



**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE CAREW ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON THURSDAY 22nd MAY 2014 AT 4.00pm**

Members: Mr S Vines (Chair)
Mr R Mills (Vice Chair)
Mr J Prior (Principal)
Mrs A Acik
Mrs T Conaghan
Mr N Hall
Mr E Murphy
Mrs K Phillips
*Mrs J Sherborne
*Mrs N Summers

Also Present: Mr B Geen-Vice Principal
Mr C Smillie-Assistant Vice Principal
Mrs T Goodsell-Clerk to the Governors

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Janet Sherborne, Nicola Summers and Kelly Phillips.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

Mrs Acik was welcomed as a new governor. Mrs Summers, the new parent governor, had been unable to attend due to family commitments.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Governors **RESOLVED** to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th February 2014.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. DRAFT PORTFOLIO GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The clerk introduced this item and explained that this draft document had been drawn up to assist the portfolio governors to carry out their role effectively. She invited governors' comments on the document which would also be presented as draft to the OHCAT Board of Directors in June.

Mr Prior explained that this is an important part of the governors' support and challenge role and it is critical that the correct structures are in place for the system to work effectively. He tabled an example of a monitoring schedule for portfolio holders based upon the premise of seeking answers to specific questions to enable the leadership team to be held to account.

Mr Prior agreed to draw up a schedule for portfolio governor visits.

Governors **RESOLVED** to approve the draft document

ACTION: Mr Prior to draw up a timetable for portfolio governor visits.

7. DRAFT GOVERNORS' HANDBOOK

The clerk introduced this item and explained that this handbook had been drawn up to outline the structure of the Orchard Hill College Academy trust (OHCAT) and to set out the expectations and commitments required from governors in order for the LGB to carry out its work effectively. The handbook also includes a code of conduct and meetings charter.

Governors **APPROVED** the Governors' handbook

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr Prior explained that he had altered the format of his report to governors, with the intention of giving governors a high level overview of where the school is currently placed in terms of an Ofsted judgement, and what the school needs to do to improve further. Effectively, this report takes the form of a self-evaluation in the four key areas graded by Ofsted, namely, Quality of

Teaching, Pupil Achievement, Behaviour and Safety and Leadership and Management.

He explained that he had also included a model 'question frame' after each section to support governors to ask the right questions and hold the leadership team to account.

Mr Prior further commented that governors should not take the information they are given wholly on trust; they need to be able to support and challenge through asking appropriate questions, and by getting to know the school well, through the normal governance processes (eg, meetings minutes, portfolio roles) but also through an additional structured programme of targeted monitoring activity.

As agreed at minute 6, Mr Prior said that he would draw up a formalised monitoring schedule, in the first instance, from after half term up to the end of the Autumn term 2014.

Governors asked how often the school carries out this sort of self-evaluation exercise and Mr Prior explained that this is constant, ongoing exercise but he intends to produce this 'condensed' version for governors every term.

Governors commented that there was not a specific portfolio governor area for leadership and management and after discussion, it was agreed that an element for leadership and management should be included in each portfolio governor area, as it is a cross-portfolio area.

Governors agreed that this format of reporting from Mr Prior enables the governors to have a clear steer going forward in their role.

Mr Prior then explained to governors that in order for the DfE to approve the sixth form business case, the school needs to be able to demonstrate and evidence the rapid progress it is making. This cannot be done as a desktop exercise and therefore, a DfE monitoring visit will occur on 3rd July to look at quality across the school. They will also want to speak to the Chair of governors.

The school needs to show clearly where it is achieving well, and to be candid about areas for improvement. Evidence of this will be reflected in governing body minutes and this report.

Governors **RECEIVED** the Principal's report.

Clerks note: item 11 on the agenda, budget forecast was taken at this point of the meeting to allow Mrs Jenkins to leave the meeting following her report.

9. BUDGET FORECAST

Mrs Jenkins explained that there is a 5% recharge to OHCAT to pay for shared services. There is a considerable shortfall which is currently being paid by the one-off start up grant. It is hoped that top-up issues with Sutton LA will be resolved by the time this grant runs out.

