

# **Acton and Calveley Academy Trust**

## **Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**30th March 2017 6.15 pm**

**Venue: Acton Primary Academy**

### **MINUTES – PART 1**

In Attendance: Laura Leather (LL), (chair), Bev Dolman (BD), Fiona Sloyan (FS), Penny Holding (PH), Jo Edwards (JE), Verity McKay (VM), Nick Brown (NB) , Melissa Parry (MP) and Lesley La-tronico.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted for Yvonne Wood, Neil Duncalf, and Liz Ford

#### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

VM confirmed that she was an employee of Poole Alcock

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as an accurate record and the chair signed a copy for retention by the clerk.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

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

#### **5. DECLARATION OF AOB**

- Photocopying quote - consider under finance item
- After school club
- FOAS Friends of Acton School
- School trip policy

#### **6. MEMBERSHIP**

There were no changes to membership to report. However with the departure of Jeff Turnbull from the diocese - LF to be asked to speak to the diocese.

#### **7. FINANCE**

- a) Receive and approve Term 1 finance minutes

In the absence of YW, BD reported that there has been a meeting on the 16th feb to review expenditure against budget. This had highlighted queries that had been raised with BD.

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These actions are in hand and will be reported to the budget meeting on the 21st April which will set the budget for the next academic year.

YW had requested that due to funding changes and implications of the national funding formula that the whole board meet to discuss finance - this will be set for a date after Easter.

b) Tennis Court quotes

BD reported that three quotes had been received. This is to be jointly funded by the school and FROCS. Directors reviewed the three quotes and agreed that subject to affordability within the budget to ask Leisure Supplies to undertake the work - this was the mid range quote but it was felt that there was more value in the proposal.

The affordability was the main concern for Directors who used the meeting to briefly explore funding options including grants that are available and a charging and clubs policy.

**Outcome:** That the school and FROCS fund the work subject to budget meeting - with a view to applying for funding for improvement works for flood lighting.

**Outcome:** that the school establish / formalise club usage.

**Outcome:** That subject to funding available that they appoint Leisure Supplies.

a) Photocopier renewal

BD reported that she had received three quotes for the replacement of the photocopier. Directors reviewed the quotes and their affordability.

**Outcome:** To remain with the existing provider Bomfords as this provided good value for money.

## 8. POLICY APPROVAL

a) To discuss and approve Attendance Policy

Directors discussed slight amendments to the Attendance Policy, and discussed the provision around children missing from education - querying the 10 days stipulation. BD confirmed that 10 days was correct.

**Outcome:** The policy was approved by all Directors

b) To discuss and approve the Accessibility Policy and Plan

**Outcome:** This was deferred to the next meeting

c) To discuss and approve approach to Time off in Lieu

A query had been raised regarding whether the trust had a policy regarding time off in lieu. BD reported that each case is considered on its merits and discussed with the chair. The example of a TA going on a residential was given and Directors discussed whether this should be time off in lieu or overtime pay.

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There were pros and cons to either however it was felt that time of in lieu presented further challenges about cover and ensuring that time off did not coincide with busy times in school.

**Outcome:** It was agreed that overtime would be paid for additional hours incurred in the working day - e.g. if a part time TA works full time hours - the difference will be paid and not given as time off in Lieu.

## 9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

BD reported that the new system had been discussed with staff and will be enacted from the start of the next academic year.

## 10. PARKING AND ACTON CAR PARK

**Parking measures** had been put in to place such as no parking signs placed in the lay-by - however these had made zero impact as parents were still parking there. BD is meeting with Cheshire East Highways on the 21st April to review problems and seek potential solutions using road markings. The officer will be attending school at 8.40 to see first hand the impact and look at options for road marking to deter parking - such as yellow lines etc. In light of this meeting, no meeting has been held with the parish council yet.

**New carpark** - the working group (YW, JE and BD) had met and options are being drawn up for parking arrangements and this will be the starting point for the working party - FS to join the working group. The group will meet again after April 21st. An invite will be sent to Arthur Griffiths (Landowner)

Q: How much land do we need?

A: This will depend on the plans and also how much land the owner wishes to allow the school to use.

