

Minutes of the Local Academy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025
Main Meeting: 4pm – 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams

Governor name	Initials	Governor category	A = absence
Mr Peter Edwards	PE	Chair of Academy Committee	
Mrs Lynn Weeks	LW	Vice Chair of Academy Committee	
Mr Lyndon Stocks	LSt	Appointed AC governor	A
Mrs Zoe Clayton	ZC	Staff Appointed AC governor	A

In attendance:

Staff name	Initials	Role	
Mrs Lucy Spacey	LS	Executive Principal – RPA + YPA	A
Mr Courtney Hoop	CH	Principal - YPA	
Mrs Claire Gouthwaite	CG	Principal - RPA	
Mrs Rhianne Chambers	RC	Governance Professional (Clerk)	
Mrs Lynsey Parker	LP	Observing Governance Professional	
Mr Douglas Pink	DP	Observing pending appointment	
Mrs Alison Pink	AP	Observing pending appointment	
Mr James Coope	JC	Observing pending appointment	
Ms Lesley Dolben	LD	Observer – External Review of Governance	
Quorum Required	2	Governors Present	2

Governor support, questions and challenge: Responses

Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
RPA/YPA/035/2425	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mrs Pink, Mr Coope and Mr Pink were welcomed as observing governors ahead of being appointed during this meeting. Mrs Parker was welcomed for observing ahead of taking on the role of Governance Professional ahead of Mrs Chambers' maternity leave. It was then explained that Diverse Academies Trust are undergoing an external review of governance and therefore Ms Dolben was welcomed to the meeting as part of this process.</p>	

	Mrs Clayton and Mrs Spacey had sent their apologies due to work commitments and Mr Stocks, due to a medical appointment, these were accepted by the committee.	
RPA/YPA/036/2425	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Mr Edwards confirmed he has 1 new declarations of interest</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vice-Chair of the Board for Funding with Discover Ashfield 	
RPA/YPA/037/2425	<p>Governance report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local response following central training – Building confidence in reviewing Suspensions and Exclusions <p>The governors agreed that the central training on building confidence in reviewing suspensions and exclusions was good and was reassuring to know, for those who sit on panels, that what they are doing is correct. It was noted that there is still more to do but was a beneficial training session considering the suspensions and exclusions that happen across the Trust where panels are needed.</p> <p>The governors noted that there had not been a suspension or exclusion at either YPA or RPA in the last few years before asking the reason behind why there has not been any. Mrs Gouthwaite advised that this tends to be down to the approaches of which both academies have in terms of their understanding of the children / learners needs. It was noted that the academies have much smaller class sizes so therefore better relationships are formed with both the children and families and that a suspension or exclusion would not benefit the children. The governors were advised that in mainstream academies, some of the behaviours that may warrant a suspension are tolerated much more in a special school and that the boundaries of a special school are different in terms of what is acceptable behaviour. Mr Hoop agreed and advised that as a special school, they admit learners based on them fitting the school profile whereas mainstream school apply through the normal transition process and therefore have no control over the school population. Governors were also advised that in a special school, all behaviours seen are related to the child's learning disability therefore there is more understanding. The governors agreed and noted some trust wide training on understanding EHCP's and SEND students could be helpful. Governance Professional to put this forward. Mr Hoop added that the special schools continue to support colleagues in the mainstream setting for students with ASD and learning behaviours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link governor visits and reports 	GP

	<p>The committee discussed the 2 link governor reports that had been submitted in advance. Throughout both visits, mental health and wellbeing was discussed as well as attendance, the SCR and the new DfE dashboard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of James Coope, Douglas Pink and Alison Pink <p>Mrs Pink, Mr Pink, and Mr Coope left the meeting at 10.15am and returned at 10.19am.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the application process had been followed for Mrs Pink, Mr Pink and Mr Coope and that all 3 DBS' have returned. Reference requests are also underway. The Chair reported that all 3 governors would be beneficial to the LAC and were committed to the academy. All governors agreed that Mrs Pink and Mr Coope should be elected to the LAC for a four-year term of office with effect 18.03.25 as appointed governors. All governors also agreed that Mr Pink should be elected to the LAC for a four-year term of office with effect 18.03.25 as an appointed parent governor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor conference 12.06.25 <p>Governors were reminded of the governor conference which is taking place on the 12 June at Diverse Academies HQ. It was requested for as many governors as possible to attend and the agenda for the conference was included in the GP report which was distributed in advance of the meeting.</p>	
RP/YPA/038/2425	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 21 January 2025</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received and agreed by the Executive Principal, Principal, and Chair were subsequently agreed by the Local Academy Committee and signed electronically by the chair.</p>	
RP/YPA/039/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>RPA/YPA/029/2425 – To note, governor training has now been added to both academies safeguarding checklists.</p>	
RP/YPA/040/2425	<p>ERM Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive any surveys / audits / reviews <p>In advance of the meeting, the governors received a copy of the OFSTED report for Yeoman Park which had been received since the last meeting. The governors praised the academy on the fantastic report. Mr Hoop advised that from a school context, the academy is extremely pleased to have had the inspection prior to the move into the newbuild and therefore were judged on the current culture. It was also great to be recognised for the work that has gone into the reading programme and that it is detailed</p>	

that the programme is what is right for the learners at YPA. The clear vision and values came through everything across the academy and from all members of the team on highlighting that all decisions are made in the best interest of the learners. There is also the desire to ensure that activities are meaningful as well as the focus being on what the skills, knowledge and the understanding of what the learners are getting out of the activity. Mr Hoop added that YPA are now supporting other academies in their pending Ofsted visits as there is a desire to improve the provision for SEN children not only in YPA and RPA but across all other academies in the Trust.

