

# Five Spires Academy

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board held in the School on Wednesday 8 May, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.

**Present:** Mrs. Winson (Chair), Mrs. Motorny (Interim Headteacher), Miss Bye (Co-Headteacher), Mrs. Van Dreumel, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Murray

**In attendance:** Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)  
Mrs. Dixon (School Business Manager)

### Opening Remarks:

Governors were welcomed to the Summer Term meeting by the Chair.

### 1 Apologies:

**Resolved:** That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Agates and Mrs. Downie.

*Governors are reminded that any Governor who does not participate in full Governing Board meetings for more than six months without their apologies being accepted by the Governing Board are automatically disqualified.*

### 2 Finance Update:

It was at this point in the meeting that Mrs. Dixon presented a budget overview to Governors which included the actual figures for 2017/18, the out-turn position for 2018/19 and the projected budget up to 2022/23.

Given the confidential nature of the discussions that took place around the Academy finances Governors determined that this agenda item be recorded as a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes – **see Confidential Appendix.**

### 3 Governing Board Matters:

#### a) Membership

There were no membership changes to action at tonight's meeting although the Clerk will review the current listing before the Autumn Term to determine what action, if any, need to be taken.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk progress this action.

#### b) Confidentiality

Governors were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting.

**c) Register of Business Interests**

Governors were reminded of the requirement to update the register of business interests on an annual basis, and are aware that this must be kept in the Academy and should be included on the Academy website.

This agenda item was closed off in the Autumn Term. There are no additions that need to be made to the Register following tonight's meeting.

**d) Declaration of Interest Business and Pecuniary**

No declarations of interest were made by Governors in respect of any items appearing on the agenda.

**e) Code of Conduct**

Governors were advised that they should have a Code of Conduct in place that all serving Governors agree to and understand and that arrangements are in place to ensure that all new Governors are made aware of the Code when joining the Governing Board.

The Governing Board membership adopted the REAch2 Code of Conduct in the Autumn Term and confirmed its compliance with the protocols listed in this document. No further action was required at tonight's meeting.

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the full Governing Board meeting held on Wednesday 16 January, 2019 be approved.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection.

**5 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting:**

It is customary practice that the Clerk generates an action matrix to each set of minutes. It was reported that all listed actions have either been progressed or closed down.

**6 Review of Committee Structure/Scheme of Delegation:**

**a) Committees/Nominated Governors**

The Academy does not operate a committee structure. Link Governor responsibilities have not changed since the last meeting. This agenda item will need to be revisited again in the Autumn Term.

**Resolved:** That this item be included on the Autumn Term agenda.

**7 Reports:**

**a) Chair's and Vice-Chair's Actions**

The Vice-Chair confirmed she had written to Mrs. Beck regarding the on-going situation with cladding. The letter had highlighted the health and safety concerns with regard to this issue and the Academy is expecting REAch2 to honour its original

commitment to pay for any remedial action that is needed to make the building safe. Governors will be informed as to how this issue is eventually resolved.

**b) Committees**

This agenda item does not apply to the Academy.

**c) Nominated/Link Governors**

There were no Link Governor updates to provide at tonight's meeting although it is worth minuting that a SEND Link Governor report has been completed as evidence of direct Governor engagement in relation to this critical area of school life.

**8 Headteacher's Report**

***The Headteacher's Report had been received by Governors in advance of tonight's meeting. It provided a valuable insight into areas of academy life and in particular an update on the KPI's which the SLT is responsible for and which provides the context for Governor-based challenge.***

**1.1**

There was a discussion around the whole school focus on writing which is an area that is performing slightly lower than other core curriculum areas. The Headteacher explained that triangulation of evidence has to date struggled to pin point the barrier that is behind this performance issue. The Academy will be facilitating a learning walk with the Deputy Director of Education to hopefully get to the root cause of this issue. The SLT has suspicions that part of the issue may be the need to develop the creative flair in pupils writing to move beyond an overtly academic approach. Governors can expect further updates on this issue in due course.

**1.2**

***With the changes in the SLT structure, Governors challenged that the appropriate Safeguarding designations are in place up until the end of the Summer Term.*** The Co-Headteacher confirmed this to be the case.

**1.3**

The empowerment of middle leaders at the Academy was discussed. The Interim Headteacher confirmed it is her intention for the Maths/English Leads to present their 'data on a page' at the Autumn Term meeting. This will include a review of any group data although the data itself offers limited analysis given the small number of pupils involved. The Headteacher also added that the vulnerable cohort can fit across multiple categories (i.e. Pupil Premium and SEND) which is an important consideration when any data analysis is undertaken.