## 11. HOLIDAYS

Unfortunately at the time of the meeting Cheshire East had not yet published the dates for the next academic year. This will be brought to the next meeting. In addition a meeting of the NEP on the 18th May will attempt to determine dates.

**Outcome:** Defer decision to next meeting.

## 12. HEADTEACHERS REPORT

Directors thanked BD for her report and raised the following items for further discussion:

**Nantwich Education Partnership (NEP).** Nantwich schools pay in to this partnership on a per pupil basis. However the National Funding Formula and funding constraints mean that the Secondary Schools may be leaving - this would leave a huge gap to fill by the primaries.

Q: what value to we get from our membership?

A: The partnership employ a family worker and also a SENCO - which smaller primaries particularly value.

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RLL Trust has used to support 8 families and BD feels that it is great value for money.

Q: What would happen if the NEP didn't exist?

A: As said above the school receives a lot of support from workers employed by the partnership, however in addition, the school receives improvement support and value from peer challenge reviews.

Should the secondary school leave, then considerations will need to be made regarding staff employed by the partnership and redundancy costs. However the challenge is until it is known whether secondary schools remain members then primary schools are unsure if they can afford to continue.

The trust needs to decide on whether they wish to carry on paying £19 per pupil per academic year for the next academic year - should the status quo remain. A discussion took place and determined that as the trust receives good value for its money, then as long as the secondary schools remain then the trust is happy to continue.

**Outcome:** Subject to secondary school continuation, the trust is happy to contribute on the same level.

**MAT Growth Plan** - This is a plan for the expansion of the schools within the trust. This is in hand by the chair.

**Singapore Maths** - BD outlined a method of maths that she would like to implement in the school. Despite attempts to improve maths - further progress is needed. BD had visited a school who had implemented it 2 years ago - she was impressed with the knowledge of the children and that they were obviously secure in complex concepts - she observed high levels of reasoning.

- Singapore has become a “laboratory of maths teaching” by incorporating established international research into a highly effective teaching approach. With its emphasis on teaching pupils to solve problems, Singapore Maths teaching is the envy of the world.
- Singapore consistently top the international benchmarking studies for maths teaching.
- It is a highly effective approach to teaching maths based on research and evidence.
- It builds students’ mathematical fluency without the need for rote learning
- Pupils learn to think mathematically as opposed to reciting formulas they don’t understand.
- Teaches mental strategies to solve problems.
- The Department for Education, the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (NCETM), the National Curriculum Review Committee and OFSTED have all emphasised the pedagogy and heuristics developed in Singapore. Today, maths textbooks based on the Singapore Maths approach are being used in thousands of schools across the UK and have been widely adopted by the Department for Education’s Maths Hubs

Q: What is the cost to implement Singapore Maths in to both schools?

A: The total cost would be £12000 - which seems expensive but each child gets a workbook and the plus points are:

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- No photocopying - which is an enormous part of the academy's photocopying bill
- No Planning - as the teacher follows the lesson plans that have been carefully constructed.
- It will be easier for supply teachers to follow the work pattern - avoiding disruption
- It teaches the children reasoning which is a skill for life.

If Directors agree to implement Singapore Maths the £12k includes:

- Full day training - planned for September.
- Access to Early years, KS1 and KS2 specialists.
- Onsite support following implementation to support the changes to our teaching practice.

Q: Can we afford not to implement if we need to improve standards and this is a proven strategy?

A: Whilst the £12k seems a lot as detailed above this would also bring savings to other areas such as photocopying.

**Outcome:** Directors were unanimous in their approval to implement - subject to the funding being found in the budget meeting in April.

### 13. DIRECTORS' PLAN

Directors reviewed items in the Directors' Plan and all agreed that there had been good progress so far.

