

ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Thursday 3rd March 2022
 Time: 5.45pm
 Venue: Laurus Ryecroft High School, Lumb Lane, Droylsden, Manchester M43 7LJ

Clerk: Clare Vogt
 Present: Julie Crawford (Chair), L Casey, S Marsden, H Rizvi, M Vevers
 In attendance: R Carling

| Item | Action | Initials |
|------|--|----------|
| 1.1 | Subject Leaders to be invited for a short presentation and Q&A at the start of meetings. | MV/Clerk |
| 3.1 | The AC Annual Report to the Trust Board will be updated following today's meeting. | Clerk |
| 4.1 | SM to be invited to the next Safeguarding training given to staff. | RC |

| Agenda – Part 1 | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Category | Item | Notes | Action | |
| 1 | Governance Arrangements | Apologies | Apologies were received and approved from A Ali (AA) and L Booth (LB). L Casey (LC) joined the meeting via Teams videolink. | |
| | | AOB items | None. | |
| | | Register of interests | There were no amendments to the Register of Interests. | |
| | | Part 1 Minutes | The minutes of the meeting on 25 th November 2021 were <u>approved</u> as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Governors noted that all actions had been completed. | |
| | | Membership: Recruitment Update/Succession Planning | Governors discussed the current structure of the Committee which was considered a strong team but required consolidation before recruiting more members. S Marsden (SM) said it was a credit to M Vevers (MV) and staff that the business of the Academy Committee (AC) was generally smooth-running, without any particularly difficult issues to resolve to date. It was noted that a session for AC | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|----------|
| | | | Chairs to share best practice will be set up by the Trust. | |
| | | Governor Visits Protocol | Governors received the Governors Visits Protocol and commented that it was very beneficial. | |
| | | Academic Links | <p>The Trustee Academic Links was provided for Governors' information.</p> <p>The Committee suggested it would be helpful to understand more about specific curriculum areas from Subject Leaders.</p> <p>Action 1.1: Subject Leaders to be invited for a short presentation and Q&A at the start of meetings.</p> | MV/Clerk |
| | | Staff Governor Role | Governors noted the Staff Governor Role Description. | |
| | | Trust Board Update | <p>The Trust Board Report to Academy Committees for December 2021 was received by Governors.</p> <p>Governors heard that MV attended all Trust Board meetings and could raise questions and give feedback on behalf of the AC.</p> | |
| | School Performance & Accountability | Review School Development Priorities | <p>The School Development Plan (SDP) 2021-22 Mid-Year Review was received by Governors. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SDP was reviewed by the Leadership Team to check progress. • The initials next to the different actions showed who was best to lead on that action, with the individual being supported by others. • Whilst some items were showing as amber, this was due to the time of year and progress was being made towards reaching green by summer. • The main red issue related to student voice activity. The school would be conducting a pupil survey but felt that this should take place later in the term to provide an accurate reflection of feelings in different subject areas. <p>Q: LC asked if there were any areas of concern? A: MV said all targets were achievable. Some had been a concern due to Covid restrictions but were now progressing. More activities were being arranged this year, such as university visits. The school ensured that entire year groups were taken to three different universities by Y10. These reflected the varied university experience in city, on campus or within a collegiate system. The aim was to take pupils out of Greater Manchester to</p> | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <p>demonstrate the possibilities elsewhere and that attending university was an achievable aim, particularly for students who may be the first in the family to go. The school had good connections with Sheffield, Cambridge and a London University.</p> <p>Q: The Chair queried if arranging these university visits was standard practice?</p> <p>A: R Carling (RC) said not all schools did this but the benefits were immeasurable. Y7 had recently been to Lancaster which had been a very positive experience.</p> <p>MV said the school had been used as a hub for schools in Tameside to attend a presentation from Cambridge University on attracting students there.</p> | |
| | Ensure Delivery of School Curricula and Assessment (in line with Trust's approach) | Governors heard that MV was Head of Curriculum across the Trust and, as such, they could be assured that the school curricula and assessment criteria were being followed. | |