Governors expressed concern that the wrong amount of top up from the LA has a significant impact on the school's drive to improve. They were of the view that the borough may be in breach of its statutory requirements.

Mr Prior assured governors that the matter is being addressed through the proper channels. The Chair of the OHCAT Board of Directors has written to the Director of Children Services in Sutton, where it currently sits.

A new, more appropriate and targeted top-up banding and funding framework has been developed by the school, which Croydon have signed up to; it is hoped and anticipated that Sutton will follow suit.

Governors **RECEIVED** the budget forecast.

Mrs Jenkins left the meeting.

10. PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR VISITS

- i) Mrs Acik reported that she had visited Mrs Jenkins, Finance Director on 12.5.2014, for an introduction to finance. She had reviewed the Academies Financial handbook and the schedule of the statutory requirements for financial reporting.

Mrs Acik said that the visit had proved a good starting point for her in her role as one of the portfolio governors with a remit for Finance, and it has given her confidence to move forward and to ask the right questions.

- ii) Mr Mills reported that he had visited Mrs Temple, who had been the Head of Upper School at the time, and with Mr Murphy, Head of Middle School and Lead for ASD on 28.4.2014 to discuss the impact of Middle Leadership on securing ongoing improvement.

Mr Mills said that both meetings had been informative and provided a valuable insight into this area of school life. He was pleased to note that the core

issues raised by both members of staff were intrinsically linked into Mr Prior's report, providing triangulation of evidence.

Mr Geen drew governors' attention to the following key points that had been raised during the visits;

- More robust financial management means that contractors are being paid on time and there is regular financial monitoring and financial reports being produced in line with requirements of the EFA. As a result, the school can manage and target its resources even more effectively.
- Maths Booster groups are having a clear impact on pupil progress in number over time.
- Recruitment of outstanding staff must remain a priority.

Both governors were thanked for their time.

Governors **RECEIVED** the portfolio governor visit reports from Mrs Acik and Mr Mills.

11. GOVERNOR TRAINING

Mrs Acik reported that she had attended safer recruitment training run by the Borough, with Mr Prior and Mr Geen. This had been an informative course that had followed the process of recruitment from start to finish. She said she had acquired knowledge that she could bring back to her role as governor, particularly in terms of sitting on interview panels for key staff. She also commented on the importance of ensuring that all staff are aware of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding matters.

Mrs Acik said that she is also due to attend a Financial Efficiencies Workshop in June and she would provide an update on this at the next meeting.

Governors were encouraged to attend relevant training and the clerk would keep an up to date register of training attended.

Governors **RECEIVED** the training report from Mrs Acik.

12. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

The following policies and procedures had been circulated for approval:

- Intimate Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Adoption Leave
- Flexible Working
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Complaints Policy
- SEN Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management and Pupil Support
- Data Protection Policy
- Marking Policy
- Government Procurement Card Policy and Procedure
- Lettings Policy

Governors noted that all statutory policies are now in place, although they recognised that they may need to be refined further down the line. They also noted that the HR policies were in line with the London Borough of Sutton's HR policies that had been transferred over to the school as part of the TUPE process.

Governors **APPROVED** all the policies.

13. APPROVAL OF DRAFT STAFF HANDBOOK

Mr Smillie explained that this handbook has been drawn up as a draft for governors' comment. It will then be circulated to all staff asking them to sign up to it.

Governors **RESOLVED** to send any comments back via the clerk to the governors before the end of June.

14. UPDATE ON BEHAVIOUR, TEACHING AND LEARNING AND PUPIL PROGRESS

i) Behaviour Data

Mr Geen tabled the comparative behaviour data from January to May 2014 which showed encouraging results.

Governors questioned the increase in internal exclusions in the second half of the spring term. Mr Geen explained that this increase is affected by three specific pupils contributing a disproportionate amount of serious incidents, one of which has now left the school.

Mr Geen said that there is robust evidence to suggest that the reduction in reported incidents of challenging behaviour is in no small part due to the introduction of the new Praise and Reward policy. He had spoken to the student council about the new policy and 100% of the pupils reported that they liked the new system and they had all been awarded at least one merit.