A: Aim: To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction		
Objective 1	To consult and agree with all stakeholders a vision for the RLL Academy Trust	All on track
Objective 2	Actively seek out opportunities to expand the trust	All on track / ongoing
B: Aim: To improve the effectiveness of MAT governance		
Objective 1	use the 21 questions and self evaluation surveys to review the MAT	Due summer term
Objective 2	Complete a chairs 360	Due summer term
Objective 3	To ensure that the newly formed governance structure is suitable	Ongoing
Objective 4	To ensure financial effectiveness	On track
Objective 5	Undertake an AGM	Due end of summer term
Objective 6	All governors in active roles and recruit new governors with appropriate skills	On track
C: Aim: To monitor and challenge school performance		
Objective 1	To investigate and implement improved systems to complete monitoring responsibilities within the trust	All on track Directors day
Objective 2	Monitor the performance within the MAT	Newsletter summer term

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D: Aim: To improve links with stakeholders and the local community		
Objective 1	To ensure that parents understand the new governance structure and kept up to date	All on track Parents meetings, Letters
Objective 2	To review the website and ensure legal governance compliance	All on track / ongoing
Objective 3	To improve links with pupils in order to monitor their views	Termly meetings with School council, lunch with children - on track

### Directors' day

A second Directors' Day was held 29th March and again was a complete success. A reminder to all Directors to send in their completed visit forms to FS and she will do a summary - forms in by: 18th April. The forms should be a summary of what you saw and actions that you feel need taking or suggested improvements.

These actions will be added to the list from the previous Directors' Day in December and turned in to monitoring system to ensure that Director's recommended actions are followed through - and assess the impact.

Directors wished to record thanks to staff and children. It was a very enjoyable and they were made to feel very welcome.

#### 14. NANTWICH SHOW DATES AND ROAD CLOSURES

The show coincides with the last week of school. This has happened previously - and BD outlined the actions that the school takes to reduce the impact of the show on the school:

- The start time of the school is staggered - KS2 in early and KS1 later
- They liaise with school transport
- There are collection arrangements for children that need to go to the show - many from farming families who have a role in the show.

BD assured Directors that plans were in place.

**Outcome:** Directors were happy with the arrangements

#### 15. SUGAR TAX

Following the recent introduction of the Sugar Tax, JE updated Directors on the funding that the government said would be available. The funding had been delayed and would not now be available for bidding until April 2018.

More details later in the year.

#### 16. SKILLS AUDIT AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

FS ran through the recently launched competency framework and the skills audit undertaken in 2016.

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- Skills audit completed and had been analysed all areas reasonably covered .
- There are weaker areas - but nothing not covered.
- There is the need for a Director to become a champion for Equality and Diversity
- The Skills Audit is outdated now - as competency framework brings in new areas for consideration.

FS will review the skills audit following the introduction of the competency framework and use to review skills again.

FS highlighted a website called Better Governor who host webinars that Directors may find useful.

## 17. AOB

### **After school club**

Directors had been approached during the Directors' Day and had received several criticism regarding the growth of the club and staff ratio. Concerns included:

- Toilet facilities
- Those children with additional needs and how this is managed
- Late pickups

BD reported that these issues had been raised previously and were either dealt with or in hand. Management arrangements for those children with additional needs had been resolved. She also reported that many letters had been sent to parents regarding late pick up in the future parents will be asked to pay immediately for late pick ups instead of it being added to their next bill.

Q: Are Directors happy from a safeguarding point of view to the arrangements for the toilet?

A: The club use the toilets in the school - which is secure.

**Outcome:** Directors asked BD to keep them informed

### **Friends of Acton School (FOAS)**

A discussion took place regarding the ongoing challenge of recruiting parents onto the organising committee of FOAS and take on the roles of Chair, Treasurer, etc. Parents are very good at supporting events and helping on the night.

The Directors wished to record their thanks to all the FOAS members for the invaluable work that they do, and are keen to support FOAS to reinvigorate its membership. Directors discussed a number of options including:

- Setting dates of meetings of FOAS advance (an annual calendar) staff and Directors can then rota
- Doing another promotional push to secure more funding

**Outcome:** The school will continue to promote and recruit parents.

**Outcome:** Note Directors thanks to the members of FOAS for their continued work to support the school.

### **School Collaboration Communication**

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In the lead up to the collaboration between the two schools within the academy - the collaboration had been discussed with teaching staff and letters were sent to parents - however this did not include TA's.

**Outcome:** Future collaborations - all staff will be kept informed and will receive a copy of the letter that is sent to parents.

**Sports Trips Policy**

Directors raised whether the academy had a separate policy for sports trips. BD informed Directors that this falls under and managed through the educational visits policy