| | Review Head of School Report | <p>MV presented the Head of School Report, including a confidential recruitment update outlined in Part 2 of the meeting. Key points were:</p> <p><u>Attainment</u></p> <p>Projections for the class of 2023 were shown. These related to the current Y10's potential achievements at the end of Y11. They were currently below the targets set in the SDP but these had been set high to be challenging. If students reached the predicted grades, raw attainment results would be excellent. Attainment on intake was much lower than other secondary schools in the Trust.</p> <p>Data was provided to subject leaders to identify those who needed support, as well as those who were high achieving.</p> <p>Q: SM asked if the information was shared with students?</p> <p>A: MV confirmed that discussions took place with pupils and any gaps were addressed. RC added that Y10s would have full mocks in June. This provided experience of back to back exams to help</p> | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>with preparation the following year.</p> <p>Q: J Crawford (JC) queried how accurate the mock exam results would be in predicting actual grades?</p> <p>A: MV said it was difficult to assess as there was no recent data from the national cohort for comparison, due to Covid. Grade boundaries from two years ago could be changed. Y11 grade boundaries were going to be lower this year but grading will ultimately revert to pre-Covid levels. The impact of Covid on children nationally and how this might affect percentages was also not yet known. RC added that actual results could fluctuate from those indicated at mock stage due to unknown factors affecting students at the time of sitting GCSEs.</p> <p>Q: Humera Rizvi (HR) asked how many times the students took mock exams?</p> <p>A: MV said it was four times in total.</p> <p>MV said the report included an update on the options process which had been improved to follow the system put in place last year during Covid restrictions. This involved setting up options afternoons for Y9s where they could find out more information on GCSE subjects from teachers. This could then be discussed with their parents prior to the Options Evening. The arrangements had worked very well last year with less than 5% changing options which was an improvement from previous years. Other Trust schools were now following the model.</p> <p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>RC advised that attendance had gone down in half-term 3 but this was usually the worst period due to being in the depths of winter. It was also a short half-term and only 3 days off could show as persistent absence.</p> <p>Overall, the trajectory for attendance was towards pre-Covid figures of 95%. A Family Attendance Liaison Officer had been recruited to work with the families of Pupil Premium and SEND children who had struggled with Covid the most. Support and care for those students was being provided. These early efforts had resulted in pushing current attendance towards 94% which was significantly above the national average of 88%.</p> <p><u>Behaviour</u></p> <p>RC said regular discussions took place with SM concerning behaviour. Low level disruption was to be expected and the school's focus was on</p> | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>targeting repeat offenders of C3s and 4s. Scrutiny of whether they were learning from their mistakes was continually undertaken. The data suggested that students were benefitting from the support provided by Heads of Year, form tutors, SM etc.</p> <p>C3s for repeated offences such as class disruption and swearing were minimal. There had been a spike in truancies but this was due to lateness of 10 minutes or more being recorded as such. This provided a clear message to pupils that lateness would not be tolerated and should result in long-term gain.</p> <p>Q: HR asked if the top floor toilets had been locked because of behaviour issues?</p> <p>A: Yes, RC said there had been several C4s issued in relation to the toilets. Closure was a short-term solution and CCTV will be in place on the top floor next year. MV added that there were not enough staff currently to cover that corridor.</p> <p>RC advised that exclusion figures were very low. Permanent exclusion would only be considered as an absolute last resort. Mechanisms were in place to try to prevent this.</p> <p>There had been a spike in poor behaviour from Y8 girls who were not settling well but this (anecdotally) appeared to be an issue across Greater Manchester. MV remarked that this year group had never finished Y6 and had undergone a turbulent time at secondary school due to Covid. Most of the behaviour issues related to out of class and online activities. Local Police Officers had come into the school for a tailored assembly to address these issues.</p> <p>SM and RC had undertaken a recent patrol where only one C2 had been noted. The results were very pleasing overall.</p> <p><u>Recruitment</u> Confidential details noted under Part 2.</p> | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 3 | Governor Monitoring | Finance Update | <p>The management accounts for November and December 2021 were noted by the Committee.</p> <p>MV said that a number of projects throughout the school were in progress or had taken place. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various pieces of art work being put up throughout the building in a two-year project. This was being funded by Philip Mould (PM), art dealer who appears on the BBC’s ‘Fake or Fortune’ programme. PM felt strongly that students should be surrounded and inspired by art. The Governors and the School expressed grateful thanks for PM’s very kind donation. • The second sail had now been erected. • The steel was in place for the big screens in the sports hall and the work should be finalised over Easter. • Works were taking place over the summer holiday, such as creating extra space at the front of the building in the office area, and an additional music room next to the current one. Cameras were also being installed on the first floor. • Several outdoor benches had been added and these were made from recycled materials. | |