**Resolved:** That provision be made for the Maths and English Leads to present to Governors in the Autumn Term.

**1.4**

The SLT confirmed a pupil safety audit will shortly be carried out in the Academy. The Academy site has an outside space that is quite unique and coverage of the space by staff during break times can at times be a testing challenge. The hope is that the audit will inform future practice in this area and an appropriate risk assessment and action plan will be put in place to safeguard against any future risk.

**1.5**

Mrs. Van Dreumel discussed the focus of her next Safeguarding Link Governor visit into the

Academy which as well as a check of the Single Central Record will need to include 15-20 minutes on the relevant sections of the Governor Information Pack, if only to check that the SLT has accounted for the listed areas. It was agreed that Mrs. Van Dreumel will contact the School Office outside of tonight's meeting so that a provisional date can be put in the diary.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Van Dreumel progress this action.

#### **1.6**

Finally, Governors were informed that the recent parent workshop on e-safety had been well attended by parents. Excellent feedback had been received and it is pleasing to see that parents want to become better informed in this area from a safeguarding perspective.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher be thanked for her informative and detailed report.

### **9 Safeguarding Updates:**

There were no further updates to provide at this point in the meeting.

### **10 Six Features of Effective Governance:**

A significant proportion of the agenda covered the six features of effective governance as outlined in the Governor Information Pack. It is important Governors/the Academy considers the issues listed in this document and the Chair also outlined her intention to revise this area of the agenda for future meetings.

**Resolved:** That the Chair progress this action. Governors to consider the Governor Information Pack at their leisure asking questions of the SLT as appropriate.

### **11A Ofsted:**

Miss. Bye provided a brief overview to Governors as to how the Ofsted inspection framework is changing with a greater emphasis on the curriculum particularly related to its intent, implementation and impact. Other areas will also shift in focus and the Interim Headteacher informed Governors that staff meetings are planned for the end of term to discuss the changes in more detail. Miss. Bye added that for 'RI' schools the new framework will be particularly challenging as they will have to demonstrate that the curriculum, not just performance outcomes, have moved on significantly to move out of this category. Given the timeframe involved before Five Spires will be subject to its next inspection, the Academy and Governors have sufficient time to recalibrate themselves to the demands of the new framework.

### **11B Impact of Discussions During the Meeting or Future Actions Arising from this Meeting on Pupil Outcomes:**

***It is important that Governors can reflect on their contribution to governance at the Academy, not just on pupil outcomes (challenge on data) but also in a wider context (Safeguarding checks, parent engagement activities, etc.).*** It was felt at some point it might be worth revisiting some form of self-evaluation to address this issue although there is no doubt Governors at Five Spires are actively involved and engaged in the life of the Academy.

**Resolved:** that the Chair determine an appropriate point to revisit a self-evaluation so that Governors can reflect on their collective effectiveness as a Board.

**12 Any Other Business:**

There were two specific areas of any other business discussed at tonight's meeting. It was agreed both items needed to be recorded as a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes – **see Confidential Appendix.**

**13 Confidential Items:**

Governors were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Governors were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

**Resolved:** That the following items be identified as needing to be included in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minutes 2 and 12.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

**14 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

A date for the Autumn Term meeting was agreed as 16.09.19 at 5.30 p.m.

Governors were at this point thanked for their attendance at tonight's meeting and it was brought to a close by the Chair.

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Five Spires Academy

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board held in the School on Wednesday 8 May, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.

#### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
3a	Clerk	Review membership listing prior to Autumn Term meeting to determine whether any actions need to be taken.	
4	IHT	Publish January minutes.	
6a	Governing Board	Revisit Link Governor responsibilities in Autumn Term.	
8	IHT	Make provision for Maths and English Leads to present 'data on a page' at Autumn Term meeting.	
8	Mrs. Van Dreumel	Arrange Safeguarding Link Governor visit.	
10	Chair	Review agenda before next meeting.	
11B	Chair	Determine appropriate self-evaluation strategy to be used with Board.	
Conf.	Various	Individuals to progress actions as listed.	

