



**Minutes of the Holyrood Academy Local Governance Committee Meeting**  
**held at 17.30pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at Holyrood Academy**

Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Peter Chapple	PC	Daniel Pritchard	DPr
Ali Collins	AC	Richard Poole	DPo
Jonathan Farey	JF	David Pugh	DP
Lorraine Heath	LHE	Jason Swarbrick	JSK
Barney Haydon	BH	Kate Yamada	KY
Pauline Lamond	PL		
Dave MacCormick	DMc	Paula Gibson - Clerk	PG

Apologies / Absence (reason if required)	Initials	In Attendance	Initials
		Laura Gold – SENDCo	LG
		Tina Coles – Business Manager	TC

Signed as a correct record of the meeting: .....

Date:.....

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

DP welcomed all to the meeting – there were no apologies.

## 2. SEND Report – Laura Gold

DP introduced Laura Gold, SENDCo, whose report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. As the report had been prepared in December 2019 with the then Lead Governor Pearl Barnes, DP asked Laura to update governors on any specific areas.

LG reported that there has been an increase in High Needs Funding and the Academy has admitted a student with an EHCP. The Academy is now using external providers as well as alternative provision, which is costly, to support key students. Staffing levels remain consistent, but an additional TA is joining after the half term.

A specialist SEMH (Social, Emotional, Mental Health) worker continues to work with the most challenging students – this area of need remains the most challenging within the Academy

The SENDCo is working with the Head of English on the development of testing to improve interventions.

LG pointed out the graduated response appendix, included within the SEND Policy, however the Universal Provision has yet to be shared with staff. The Dyslexia Policy has also recently been reviewed and LG explained that this was a joint piece of work with the SEND Cluster group. **Governors** were **PLEASED** to see this positive approach of collaborative working as it brings together the expertise of a group of professionals across the area, and they suggested that parents are also signposted to Effective Support for Somerset.

The SEND Targets are to be reviewed to ensure that they are dove tailed into the curriculum and identified at the start of their academic journey. LHE noted that this was an area of focus at another Trust schools recent Ofsted inspection.

**Governors ASKED** how feeder Primary Schools respond – it was explained that they do not always identify the student needs in a timely manner, which causes concern when a student joins the Academy in Year 7. It was hoped that this could be addressed via the CAFOS group.

LG has met with the Educational Psychologist (EP) on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020, who also recognised that student needs should be addressed sooner and that some primary schools need look at how they manage this to ensure that families are supported on transition.

**Governors ASKED** how SEND Students are differentiated in terms of behavioural expectations. The Behaviour Policy is being rewritten in conjunction with the EP and SEND team – a consistent approach will be adopted in which all students are given fair access. **Governors felt this was very positive.**

**Governors ASKED** how Pupil Premium (PP) funding feeds into the SEND provision. DP will discuss this with Claire Berry.

**Governors ASKED** how they could support LG in her role. LG noted that the Local Authority takes far too long to process any EHCP applications – all recognised that the County are not being held accountable for their performance and that the Academy could process their concerns through the Complaints procedure.

**Action:** The Trust / LGC to contact the Local Authority to share their concerns regarding the unacceptable waiting times for EHCP applications to be processed.

**Governors ASKED** if there was a correlation between PP and SEMH? LG explained that there is often a need across a number of different areas, which may have a knock on effect in a student's life. An EHCP must note a student's primary needs and SEMH is a recognised SEND need.

**Governors ASKED** if the department had enough staff to manage the level of need. LG felt they did not always have the required number of staff, but that the SENDCO was now a full time appointment and that an additional TA was joining the team after the half term break.

**Governors ASKED** how the Academy measures the effectiveness of Alternative Provision. Reports are provided however, it could be hard to measure SEMH provision as this may be used to address a student's self-esteem and well-being. LG acknowledged there is a duty to support students, but recognised that the impact may not always be felt in the Academy. There are a number of ways to see positive impact including increased attendance, house points, progress in a student's PSP as well as a decrease in RTL / PSP referrals. Case studies are being written to demonstrate the success of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle. Alternative provision is also quality assured in conjunction with the Safeguarding provision.

LG explained that the SEND Policy, which had been circulated in advance, was written in conjunction with the SENDCO, SLT and CEO and referenced best practice.

**Governors APPROVED** the SEND Policy.

Governors thanked LG and she left the meeting at 18.02pm

### **3. Local Governance Committee Membership**

DP informed all that Anna Flindell has resigned from the LGC and that he has taken over her SIP responsibility for CPD and will meet with Jo James to review this.