| | | Risk Register | <p>The School Risk Register and Covid-19 Risk Assessment were noted by Governors. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential issues with teaching standards were mitigated through professional learning. • The Covid-19 Risk Assessment was still being prepared, although no longer a legal requirement (from April). The number of cases had fallen considerably but the school felt it was better to keep the assessment and mitigations in place for now. • Cyber security required ongoing vigilance. The Trust had an excellent IT team and strong structures in place but Ransomware demands were an increasing issue in schools. • All appropriate Health & Safety (H&S) measures were in place. These were regularly checked by an independent H&S specialist. A recent inspection had been very positive. | |
| | | Policy Reviews | Governors received and <u>approved</u> the School Uniform, Behaviour and Attendance Policies. | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|-------|
| | Curriculum Policies (e.g. Religious Education and Relationships, Sex Education), Behaviour and Welfare Policies (ensure in line with statutory guidance) | MV confirmed that Curriculum Policies as published on the school website were in line with statutory guidance. https://www.laurusryecroft.org.uk/curriculum-statements/ | |
| | Review Educational Achievement of Looked After/Previously Looked After Children | SM reported that frequent meetings with RC were undertaken to discuss looked after/previously looked after children and there were no concerns. | |
| | Monitor Pupil Premium, Catch Up | SM confirmed that the school performance with pupil premium students was strong. Monies were being spent on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils were able to participate in the same experiences as other children, such as going on trips. | |
| | Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor Updates | Governors were advised that SM had checked the Single Central Record and all was in order. | |
| | Governor Self Review of Impact – Chair Visits to GO&S | Governors noted the Framework for AC Chair Discussions. The Clerk advised that all AC Chairs would be invited to Governance, Oversight and Standards Committee (GO&S) meetings over the next year to update on their AC's progress. The framework was in draft form and subject to change once the most experienced Chair, Adrian Jarvis of Cheadle Hulme High School, had provided feedback to the next GO&S Committee meeting following his presentation. The aim of the meetings was to provide enhanced interaction and communication between Chairs and Trustees. Action 3.1: The AC Annual Report to the Trust Board will be updated following today's meeting. | Clerk |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|---|----|
| 4 | Governor Development | Training | <p>The Committee reviewed the Training Plan and Training Log. The Clerk advised that recommended training for Governors prior to ACM4 was the Equality and Diversity Module on the Laurus Institute site.</p> <p>RC shared details of the Safeguarding Professional Development for Teachers. This in-depth training takes place annually. SM asked to be invited to the next session.</p> <p>Action 4.1: SM to be invited to the next Safeguarding training given to staff.</p> <p>MV provided details of the Governance & Inspection Training which took place in December 2021. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This had been led by David Woolley (DW) and Linda Magrath (LM) who are both serving inspectors. • DW and LM had provided insight into the process and there was also feedback from the Hazel Grove inspection. • An inspection could take place at Laurus Ryecroft at any time. • Governors will be asked to meet the Lead Inspector. | RC |
| 5 | Community Engagement | | <p>MV provided details of events which will take place in the Summer and which Governors were welcome to attend.</p> <p>MV said there had been a review of Uniform Prices which were outlined for Governors in the Uniform Average Cost document. This was following a national initiative to make school uniform more affordable. MV was concerned that the school's blazer costs were too high at £42.99 upwards, although they were good quality. The suppliers had been asked to reduce this cost. The number of branded items had been kept to an absolute minimum. HR suggested that a spare button on the blazer would be useful and this will be fed back to the supplier.</p> <p>Q: SM asked if parents were aware of the school's work in trying to keep uniform prices down?</p> <p>A: No particular mention had yet been made. The school was adding a third supplier this year which should help reduce costs. Where families were struggling, the school assisted in supplying items. A mechanism for providing second-hand uniform was being considered across the Trust.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| | AOB | | None. | |
| | Meeting Dates: | | Monday, 20.06.22 at 5.45pm | |

| Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes | |
|---|---|
| • | Governors requested different Subject Leaders attend future meetings to provide further details on their specialist areas |
| • | A mid-year review of the School Development Plan was undertaken by the Committee |
| • | The Safeguarding Governor confirmed having checked the Single Central Record |
| • | Governors were asked to take the Equality and Diversity Module before the next meeting. |

Signed by the Chair:

Julie Crawford

Date: 20.06.22