**Date of next meeting: Monday 16 September, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.

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**In attendance:** Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)  
Mrs. Dixon (School Business Manager)

#### CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

##### Minute 2 – Finance Update:

Mrs. Dixon confirmed that due diligence has been applied to the budget setting process with Five Spires being one of the first Academy's to have its budgetary information ratified by REAch2. Both Mrs. Dixon and Miss. Bye have considered all income and expenditure lines in the Budget and the top level information shared with Governors at tonight's meeting suggests that the Budget for 2019/20, whilst balanced, is particularly tight. One pleasing announcement is that the increase in pension contribution the Academy is going to have to make to The Pension Fund for staff is going to be covered by the Trust although this money will have to sit in the Budget and cannot be ring fenced for other uses. Mrs. Dixon also indicated that the Academy is a growing school and does not have the reserves to fall back on that other schools may be able to access. This is a reality that demands a certain level of financial prudence to be exercised. There was some discussion around pupil numbers which again see a significant increase in 2019/20 with the obvious financial impact to come into the Budget. It is particularly pleasing to see that from a standing start, all classes are full with waiting lists. Not only does this show that the community sees value in the quality of education offered at Five Spires but it also brings additional funding into the Budget that can be used to enhance the teaching and learning environment for pupils.

One of the most significant areas of expenditure is staff costs and Mrs. Dixon provided an analysis of this area of the School Budget. ***Where it is known, any staff mobility for 2019/20 has already been incorporated within the financial data and following a Governor challenge as to why the 'Staff Costs % of GAG' is currently showing 108.3% for 2019/20, Mrs. Dixon explained that the percentage will come down to a much more realistic level (70%) once income from nursery and wrap around care is taken account of as part of the total income.***

The next area of discussion was budget reconciliations and the data shared with Governors included updates on Pupil Premium; Sports Premium; Catering; Wrap Around Care; Nursery and School Trips. There were no significant areas of concern to share with Governors (i.e. loss leaders) and a supporting narrative was provided by Mrs. Dixon in relation to each designated area.

The catering position was shared with Governors. At present, the School has to pay a management fee as part of an SLA with Entrust. The plan going forward is to miss out the middle man and agree a catering contract with a provider direct with the intention being it will be a central REAch2 contract. Several companies are pitching for the contract and whilst the current provider, Chartwells, has every chance of winning this tendering process it will be agreed on different terms with the procurement power of REAch2 being used to full effect.

Governors welcomed this development as it moves the liability from an individual Academy with the cost savings that will no doubt follow.

***For Pupil Premium there was some challenge as to how the project income is calculated along with a recognition that this pot of money is substantially less than other schools receive. Despite this, the SLT must be seen to deliver real impact from the funding that is allocated and there was some challenge from Governors as to how the SLT can demonstrate that Pupil Premium pupils, benefitting from the funding, are achieving/attaining at the right level.*** The SLT explained the evidence base that can be analysed to determine whether gaps are being closed including impact assessments on the various interventions that may be deployed.

Sports Premium is ring fenced and must be used for specific purposes in schools including funding additional and sustainable improvements to the provision of PE and Sport and encouraging the development of healthy, active lifestyles. Mrs. Dixon explained why the 2019/20 Budget spend drops in relation to the services provided by Burton Albion and there was also confirmation that the SLT is looking for more sustainable solutions when it comes to this revenue stream, particularly as Sports Premium may only have a few more years to run. A final update in this area was that the Academy has put a bid in for a trim-trail which would naturally enhance the outdoor educational experience for Five Spires pupils.

Wrap Around Care is a profitable enterprise with staffing levels having to be increased to maintain the effectiveness of the provision. To offset increased staff costs a decision has been taken to increase the fees for After Schools Club from £4.20 in 2018/19 to £4.80 in 2019/20. This increase is still highly competitive against local providers and Governors could appreciate why this decision (a relatively small increase) had been taken.

Nursery provision again remains a positive venture. The rationale for opening up lunch club to both morning and afternoon sessions was explained. There was also an explanation as to why school trips are running at a slight deficit caused in part by the fact parent contributions are voluntary.

The final significant area of discussion related to the analysis of budget reserves. Governors noted straight away the deficit position of around £17K in 2017/18 with Mrs. Dixon explaining the reasons that had resulted in this budgetary position which Governors felt could not have been avoided. Mrs. Dixon reassured Governors that a conscious decision has been taken in the coming years to get the Budget back on track with the aim to not only generate a budgetary surplus but a surplus on top of this to mitigate against a sudden financial outlay. Operating from a standing start, this will be particularly challenging for the Academy although exercising financial prudence and the natural increase in GAG funding should help the Academy along the way. Governors could see from 2021/22 that the Academy should have a healthy operating surplus which is crucial if autonomous budgetary control is to remain. The action the Academy is taking also aligns with the aspirations of REAch2 in this area and Governors were reassured that the reported deficit is by no means as serious as can be seen in the finances of other academies across the Trust. What the budget reserves analysis does result in is a delay in investing in the Academy when it comes to premises-related projects. The surplus is simply not there at the moment to reinvest back into the Academy and Governors wanted this point minuted to ensure the Trust is aware of this situation.