The governors acknowledged that the academy cannot build a culture overnight and that this has been carefully embedded over a period of time and that staff need to be commended for this. Mr Hoop added that with having the inspection already, it now allows the academy time to move into the newbuild as they are not underestimating how hard that will be for both learners and staff.

The governors praised the academy for getting outstanding in all areas and for ensuring the learners are at the heart of all decisions made in the academy **before asking** if the academy had any feedback that would be incorporated into the academy AIP. Mr Hoop confirmed there were no comments therefore the academy will continue with communication to ensure it is at the heart of the curriculum.

- **Standards**

The governors noted that within the ERM for RPA, it noted 6 agreed actions **before asking** if any of these been actioned.

1. Teacher toolkit – Mrs Spacey is looking at this as being an online version.
2. Curriculum planning – the academy is in the process of tweaking this and adding in the primary pathways for those children who may go onto this pathway. Everything else is written.
3. For the Maths Strategic Development Lead (SDL) to visit and review the curriculum. Governors were advised that the academy are now part of the special school branch of the East Midlands Maths Hub and working with the hub at the mastery of maths from a special school point of view. The Maths SDL for the Trust will then come and look at where the curriculum is at.
4. Quality assurance – the academy is now in a position where they can test the implantation and are therefore sharpening up on the quality assurance around the curriculum leadership. As part of this process, discussion will be held on how YPA may be able to support RPA. **The governors asked** if there is an opportunity for the two academies to work together. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed there is and that this will commence from September to allow YPA time to move. Mr Hoop added that it is important to forge links whilst ensuring capacity is considered. It

	<p>will be a reciprocal agreement and recognising the commonalities between the two academies. The governors noted that in the last Ofsted inspection for RPA, one action point was the sequencing of the curriculum before querying if this has been actioned. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed this was done quickly post the visit. Following the visit at YPA, RPA will be looking at pulling the curriculum together to show it as a continuous provision and by doing this, it will be useful for the curriculum leads to revisit their areas.</p> <p>5. PD – Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed that Mrs Spacey, Executive Principal, and Mrs Robinson, Assistant Principal, are going to meet to discuss the PD offer at RPA. A discussion will then be held on the traits for RPA as there may be a project in rephrasing these traits. This will be done alongside all stakeholders to ensure all are engaged including children, parents and governors. From there marketing will support. The governors questioned how this will benefit the children. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed that the academy is consistently promoting the current traits but will be looking at making these clearer. Mr Hoop added that when this was done for YPA, the learners had an input into the values as they can vary slightly for the primary area in comparison to the sixth form.</p> <p>6. Cleaning – this is a Trust focus, and the Business Manager is picking this up.</p> <p>The governors noted that the English Strategic Development Lead for the Trust was visiting recently before asking how the visit went. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed it was a positive visit and that the phonic groups will be up and running after Easter. Where staff are inexperienced, they will have the training to ensure the desired standards are there. The governors highlighted that the report noted that ‘most teachers are providing appropriate books’ and queried what the academy are doing to ensure the teachers that are inexperienced are getting the same high-quality teaching. Mrs Gouthwaite advised that this is the classes where the teacher is an ECT and also new to special school. These staff members are being supported with the phonics assessments, are undertaking RWI training and have been given story boxes to use. On the recent INSET day, all staff had training on ‘reading for pleasure’ and what this looks like for both children but also to include the adults reading to the children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn term evaluation of AIP There were no questions on the autumn term evaluation, but it was confirmed that this has been done for both academies. • Progress against targeted outcomes The governors questioned the data collections with BSquared at YPA. Mr Hoop confirmed that following an update on BSquared, there was quite a few glitches, so the 	
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academy had a clean of the system and used the opportunity to retrain all staff. It is an effective tool the academy uses and was a beneficial refresher for the team.

- **Attendance data**

The governors acknowledged the attendance at RPA is at 92.2% which has increased slightly from this time last year. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed that was correct before advising the governors that the academy has been hit again with the sickness bugs and chicken pox which significantly impacts on attendance due to children needing to have 48hrs clear of any sickness before returning to the academy. **The governors asked** if there are still 8 pupils who are persistently absent. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed that was correct, but the majority have been purely down to illness. The Family Support Advisor (FSA) is aware of these children and is supporting the families to show them the importance of attendance in the hope of reducing this figure further.