There are also two Staff Governor vacancies and these will be 'advertised' in due course.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

LH declared an interest as CEO of the Uffculme Academy Trust and DP, AC and KY in agenda items 7 (Year 9)

### **5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and Matters Arising**

DP signed the minutes as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

### **6. Heads Report**

This had been circulated in advance of the meeting. DMC discussed his report in detail and updated Governors on the following items -

- Admissions - One admission request was rejected due to serious safeguarding concerns
- Attendance – DMC reported that the Academy was looking at measures to improve attendance now and going forward. This is to be an agenda item at every LGC meeting. JF is

also regularly meeting the school Attendance Officer for updates and in order to bring issues to the LGC. TC reported that the Attendance Officer had already raised issues about the Local Authority's attendance processes and support for schools. Governors agreed that a letter should go to the Local Authority outlining these issues.

**Action : DP**

- SEND - DMC recognised that the Academy was under resourced in this area. An additional TA has been recruited and the specialist SEMH worker will remain in post for the rest of the Academic year.
- PP / LAC – A commissioned review of PP will take place in the Summer term.
- Safeguarding – DMC further explained the scheduled Safeguarding review detailed in his report. Certainty in the Academy's provision and a raise in the profile are of paramount importance, all staff and students need to be well versed in discussing Safeguarding.
- Behaviour – This has now become a priority area of focus, due to the disproportionate affect a small minority of students have on the good order of the Academy. DMC explained the four key aspects of the behaviour focus as outlined in his report, namely student punctuality, truancy, moving around the site in an orderly way and responding positively to 'reasonable requests' from staff. The Behaviour Policy is to be rewritten between now and Easter, principally by himself and the Senior Deputy Headteacher, Sam Davison.

**Governors ASKED** how SEND student's behaviour expectations are managed. Students are supported centrally with how to get to the same point as other students. High tariff students are often complex so are differentiated and have a graduated response.

**Governors ASKED** if the Academy should consider dropping RTL. DMC explained that this will be amended to a more compassionate system, which will be in place after Easter.

DMC shared his thoughts on the provision and that key staff will take on a differentiated role based upon SEND, SEMH and Behaviour needs.

A confidential minute was held.

- Staffing – DMC reiterated that staff absence remains too high – some is due to recognised long-term sickness, which DMC gave details of, but noted that some of the short-term absences could be indicative of staff struggling. This has not yet been identified, but it was noted that if there is a significant improvement in student behaviour staff absence rates often improve.

**Governors ASKED** how many Occupational Health referrals had been made – to date, four referrals have been made. Staff have access to both Care First and the Beneden Health Insurance provision. The other wellbeing facilities being offered is a positive and pro-active approach.

- Achievement – Year 13 data will be available after the 11<sup>th</sup> February. Year 11 data outcomes exceed Tracking 2 (T2) predictions. There was a slight improvement from the T1 data. Students did not sit a full suite of mocks due to a conscious decision to reduce the levels of stress and pressure on students and to provide them with a confidence building, practice related experience. A second set of mocks will be held in March.

Teacher predictions are generally a good indication of progress but with all subjects predicting positive outcomes this has raised some concerns in some subject areas, with regard to the accuracy of predictions. This is being rigorously investigated by the SLT and a checklist has been produced to assist Middle Leaders.

There are four tracking points throughout the year for Year 11, and three for Years 7-10, as per Ofsted guidelines.

- Leadership and Management – the portfolio of evidence continues to be gathered to support the key Ofsted judgements. These items underpin the SEF.  
DMC is clear on the priorities of the Academy and has shared these with staff – a Middle Leadership conference has been arranged.  
DMC detailed the two new Deputy Headteacher appointments, which will strengthen the leadership capacity. DMC thanked the Trust for supporting the two appointments following recent interviews.
- Academy Priorities – these were outlined in the report and DMC explained that the SLT have increased their visibility across the Academy and have now visited 220 lessons this half term, in comparison to 70 last term. There is a shared accountability for quality teaching and learning.
- 2020/21 Admissions – there have been 233 1<sup>st</sup> Choice applications – the PAN is 232. Trust Directors have agreed that they will not admit students over PAN and will apply the oversubscription criteria.  
Discussions are currently taking place with the LA concerning parental demand, class sizes and capacity expansion plans, which may not be deliverable until 2022. There may be the opportunity to de-couple the process from the LA to deliver this in a more timely and effective manner.

## 7. Year 9 – Jason Swarbrick

Governors had specifically requested this agenda item due to the concerns raised about the current Year 9 cohort in previous discussions. JSK gave a detailed breakdown of the Year 9 cohort and the challenges faced.