Overall, considering the challenges that are faced when setting, maintaining and projecting budgets for the Academy Governors were extremely appreciative of the work carried out by Mrs. Dixon. She was thanked for her due diligence and dedication to the task in hand and Governors are reassured by the level of scrutiny that is applied to the Academy finances.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Dixon be thanked by Governors for her financial update.



## **Minute 12 – Any Other Business:**

### **1.1**

Governors were informed both of the details of the Co-Headteacher's secondment and the forthcoming maternity leave of the Headteacher. In both cases, Governors congratulated the two individuals on their news and wished them well in the coming months.

This discussion then facilitated a discussion about the plans REAch2 has in place for advertising an internal post for the appointment of an Interim Headteacher for a period of 12 months at the Academy. As the Co-Headteacher is taking up a seconded post at Scientia Academy the advertised post cannot be filled on a permanent basis. Governors were informed that interviews for the new position are due to take place on 22.05.19. There was some frustration exercised by Governors at this point that the Chair had not been afforded the appropriate professional courtesy by being informed of REAch2's plans around succession planning. It was suggested that representation should be made to the Regional Governance Board on this issue as whilst Governors accept that REAch2 has the final say when it comes to any recruitment issues, there is a level of transparency that not come through in the process.

**Resolved:** That the Chair act on this Governor mandate.

Any Governor who has the availability was invited to attend and participate in the recruitment process on 22.05.19. The Chair fortunately is available to contribute and other Governors will inform Mrs. Dixon if they too can attend.

**Resolved:** That Governors act on this request.

***There was a Governor challenge at this point about the impact of these changes on strategic leadership at the Academy and whether it will be left short in this critical area.***

The Co-Headteacher explained that with forthcoming changes to the REAch2 framework, where clusters of schools are being established, the Deputy Regional Director will be expected to support a smaller cluster of schools and will be physically based at the Academy one day a week. Whilst Miss. Bye is taking up a position at Scientia Academy this will be in the same cluster as Five Spires thus ensuring the two schools will be working together in a close partnership. There are also plans to bring in additional support for the SENco role as well as empowering middle leaders who are showing real promise to take on a greater level of accountability. The Headteacher also intends to use her KIT days to support the Academy in key areas. The Co-Headteacher felt that all of these changes will not leave the Academy vulnerable and Governors can be reassured a robust, forward looking strategy is in place.

### **1.2**

The Chair shared a parent complaint letter with Governors that covered a variety of issues including how the departure of Miss. Bye had initially been communicated; the fact the parent concerned had not yet met the Interim Headteacher; the fact recruitment plans for appointing a successor had not been shared; the scheduling of PTFA meetings and Governor visibility in relation to the Academy.

The first point Governors wanted to make clear is that some of the areas raised by the parent did not warrant further discussion as they are internal matters that the Academy itself is not obliged to share. The Co-Headteacher then explained the rationale behind having to get something out to parents at speed given a very fluid situation that developed at Scientia. It is worth noting that since the initial communication a letter has gone out from the Co-Headteacher direct with an article also included in the newsletter. On the subject of the PTFA the Co-Headteacher explained that meetings flex between the working day and evenings given peoples' daily commitments and also the needs of academy staff to secure a reasonable work life balance.

Overall, Governors, whilst being comfortable that the majority of the parent's letter did not warrant further investigation, did feel that the point around Governor visibility probably did warrant further reflection. Photographs and bios on the web, representation at school events and an annual report on behalf of Governors were all suggestions put forward in terms of raising the profile of governance and with new members set to join the Board in the Autumn Term this is an area that warrants further action.

**Resolved:** That the Chair determine the best way to take the issues around Governor visibility forward, liaising with the SLT as appropriate.

Governors suggested that rather than responding to the parents concerns by letter, the parent in question should be invited into the Academy to meet the Chair in person. This was felt to be the best way to run through the concerns expressed in the letter but also to make the Academy's position clear on certain issues.

**Resolved:** That the Chair liaise with the School Office to facilitate this meeting. An update on this matter will be provided in the Autumn Term if not by email beforehand.

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**Chair**

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**Date**