There now needs to be increased staff capacity to follow up on behavioural issues.

Mr Smillie explained that a teaching assistant has been moved from a classroom setting to organise work experience, and this has made a good impact.

Mr Geen said that there are still areas for improvement, including continuing to improve student engagement and positive attitudes even further during break and lunchtimes, developing and expanding the role and status of pupil voice and the impact of poor behaviour on pupils' attendance (an attendance officer has been employed and this is beginning to show impact).

Mr Prior commented that at the last meeting, governors had raised a point about how the school could realign its focus to recognise and measure positive behaviour and good attitudes. These useful comments were taken on board and incorporated in the new policy on positive behaviour (praise and reward element), which has made an impact.

ii) Observations of Learning and Teaching

Mr Geen spoke about the quality of teaching and learning and asked governors the question; "How does the leadership team judge the typical quality of teaching?"

Governors agreed that they would do this by receiving OLT data and pupil progress data, particularly specific booster group data and then by asking searching questions regarding the data, for example do pupils in booster groups make better progress than those who are not?

Mr Geen said that next half term there will be the usual formal observations but that these observations will be part-announced. The usual cycle of other

unannounced monitoring activity, such as drop-ins, learning walks and work scrutiny will continue.

Governors asked about the systems used in school for planning and assessment, which were explained

Mr Geen then tabled data on round 5 OLTs. He explained that the grades 1-4 have been broken down into bands, i.e. Grade 2 a, b and c to show finer differentiation and progress over time. The data also indicates a total point score for each teacher, which is a cumulative of formal observations. Data shows a steady increase in quality, with an overall typical grade of a 2 emerging.

The average grade for Round 5 is the highest so far this academic year. In total, five teachers have produced Grade 1 lessons this academic year. There now needs to be more consistency in grade 2 teaching and the school needs to continue to hold underperforming teachers to account. The quality of teaching is not judged solely on formal observations and in truth, we don't grade lessons, we grade learning, especially learning over time. Good teaching is triangulated with other elements, including progress and attainment data, work scrutiny and pupils' attitudes to learning.

Recruitment continues to be a challenge, partly due to the specialist nature of the school but also partly due to some residual reputational issues, as well as national difficulties across settings. The school is working in collaboration with Orchard Hill College who employ good agency staff and will work with the agencies to get the best possible candidates for the school. However, it is recognised that the use of agency staff is not a long term solution and can leave the school vulnerable in terms of staff leaving at short notice etc.

In terms of performance management and appraisal of teachers, the main judgement will be on the typicality of teaching (see above), not just the formal lesson observations and this will be related to teachers' pay from September 2014.

iii) Pupil Progress

Mr Prior gave governors a PowerPoint presentation on pupil progress which he agreed to email to governors after the meeting.

There is good evidence of a secure and improving Grade 3, moving towards Grade 2. This presentation gave a high level overview of progress during the first half of this academic year as set against the second half of 2012-13. Progress in both English and Maths indicates rapid gains. There is further

work to pull together progress measures for the year, which will be available by the end of June. This will data will look in closer detail at the progress of different groups of pupils, progress in particular strands and and how pupil progress correlates to the quality of teaching. Attainment data (eg, Entry Level and GCSE) will not be available until August.

Mr Prior said he had given a presentation to the joint Sutton secondary schools forum about Carew Academy, which had been well received. There had been offers of help and support in terms of lobbying, sharing good practice etc. but also inclusion links to broader provision, particularly for the more able students.

Governors felt strongly that parents should made more aware of the good progress being made at the school.

Mr Mills agreed to produce an end of term document for parents to show the successes.

Governors **RECEIVED** the progress reports on behaviour data, OLT data and pupil achievement data.

Action Mr Prior to circulate his presentation on pupil achievement to governors by email.

Action: Mr Mills to produce and end of term document for parents to show progress and successes.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Prior asked governors to attend an extraordinary meeting of the LGB before the DfE visit on 3rd July.

Action: The clerk to email governors to arrange an extraordinary meeting.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

There were no items of confidentiality.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

CHAIR----- DATE-----