GCSE targets used are based upon FFT 20, which is an aspirational target in line with the top 20% as a target grade. Discussions took place regarding students choosing options in Year 8 for commencement in Year 9, as it is now recognised that some students are not mature enough to manage this process, so from 2019/20 the Academy is reverting to a 3-year KS3 / 2-year KS4 programme. Governors welcomed this development.

A small number of students have a significant negative impact on attendance and different provision is in place to manage students with complex needs. Year 9 currently counts for over 50% of all RTL referrals, with a disproportionate number of PP / SEND students included. Peer pressure is a concern and defiance is seen as the main behavioural issue.

**Governors ASKED** how students are rewarded for their positive behaviour. They receive positive praise within the Academy and the recent behaviour audit produced letters home. This is alongside the introduction of staff phoning families with a positive Friday phone call. LHE explained that the behaviour audit confirmed a small number of students negatively impact the year group and that an effective strategy for dealing with these students is not yet in place. Students have been referred to external support mechanisms as necessary, but that the capacity to individually tailor make a programme although desirable is not easy.

A key group of Year 9 students has been identified and SLT are to meet with the parents of these students to discuss the ongoing issues, and there will be changes to reports to include an addition of a behaviour-reporting column. A discussion took place regarding the current reporting structure and how target grades can have either have a positive or negative affect on students. DMC acknowledged that reporting is an aspect that needs addressing, but this is not a priority at the current time.

**Governors RECOGNISED** that the capacity of the SEND Team to help manage the needs of SEMH students remains an area to be addressed by the Academy.

DP interrupted the meeting as it had now overrun the scheduled two hours. DP proposed that the items following be acknowledged briefly, and that an additional meeting between now and the next scheduled LGC meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April be arranged, which would mainly focus on Safeguarding and Health & Safety. Governors agreed.

## 8. Policies

Health & Safety Policy - This a Trust policy, that has been agreed at Director level, however the contextual information needs to be confirmed – the School Executive team will meet to discuss this. DPr and TC will meet to discuss relevant elements.

Bullying Policy - This is in consultation with the student body and is on the Academy website. Governors were happy to **APPROVE** the policy subject to any changes required following the period of consultation.

SEND Policy - Governors were happy to **APPROVE** the policy following the report from LG.

Safeguarding - Governors were happy to **APPROVE** the policy, following SDa report at their meeting in November and the amendments to reflect County safeguarding procedures.

## 9. Standing Agenda Items

### 9.1 Safeguarding

KY reported that the Somerset Safeguarding audit has now been completed. She also reported that there had been an initial safeguarding review carried out, and that an external review of Safeguarding would take place on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

### 9.2 Trust Update

LHE explained that a Trust HR Manager has been appointed wef 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. This person will manage the alignment and compliance across all schools and be the first point of contact for advice. Governors **welcomed** this appointment.

The Trust Central Services remain tight, but LHE would like to add additional business support, to support school improvement capacity – however, finances are key given the top slice remains at 4.1%. Funding for the Teaching School remains in place for a further year, after which there is the potential for this to become the school improvement wing for the Trust.

LHE has met with the Head at Neroche Primary School, and plans progress at pace for them to join the Trust wef 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. The admissions criteria for Holyrood Academy has been amended to give priority to students from a school within the MAT.

### 9.3 Governor Visits

These reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

### 9.4 Clerks Update

New guidance had been circulated in advance of the meeting

### 9.5 Risks and Concerns

- 1) Staff absence remains too high, and there is a correlation between this and student behaviour. To date there have been four referrals to Occupational Health.
- 2) Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) is an area most challenging for the Academy. The capacity of the SEND team to manage the current needs is an on-going concern.
- 3) An external review of Safeguarding has been commissioned for 4th March.
- 4) An external review of Pupil Premium has been commissioned for the Summer Term.
- 5) Somerset County are not being held accountable for their performance as the EHCP process takes longer than statutory requirements - the LGC is following this up.
- 6) Somerset County attendance processes and systems are not supporting the needs of the Academy - the LGC is following this up.

### 10. The Future of Meetings

This paper, written by PC, had been circulated in advance of the meeting, but there was no time to consider this fully.

A brief discussions took place regarding the schedule of meetings, DMC was happy to schedule an additional meeting as outlined above, but LHE reminded all Governors that they had a duty of care to the work life balance of the Headteacher, staff and indeed themselves . A suggestion of starting meetings at 5.00pm to hear reports before the meeting was suggested and this would be followed up.

### 11. Date of next meeting – additional meeting date to be agreed.

The meeting closed at 19.46pm

### ACTIONS

Agenda item	Action	Who	Deadline
2	The Trust / LGC to contact the Local Authority to share their concerns regarding the unacceptable waiting times for EHCP applications to be processed and the concerns of the school's Attendance Officer.	DP	