The governors queried if the FSA has made a difference to the attendance figures. Mrs Gouthwaite confirmed the FSA was having a positive impact on attendance due to having the capacity to pick any attendance concerns up quicker and earlier.

- **Pupil number projections**

The governors asked if the academies have their projected pupil numbers for September. Mrs Gouthwaite advised that the academies are aware and that whilst RPA currently has 58 children, the PAN is 56 so there will be 56 on roll in September. Governors were advised that there is still time for the academy to be requested to take additional children for September so this could still change. **The governors questioned** if a governor panel is needed for any pupil requests over PAN. Mrs Gouthwaite advised that because ICDS control the places for the academy, then there is no need or a governor panel. Mr Hoop advised that for YPA, the PAN will be changing to 138 with the newbuild so until September the academy will be slowly admitting students until they hit the 138. Governors were advised that there is a prediction that the PAN may increase to 150. **The governors queried** if there is the capacity for this to happen. Mr Hoop advised that due to the classroom sizes, if a learner meets the profile of the current classes, then additional students may join. There is also the room to have an additional class. **The governors asked** how this will impact on staffing to which Mr Hoop advised that if there is a point where the additional class is in use then additional team members will be recruited.

- **Exclusion and suspension data**

The governors had asked questions on exclusions and suspensions in RPA/YPA/037/2425.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders <p>The governors asked about the financial implications on the delay of the new build. Mr Hoop advised the financial implications are largely down to still being in the current building and the bills of which that has as well as the employed staff of which should be in the new build that are unable to do the job they were employed for. There has also been a knock on for the timeline of the new learners starting too, all of which has been out of the hands of the academy.</p> <p>The governors questioned if the pupils are prepared for the move. Mr Hoop confirmed that the priority is to make sure the current learners transition over safely and with minimal fuss, however, it is acknowledged that some will struggle. It is expected for staff to find it harder and therefore; the academy has pulled together a help sheet for any issues to be recorded. Staff have also been advised that the academy is being handed over to DfE specification and so there will be amends that are needed to be made to ensure it is suitable for the learners of YPA.</p> <p>The governors acknowledged the positive parent survey results before asking if the results from the staff survey is available. Mr Hoop advised that the staff survey was superseded by the staff survey that Ofsted completed.</p> <p>The governors asked if there will be any problems for the student learners accessing the new build considering the old building being demolished. Mr Hoop advised that the new build will have more parking spaces and has double the space for the bus drop offs so therefore it will be easier. It will take some marshalling at the start but will be a much better provision. The governors agreed that this will be gratefully received by parents especially with the safety of the children being paramount.</p> Staff & pupil well-being <p>The governors agreed that staff and pupil wellbeing had been discussed throughout the agenda items.</p> Data Protection (breaches/SARs/FOIA/Police requests) <p>It was confirmed by both Principal's that there had been no breaches, SARs, FOIA or Police requests.</p> Complaints, claims (no's / overview) <p>It was confirmed by both Principal's that there had been no complaints.</p> Safeguarding – compliance and culture 	
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	<p>The governors acknowledged that the Trust are using a new SENSO monitoring system for filtering before asking if this is being used in the special schools. Mrs Gouthwaite advised that using the SENSO system is hard for both primary and special schools due to children not having individual logins for computers therefore, the academies are still reliant on their own stringent monitoring of online safety. Mr Hoop added that there is a desire to still allow learners to access what they would at home and therefore, if they do come across something inappropriate by accident then this is an educational process of what they need to do which is more important than blocking everything.</p> <p>The governors noted that they had reviewed the LAC safeguarding checklist for both academies and that there were no questions from these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&S Committee minutes In advance of the meeting, the governors received copies of the H&S committee minutes for both academies. There were no questions around the minutes. • Policy / local appendix to ratify / review There were no policies to be reviewed at this meeting. • Any Cat C trips/review Both academies confirmed that there are no new Cat C trips to discuss and that the ones that have been previously discussed have now been booked. 	
RP/YPA/ 041/2425	<p>How has the Academy Committee held senior leaders to account</p> <p>Challenge had taken place throughout the meeting in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspensions and exclusions • Ofsted visit • Attendance • The new build / stakeholders • Pupil number projections • Staff and pupil wellbeing 	
RP/YPA/ 042/2425	<p>How have Vision, Mission and Values of Trust/Equity been upheld</p> <p>Academy Committee governors were satisfied that vision mission and values had been reviewed as part of the agenda and discussions taking place during the meeting.</p>	
RP/YPA/ 043/2425	<p>Consider information to be advised to the Trust Board and complete the annual report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report was completed within the meeting and submitted to the Trust board. 	
RP/YPA/ 044/2425	<p>Determination of confidentiality of business</p> <p>Academy Committee governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed there were no confidential discussions. 	

RP/YPA/ 045/2425	Date and time of next meeting Tuesday 14 May 2025 Training Meeting: 10am Main Meeting 10.30am – 12pm Location at Yeoman Park Academy	
	The meeting closed at 11.25am. Signed.....P.Edwards via email.....(chair) Date.....19.03.25....	