laptops had been received and distributed with pupils/students during the lockdown period. It was reported the laptops are being repurposed for use in classrooms in both Academies.

### **Update on RSE**

The Principal reported delays to presenting information to families. Brief discussion took place regarding the issues faced by the Special Academies with information to be shared with families due to the nature of the pupils/students attending the Academies. Mrs Spacey briefly explained staff training had been identified as a result of the exercise.

The Clerk asked when this was to be reviewed by Academy Committee governors. The Principal confirmed this would be available for the next meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **Re-opening plans**

The Principal confirmed the school has opened to additional pupils/students. **The Chair asked whether** Academy Committee governors had any further questions. No further questions were asked.

**The Chair asked** by email how continuation of monitoring the impact of the lockdown on pupils who are still learning from home?

It was confirmed through email that this had been discussed during the Link Visit taking place with Mrs Bevan.

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	<p><b>The Chair asked</b> by email if there are sufficient staff working, to ensure full operation and effective teaching for all pupils? What is your plan if more staff need to be absent?</p>	
RPA/YPA/038/20/21	<p><b>Finance:</b> <b>Management Accounts including HR Staffing Report</b> Discussions regarding the management accounts took place which were confidential and recorded separately.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked</b> whether HR information was to be received. The Clerk advised this had been investigated at the start of the Academic Year and the full information that governors were required to review was provided in the management accounts report.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked</b> whether financial training could be provided. The Clerk advised the Trust had confirmed financial training for Academy Committee governors would be provided.</p> <p>Mr Smitheman left the meeting at 5.48pm.</p> <p><b>Staffing/UPS (Upper Pay Scale)</b> Brief discussion took place regarding the UPS (Upper Pay Scale) recommendation, which were confidential and recorded separately.</p>	
RPA/YPA/039/20/21	<p><b>Update on School Refurbishment</b> <b>Department for Education PowerPoint</b> Mrs Spacey explained she had not received the Power Point forwarded. The Clerk would ensure this was forwarded.</p> <p>A brief discussion took place on plans that were being put in place regarding Yeoman Park refurbishment.</p> <p>The Discussion was confidential and therefore recorded separately.</p> <p>The agenda was taken out of schedule at this stage.</p>	
RPA/YPA/042/20/21	<p><b>Policy Ratification: -</b> <b>Supporting Students with Medical Conditions/ Safeguarding and Child Protection Covid-19</b> The Principal provided a brief explanation to the issues identified regarding the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions. The correct document had been circulated. Academy Committee governors were in agreement with the information contained in the Policy appendix.</p> <p>Academy Committee governors were satisfied with the content of the two Policy appendix provided which were subsequently ratified.</p>	



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	<p>No Visitors Local Policy The Principal confirmed a Diverse Academies Trust document was awaited.</p> <p><b>The Chair advised</b> governors should review the updated statutory policies regarding, Financial Procedures Manual and the GDPR Subject Access Request. The Clerk advised the Governor Allowances Policy appendix was available in governor share point.</p> <p>Mrs Savage left the meeting at 5.52pm.</p>	
RPA/YPA/040/20/21	<p><b>Link Governor Visits/Reports</b> <b>Safeguarding Monitoring</b> <b>Mr Edwards confirmed</b> a visit had taken place with the report being shared. Improvements would be set at the next Link Visit taking place. <b>Leadership &amp; Management</b> <b>The Chair explained</b> a visit had taken place. It was reported monitoring of leadership will continue due to the changes in Executive Leadership. A Link Visit Report had been shared. <b>H&amp;S/GDPR</b> <b>Mrs Bish</b> confirmed visits had taken place at both Academies. Brief explanation around the visits at both Academies took place. Link Visit reports had been shared.</p> <p>Dr Nawaz confirmed a visit had taken place with the report to follow at the next meeting. Brief details of the visit were shared.</p> <p>Mrs Bevan confirmed a visit had taken place with the report to follow at the next meeting. Brief details of the visit were shared.</p>	<p>RN 12/05/2021</p> <p>EB 12/05/2021</p>
RPA/YPA/041/20/21	<p><b>Audit Summary</b> <b>Risk Register Audit Summary</b> The Principal confirmed the audit had taken place. Information would be available at the next meeting.</p>	<p>CH 12/05/2021</p>
RPA/YPA/043/20/21	<p><b>AC Team Improvement Plan agreement from training session prior to the meeting</b> <b>The Chair explained</b> the document was satisfactory and Academy Committee governors were in agreement with the content. Brief discussion took place prior to the meeting and to link with the Skills Audit discussion. The document would be reviewed prior to the next meeting.</p>	<p>AC 12/05/2021</p>
RPA/YPA/044/20/21	<p><b>How has the Academy Committee (AC) held senior leaders to account</b></p>	





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	Academy Committee governors had challenged senior leaders on finances and budgets, staffing, safeguarding, staff wellbeing and mental health.	
<b>RPA/YPA/045/20/21</b>	<b>Completion of Report to Trustees</b> Information was reported and returned to the Head of Governance through the Committee Reporting process.	
<b>RPA/YPA/046/20/21</b>	<b>Determination of confidentiality of business</b> <b>Equality Act consideration</b> <b>Nolan Principles</b> Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was Resolved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That items discussed within agenda item RPA/YPA/032/20/21, RPA/YPA/038/20/21 and RPA/YPA/039/20/21 should remain confidential to attendees at this meeting indefinitely.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications</li> <li>- Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles.</li> </ul>	
<b>RPA/YPA/047/20/21</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2021: Training: 4.00pm-4.30pm Main Agenda: 4.30pm-6.00pm	
	The meeting closed at 6.15pm Signed.....L Weeks.....(Chair) Date...12/05/2021.....	