**The Reading Cluster Local Governing Body**

**Monday 22 January 2018, 5pm**

***At Ranikhet Academy, Spey Road,***

***Minutes***

Present: Julia Abbott (JA), Faruq Bilbe, Chair from 5.30pm (FB), Sal Ducker (SD), Abby Stevens (AS) Chair until 5.30pm, Libby Thomassen (LT), Rachel Jackson (RJ), Mel Shackell (MS), Kate Lamburn (KL)

In attendance: Dom Prendergast (DP), Mark Wieder (MW), Fiona Chapman (FC), Brenda Vockings (Ranikhet SBM), Samantha Knight (The Palmer Academy SMB), Emma Lelliott (Civitas Bursar), Carol Flach (clerk to governors)

Apologies: David Leeper, Brent Lee, Fehmeeda Tailor

Absent: None

Year to date: Julia Abbott (3/3), Faruq Bilbe (3/3), Claire Challis (2/3), Sal Ducker (3/3), David Leeper (2/3), Abby Stevens (3/3), Libby Thomassen (3/3), Robert Wyld (2/3), Kate Lamburn (1/3), Brent Lee (1/2)

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION, OUTCOME AND ACTION** |
| 1 | **Welcome & Apologies for absence** |
|  | Abby Stevens Chaired the meeting in the absence of David Leeper until Faruq Bilbe arrived at 5.30pm. Apologies were also received and accepted from Brent Lee and Fehmeeda Tailor.  There was one request for any other business from the EHT which was recorded as a part 2 minute.  AS welcomed Mark Wieder, Head of School at Civitas and Helen Beattie the Trust Safeguarding lead to the meeting. |
| 2 | **Declarations of business interest** |
|  | Governors were reminded of the need to declare any business interests. No additional interests were declared at this meeting. |
| 3 | **Governor appointments** |
|  | As Head of School at Civitas, Mark Wieder is an associate governor. Unfortunately both Lloyd Thomas and Ben Carter have withdrawn their interest in being governors due to their work commitments. |
| 4 | **Previous minutes and matters arising** |
|  | The minutes of the 20 November 2017 meeting was **accepted** as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Vice Chair at the end of the meeting.  Matters arising:   1. The action to discuss new governor appointments was completed under agenda item 3. 2. The action to agree a date for the new governor training workshop was **carried forward** for DL to action. 3. The Ranikhet Head of School report was shared with governors electronically and in hard copy format and will be followed up in the ROSE group meeting. 4. The action to share the anonymised teaching profile of the schools is for the next Standards meeting. 5. AS agreed to observe SATS practice at TPA. 6. The EHT confirmed that she had written to the parent and LA about the in year transfer request for year 6. |
| 5/6 | **First quarter finance reports and budget updates (Civitas, Ranikhet, TPA)** |
|  | **Ranikhet quarterly finance report and budget update**   * REAch have agreed a 2016/17 carry forward of £92,627 * REAch have approved an in year deficit of £14,000 * The EHT has put forward a business case to REAch for £18,786 to support the needs of extra children in reception. * Staffing: there are still a high number of supply and maternity cover arrangements in place. * Absence: 26 days of SLT time (mainly 2 members of staff), 2 days of teacher time, 29 days of LSA, 15 days of LTC and 8 days admin were reported. * The SBM noted that income from letting have been reduced due to floodlight problems with the football pitch. * Some general expenses have not been accrued so £4,500 has been incorporated into general expenditure   *Governors asked for the key metrics of percentage of expenditure on teaching costs, ration of staff to pupils and average teacher costs so these could be monitored across the cluster and against the target of 74% expenditure on staffing costs.*  Ranikhet % of teaching costs: 75%  Ratio of teaching: 23:1  Average teacher cost (including on costs): £51,883  *Governors asked what had happened to the money that had been carried forward (£92,627).* The SBM explained that in line with the REAch policy on reserves this money has now been transferred to reserves and the school has to submit a business case to access any reserves.  **Civitas quarterly finance report and budget update**   * REAch have agreed a 2016/17 carry forward of £11,756 * EFA have revised the estimated pupil numbers down to 142 despite the October census reporting that there are 154 pupils on the roll. Civitas have been advised by REAch2 that the additional pupil income will be received but this has not been advised by the EFA to date. * A budget with an in-year deficit of £40,000 or £28,500 net has been approved by REAch. * A business case has been put forward for £66,000 to support the new Head of School and special needs LSA. * Staffing: a number of supply and costs have been incurred to cover sickness, training, leadership and PPE days. * Absence: 8 days for teachers and 14.5 days for LSAs, no admin absence. * The SBM noted that they are looking to apply for a grant for library books and new Chrome books for pupils.   