

**The Reading Cluster Local Governing Body**

**Monday 20 November 2017 at 17:00**

**At The Palmer Academy, 70 Northumberland Ave, Reading RG2 7PP**

**Part 1**

Present: Julia Abbott (JA), Faruq Bilbe (FB), Sal Ducker (SD), David Leeper (DL, Chair), Abby Stevens (AS), Libby Thomassen (LT), Dom Prendergast (DP), Brent Lee (BL), Rachel Jackson (RJ), Mel Shackell (MS).

In attendance: Carol Flach (clerk to governors), Emma Lelliott (Bursar Civitas).

Apologies: Claire Challis, Kate Lamburn, Robert Wyld, Sam Knight and Brenda Vockings

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

ITEM	KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION, OUTCOME AND ACTION
1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies for absence</b>
	The Chair welcomed new governors to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Claire Challis, Kate Lamburn, Fiona Chapman, Robert Wyld, Sam Knight and Brenda Vockings.
2	<b>Annual declarations of business interest and declarations for this meeting</b>
	The Chair reminded governors of the need to declare any business interest. There were no further declarations of business interest for this meeting.  Governors completed the annual declarations of interest form and returned these to the clerk.
3	<b>Governor appointments and resignations</b>
	<b>Governor resignations</b> <u><i>The Chair explained that Claire Challis is moving away from the area and will resign as a Trust governor with effect from December 2017.</i></u>  <b>Governor appointments</b> Rachel Jackson was appointed as the parent governor representative from Ranikhet Academy. Mel Shackell was appointed as a Co-opted governor. Brent Lee and Abby Stevens were appointed as Trust governors.
4	<b>Previous minutes and matters arising</b>
	The minutes of the 21 September 2017 meeting were <b>accepted</b> as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.  Matters arising: 1. The action to complete the annual declaration of interest form was done at this meeting. 2. SD confirmed that governors would receive a briefing on the Visible Learning Project at the Standards meeting on the 18 <sup>th</sup> December. 3. SD confirmed that the vision and values have been added to the school

	<p>staffing structure documents.</p> <p>4. The finance key questions are being addressed by the Finance Governor with the SBMs in their meetings.</p> <p>5. The ROSE TORs now include a financial element.</p> <p>6. Pupil outcome targets will be discussed at the next Standards meeting.</p> <p>7. Business continuity was discussed under agenda item 11.</p> <p>8. ROSE group meeting dates have been agreed and will be reported on at the 18 December Standards meeting.</p>
5	<b>Request for any other urgent business</b>
	There were two requests for any other urgent business from SD; firstly to update governors on the Schools Causing Concern Strategy and the second item was a part two discussion.
6	<b>Governors roles and responsibilities (ROSE group, cluster wide and specific school roles)</b>
	<p>Prior to the meeting the clerk had circulated a document setting out the current governor roles and responsibilities. This includes specific school responsibilities via the ROSE groups and cluster wide governor responsibilities.</p> <p>The Head of School at TPA confirmed that he found it very useful to have the parent governor perspective in the ROSE group.</p> <p>The following ROSE group membership was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Civitas:</b> Abby Stevens (Chair), Faruq Bilbe, Brent Lee, staff governor and parent governor (currently being recruited).</li> <li>• <b>Ranikhet:</b> Faruq Bilbe (Chair), David Leeper, Julia Abbott, Mel Shackell, Rachel Jackson.</li> <li>• <b>The Palmer Academy:</b> David Leeper (Chair), Faruq Bilbe, Claire Challis, Kate Lamburn, Libby Thomassen, parent governor (currently being recruited).</li> </ul> <p>Cluster wide responsibilities:  David Leeper – leadership  Faruq Bilbe – finance  Libby Thomassen and Julia Abbott – health and safety  Kate Lamburn – safeguarding  Abby Stevens – SEND  Brent Lee – pupil premium and sports premium</p> <p><u>The Chair explained that the Trust had arranged a ROSE review for Ranikhet on the 22 and 23 November and that the Chair and Vice Chair would attend on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.</u></p> <p><u>The Chair explained to new governors that the LGB role in the scheme of delegation is to focus on Standards (progress and attainment) and community (supporting schools with parents/carers).</u></p> <p>Information about events in all three schools this term has been shared with governors.</p>
7	<b>Finance reports - highlight report of key financial management issues in each school</b>

	<p>SD updated governors on a meeting she had with the Trust noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ranikhet budget has now been signed off and sent to the Director of Finance at the Trust</li> <li>• As of the 30<sup>th</sup> November all carry forwards will be taken into the Trust main account as part of the reserves policy (see below</li> <li>• SD is writing to the Trust to discuss how the reserves policy will impact on the way the school budgets are set up this year.</li> <li>• A Head of School has been appointed at Civitas which is not in the budget but is necessary.</li> <li>• There is a need to re-baseline the budget going forward due to the number of staff changes.</li> <li>• The way the SBMs work needs to be reviewed. SD asked FB to be involved in the finance meetings in particular the next meeting with the regional finance team.</li> <li>• FB questioned if the finance reporting dates to governors is at the right time, it was noted that the dates had been agreed with the SBMs to fit with reporting to the Trust.</li> </ul> <p><u><i>The Chair explained that under the scheme of delegation the LGB is responsible for holding schools to account and managing the risk of fraud. SD stressed the need for budget planning and reporting to reflect the priorities in the cluster plans.</i></u></p> <p><b>Action: FB to meet with SD and the Regional Business Manager with the SBMs.</b></p>
8	<p><b>Reserves Policy</b></p>
	<p>SD explained that the Trust have issued a Reserves Policy which has the following key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. all academies have been asked to set and manage a three year rolling budget which generates a 1% of GAG surplus in year one</li> <li>2. moving forward all academies will be expected to set and manage a three year rolling budget which generates surpluses each year</li> <li>3. all academies will be set savings targets each year based on their circumstances</li> <li>4. academies with current (carry forward) reserves will be invested by the trust, on behalf of the academies, to be budgeted for and used in future years</li> <li>5. reserves will be managed centrally to the benefit of the whole Trust but accounted for by the individual academy</li> <li>6. as a minimum, each academy will be set a target to maintain an operating reserve</li> <li>7. each academy will be set an investment reserve target by the relevant Regional Board</li> <li>8. a central reserve will be established as part of the wider risk management strategy</li> <li>9. schools facing short or medium term financial strain may on application access a licenced deficit from the collective reserves subject to repayment and a robust deficit recovery strategy</li> <li>10. the strategy will be managed by the Finance sub committee</li> </ol> <p><b>Action: Clerk to send a copy of the Reserves Policy and FAQs to all governors.</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked Emma Lelliott who left at 5.55pm.</p>

9	<b>Safeguarding update</b>
	<p><b>TPA</b></p> <p>DP updated governors on the safeguarding issues at TPA noting that there are six designated safeguarding leads in the school and that these members of staff meet weekly to discuss safeguarding issues. Currently there are 17 children with a Child Protection Plan, 14 children with a Child in Need Plan, 3 children where other agencies are involved, 5 children with special guardianship arrangements and 2 children who have been assessed as at risk of permanent exclusion. DP explained that safeguarding cluster meeting take place twice a term led by the Trust Safeguarding Lead. These meeting involve talking through case studies, audits and sharing good practice and updates from the DFE.</p> <p>DP confirmed that there were no safeguarding concerns about the TPA site.</p> <p><u>Governors asked if there were any common trends in the cases the school dealt with.</u> DP explained that children tended to be at risk of physical or emotional abuse or domestic abuse.</p> <p><b>Ranikhet</b></p> <p>SD explained that the procedures for weekly safeguarding meetings were the same at Ranikhet and that the caseload was also similar. There has been one child permanently excluded from Ranikhet this year and this is subject to a governors disciplinary review meeting on the 23 November.</p> <p>SD noted that the biggest issue that staff faced was with working in a multiagency team when the social worker or parent worker changed on a frequent basis.</p> <p>SD noted that there had been one safeguarding concern about the site at Ranikhet when BT were accessing one of their boxes on the top sports field and had left the site without putting the ties back in place.</p> <p><b>Civitas</b></p> <p>SD explained that the caseload for safeguarding is small at Civitas but that the biggest issues remained the security of the school site. The request for electronic gates to the staff parking area has been turned down by the Trust as not considered to be a high enough priority.</p> <p>SD explained that they were working closely with the Community Centre users to schedule the timing of activities to avoid times when the children might be outside.</p> <p>SD noted that the school was robust about health and safety and safeguarding for children and that they have put forward a proposal for a Security Officer to work at the school for key hours in the day. A meeting has been arranged with the Reading Health and Safety lead to see what else can be done. BL offered his support with safeguarding and site security issues.</p> <p>SD reported that the fire evacuation procedures have changed and been tested and that the last evacuation had been completed in just over 2 minutes.</p>