Civitas % of teaching costs: 73%  Ratio of teaching: 26:1  Average teacher cost (including on costs): £43,200  *Governors asked about the relative cost of a supply teacher compared to a salaried member of staff*. The SBM explained that it depends on the agency fee and what is included and excluded and what the pay scale level is. Generally it is better to have salaried staff and a stable workforce for children.  *Governors asked for clarification as to whether the business case would be a loan or income*. The SBM noted that it was unclear how the money should be treated at this stage; if it is a loan it would be repayable over a three year period. The SBM confirmed that the recruitment for the LSA for special needs had been completed but that the school was waiting for DBS clearance. FC noted that private companies can complete DBS checks within 14 days.  **The Palmer Academy**   * REAch have approved a carry forward of £407,333 which has now gone to reserves. * The EHT noted that they are going to put forward an urgent business case to REAch for £11,545 for additional EYP to work with high needs pupils in the nursery and the cost of the PiXL licence which is needed as a school causing concern. * *Governors questioned if the process of submitting a business case was easier for schools that had reserves*. The EHT explained that the process was the same for all schools regardless of the reserves they had. * Staffing: a full report on the staffing changes at TPA was shared with governors at the meeting. * Absence: 11 days SLT, 18 days teaching an, 108.5 days LSAs, 17 days LTC and 19.5 days admin. DP noted that the school was conducting an attendance review and capability procedures where necessary. * The SBM noted that it has taken some time for the street lights in the visitor’s car park to be fixed but this is due to happen before the end of the month. * The SBM noted that the only recommendation from the Health and Safety Audit was to use the REAch2 risk assessment forms for the site. * The SBM noted that all the schools are trying to reduce resources costs. * The SBM alerted governors that a new server and upgrade to ICT equipment might be needed as Microsoft will not be supporting Windows 7. * The SBM is looking at online messenger between the main office and classrooms to reduce the time spent by office staff walking to leave messages or collect children for appointments. * The SBM noted that the lettings policy needs to be brought to governors for approval. **Action: TPA lettings policy to be on the agenda for the next Finance meeting.** * The SBM noted that she is looking at the possibility of offering a school holiday club – **the Chair noted that this would need to cover costs but if our children will benefit then the scheme will not need to make a profit.**   TPA staff cost: 78%  Pupil teacher ratio 22.65:1  Average teacher costs £45,791  *Governors noted that the average teacher costs at Ranikhet appear particularly high compared to TPA.* **Action: BV agreed to check the formula to ensure that the recharge of the EHT’s costs is being appropriately reflected in each school’s calculation of staff costs.**  *Governors questioned why the early year’s income at TPA has gone down*. The SBM managed explained that there is one fewer class due to teacher recruitment issues in the nursery.  *Governors questioned the trips and income line*. The SBM noted that this is being monitored in the school and that the school is looking for more contributions from parents and carers and fundraising from the older children before trips run. |
| 7 | **GDPR** |
|  | FB noted that he had received some information on the implications of GDPR at the Reading Governor Services briefing for governors. The clerk had also attended the clerk briefing where the GDPR was discussed.  The EHT explained that the REAch Heads Forum would be looking at the implications of GDPR which is due to come into force on the 25 May 2018.  **Action: EHT to update on GDPR at the March meeting.** |
| 8 | **Attendance audit updates (Civitas, TPA)** |
|  | DP explained that TPA and Civitas had received an attendance audit as part of the Schools Causing Concern process. The key outcomes from the audit have been that the cluster is now working towards a shared attendance policy and practice across the three schools with similar targets to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. DP explained that the schools are working together to implement the policy by targeting parents, providing training to teachers and governors around expectations.  The EHT noted that the revised attendance policy is clearer for parents around what the expectations are for attendance and noted that all three schools need to follow up persistent absence in a targeted way. |