	<p>SD noted that the lockdown procedures had highlighted the need for swivel locks on classroom doors and this was being addressed.</p> <p><b>Action: BL to join the Trust safeguarding meeting at Civitas. Civitas ROSE to review safeguarding actions at the meeting on the 30 November.</b></p> <p><u><i>The Chair offered his thanks to staff for the rigour with which they deal with safeguarding concerns across the cluster.</i></u></p>
10	<p><b>Health and safety update</b></p> <p><b>TPA</b>  LT confirmed that the Trust and DFE had completed an annual health and safety audit at TPA. Some queries had been raised about when Reading or REAch2 paperwork should be used. SD confirmed that it had been agreed that LA policies and paperwork would be used unless the Trust had explicitly requested their policy and forms to be adopted. LT confirmed that the audit raised nothing of concern to report to governors.</p> <p><b>Ranikhet/Civitas and TPA</b>  LT reported that lockdown alarms are installed in all three schools and that lockdown procedures have been tested.</p> <p>LT commented on the robustness of the fire safety checks that included scenarios where part of the school was blocked off so staff needed to be aware of alternative fire routes.</p>
11	<p><b>Business continuity plan</b></p> <p>SD reported that there were no changes to the business continuity plan. Each school has identified a partner school in the event of school evacuation.</p>
12	<p><b>Governor training</b></p> <p><u><i>The Chair confirmed that in the Spring Term a date will be arranged for the Regional Governance Adviser to come in to provide training for governors on being Ofsted ready.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>The Chair offered to provide a new governor training workshop in December.</i></u>  <b>Action: Chair to contact RJ/MS and BL to arrange a new governor training workshop at Civitas in December.</b></p>
13	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was one item of other business to discuss the Trust's Schools Causing Concern Strategy.</p> <p>SD explained that due to the staff turnover at Civitas and the KS2 SATs results at TPA both schools were amongst a list of 16 schools that the Trust had deemed were 'causing concern' under their new strategy.</p> <p>Under this strategy the schools have been allocated visits either from the CEO or Deputy CEO and must put in place 30 day plans for improvement. Monitoring visits by the Trust and DfE are planned for 7 December and 9 January.</p> <p>DP explained that there is a whole school culture at TPA where everyone is</p>

<p>responsible for outcomes not just the Year 6 team and that by introducing external standardised yearly tests children are maintaining and improving their test taking skills.</p> <p>JA agreed that at Ranikhet the culture is moving towards a position where everyone understands their responsibility to every child to get them ready for the next stage of their life.</p> <p>SD noted that the focus from the Trust and DFE is welcome but with Ofsted due at Civitas and Ranikhet she was concerned about staff workload and wellbeing.</p> <p>SD stressed the need for governors to validate the information that comes to governors through looking at the evidence in books as well as the data that comes to governors from different sources including external test data.</p> <p>SD confirmed that the cluster target for R/W/M was 70% for KS2.</p> <p>The Chair thanked governors and the meeting came to a close at 6.55pm.</p>
<b>Teaching staff pay awards (part 2)</b>
Teaching staff pay awards were discussed and recorded as a part two minute.
Date of next meeting: <b>18 December 5pm, Ranikhet Academy</b>

### Summary of Actions

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Send a copy of the Reserves Policy and FAQs to all governors.	Clerk	18.12.17
2	Join the Trust safeguarding meeting at Civitas.	Brent Lee	18.12.17
3	Civitas ROSE to review safeguarding actions at the meeting on the 30 November.	Civitas ROSE	30.11.17
4	Contact RJ/MS and BL to arrange a new governor training workshop at Civitas in December.	Chair	15.12.17