| 9 | **Safeguarding update – Trust Safeguarding Lead briefing Helen Beattie** |
|  | Helen Beattie explained her role as Trust Safeguarding Lead and gave governors an update on the focus of her work in each of the schools and across the cluster:  **Civitas**   * Supporting leadership team capacity * Acting as the designated safeguarding leave in the absence of the EHT * Supported high level safeguarding cases * Worked with the admin assistant to put in place attendance tracking and monitoring systems prior to the attendance audit team review * Identified pupils whose attendance was causing concern (below 90%) by monitoring and tracking pupils with attendance of 95% or less for four weeks. Of the 51 pupils identified 26 had 100% attendance during the four week monitoring period; 35 met their attendance target and the average attendance was 94.2%. Despite this improvement it was noted that overall 23 of the 51 children were still considered persistently absent. 16 children didn’t meet the attendance target and 10 children’s cumulative attendance got worse during the monitoring period. HB noted that the EWO was involved with two families in Year 2. *Governors questioned if all absence was due to holidays or whether there were genuine health needs leading to absences*. HB agreed that the figures needed to be contextualised by medical needs and bereavement but noted that there is a need for communication with parents and carers to improve around the timing of appointments in school time.   **Ranikhet**   * Focus on Ofsted preparation through the Trust ROSE process * HB noted that the Trust safeguarding audit had highlighted some areas of concern around attention to detail and gap filling. HB reported that she was disappointed with the progress made at Ranikhet and that her monitoring visit on the 10 January had shown that some items noted during the audit had not been completed. * **Action: FC to ensure that the safeguarding audit actions have been completed and the school is legally compliant with robust evidence of this documented.**   **The Palmer Academy**   * HB explained that she has been supporting the Head of School and EHT with one very serious child protection case at TPA (see part 2 minutes).   **Cluster wide support**   * HB explained that she had been organising half termly cluster wide safeguarding meetings with a fluid agenda aimed to discuss DSLs with their case work and staff training needs e.g. supporting staff to help their parents and carers with substance abuse. |
| 10 | **Health and safety update** |
|  | The following health and safety updates were noted in the meeting:   * REAch2 have agreed to install electronic gates and floodlights at Civitas Academy which will greatly improve the safety and security of the site for staff. * **Action: In advance of the Civitas health and safety audit it was agreed that LT as the health and safety governor should visit Civitas and complete the governor health and safety checklist.** * Low level asbestos damage at Ranikhet is being addressed, the SBM confirmed that staff were aware of the asbestos and that it was not in an area that children would come into contact with. * The EHT is looking to put in some de-escalation training across the schools. |
| 11 | **Governor training** |
|  | FB attended the Reading Governor Services briefing this term and the Clerk attended the Clerks briefing. |
|  | **AOB** |
|  | There was one item of part 2 business.  There were no further items of other business and the meeting came to a close at 7pm. |
|  | Date of next meeting: **26 February 5pm – The Palmer Academy** |

**Summary of Actions**

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|  | **Action** | **Responsible** | **Date** |
| 1 | Agree a date for the new governor training workshop. | DL | 26.02.18 |
| 2 | TPA lettings policy to be on the agenda for the next Finance meeting. | Clerk | 26.02.18 |
| 3 | Check the formula to ensure that the recharge of the EHT’s costs is being appropriately reflected in each school’s calculation of staff costs. | BV | 22.03.18 |
| 4 | Update on GDPR at the March meeting. | EHT | 22.03.18 |
| 5 | Ensure that the safeguarding audit actions have been completed and the school is legally compliant with robust evidence of this documented. | FC | 26.02.18 |
| 6 | Visit Civitas in role as the health and safety governor and complete the governor health and safety checklist. | LT | 26.02.18 |