

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Strategic Governing Body of
Phoenix Academy and White House Academy
Wednesday 18th January 2017
6pm at White House Academy**

Name	Position	Attendance
Christine Baldock (CB)	Co-opted STEP Governor	Present
Carolyn Bloom (CBI)	Staff Governor, Phoenix Academy	Present
Nikki Dobbs (ND)	Staff Governor, White House Academy	Present
Alun Evans (AE)	Head Teacher, Phoenix Academy	Present
Sarah Hall (SH)	Co-opted STEP Governor	Present (from 6.10pm)
Christopher Taylor (CT)	Parent Governor, Phoenix Academy	Present
Andrea Vance (AV)	Interim Head Teacher, White House Academy	Present
Gareth Ward (GW)	Parent Governor, White House Academy	Present
Valerie Warner (VW)	Co-opted STEP Governor	Present
		Present
Other Attendees		Present
Ben March (BM)	STEP Chief Finance & Operations Officer	Present
John Wentworth (JW)	STEP Executive Head	Present
Ruth Henson (Locum ESCC Governor Services)	Acting Clerk to the SGB	Present
Andy Fisher (AF)	SENCo Phoenix Academy	Present
L Marshall (LM)	Deputy Head Phoenix Academy	Present

STEP First – We are all one Team

1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The clerk welcomed the governors, representatives from STEP and observers to the inaugural meeting of the Strategic Governing Body for Phoenix Academy and White House Academy. Governors and other attendees introduced themselves. All governors were present. Sarah Hall arrived at 6:10</p>
2	<p>Quorum</p> <p>The meeting was quorate</p>
3	<p>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</p>

	<p>The procedure for the election of Chair was followed. Christine Baldock was nominated for the position. To support her nomination, the clerk invited CB to briefly outline her experience and background. CB explained her route to governance at the school and her previous work in schools.</p> <p>Following this, CB was asked to leave the room for governors to discuss her nomination. Governors unanimously agreed that CB became the Chair for the remainder of the academic year.</p> <p>CB thanked governors for their support.</p> <p>The position of Vice Chair was deferred until the end of the meeting.</p> <p>There was a nomination from Sarah Hall. S Hall left the room.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed that S Hall assume the position of Vice Chair for the rest of the academic year.</p>
4	<p>Register of Pecuniary Interests and/or Conflict of Interests</p> <p>Governors completed their 2016/17 pecuniary interest forms with details of their business interests, any other educational establishments that they governed and any relationships to school staff.</p> <p>There were no declarations of any pecuniary or personal interests in any agenda items for this meeting.</p>
5	<p>Strategic Governing Body Membership</p> <p>The following governor appointments as agreed by the STEP Board of Trustees were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sarah Hall, Co-opted Governor ➤ Valerie Warner, Co-opted Governor ➤ Christine Baldock, Co-opted Governor ➤ Christopher Taylor, Parent Governor, Phoenix Academy ➤ Carolyn Bloom, Staff Governor, Phoenix Academy ➤ Gareth Ward, Parent Governor, White House Academy ➤ Nikki Dobbs, Staff Governor, White House Academy <p>Governors were asked to confirm the status of their DBS checks.</p> <p>S Hall and V Warner confirmed they had not yet had back their DBS checks. One was currently with the Phoenix Academy and the Head would look into this.</p> <p>All governors signed a master copy of the Undertaking to the STEP Academy Trust and this was retained by the Clerk.</p>
6	<p>Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Governors noted the strategic governing body and committee terms of reference included within the draft STEP Scheme of Delegation 2016/17.</p>
7	<p>Governor Monitoring Roles and Committee Membership</p>

	<p>Governors agreed to assume the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Christopher Taylor the role of Safeguarding/Children Looked After Governor ➤ Nikki Dobbs the role SEN/Inclusion Governor ➤ Gareth Ward the role of Assessment & Outcomes Governor ➤ Val Warner the role of Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare Governor. S Hall agreed to undertake if the need arose. ➤ Christine Baldock the role of Teaching & Learning <p>In respect of Academy Website Compliance, appointment to this position was deferred although the clerk suggested it might be undertaken as part of clerking responsibilities.</p>
STEP Way – We agree to do things like this	
8	<p>STEP SGB Programme of Works 2016/17</p> <p>The STEP SGB Programme of Works 2016/17 was noted by governors.</p>
9	<p>Academies Financial Handbook 2016</p> <p>The Academies Financial Handbook and key changes for 2016 as summarized on pages 5-7 were noted by governors.</p> <p>This was issued annually by the Education Funding Agency and specified the overall financial requirements for academies.</p>
10	<p>STEP Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Governors noted the 2016/17 Staff Handbooks for each academy</p> <p>Governors noted that STEP Policies approved by the STEP Board of Trustees were available on the Trust’s website</p>
11	<p>Admissions</p> <p>Governors noted that the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Admissions Policies had been approved by the STEP Board of Trustees and was compliant with East Sussex County Council, harmonizing practice with other local schools. It had gone out for consultation.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed to use of ESCC’s independent appeals service.</p>
12	<p>Approval of Residential School Journey</p> <p>The Head of White House Academy asked governors to approve the year 6 residential trip to Rokesbury Park 19th – 21st June. The trip had been costed and parents approached.</p> <p>This was approved.</p> <p>The Head of Phoenix Academy asked governors to approve the year 6 residential trip to Blacklands Farm 17th – 20th July.</p> <p>Governors asked about the costs of the trip and the need for risk assessments.</p> <p>The cost was confirmed as £80 per pupil; transportation costs would be available for the next meeting. Risk assessments were required and the Education Coordinator would need to attend a risk assessment course prior to the risk assessments being undertaken.</p> <p>Governors asked if there was a policy if parents could not afford the outlay.</p> <p>The Head of Phoenix Academy stated that whilst there was no specific policy in place, an inclusive approach was adopted and a payment plan could be drawn up. It was confirmed that any child with Special Educational Needs, (SEN) who needed one to one support would not be debarred</p>

from the trip. Attention to staff ratio was required so that children's needs would be met during the entirety of the residential and opportunity of experience made available.

Governors asked about the role of education visits coordinator and if there was any scope to share the post.

It was confirmed that the position needed to be examined in view of updated requirements; sharing of post responsibilities was possible and suggestions were welcomed as to how to take this forward.

Governors approved Phoenix Academy's Year 6 residential trip to Blacklands Farm.

STEP Up – We all succeed together

13 Head Teachers' Reports (Both had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting)

The Chair asked the Head of Phoenix Academy to take governors through his Head-teacher's report.

The Head picked out salient points on each page and invited governors' questions.

- In respect of Continuing Professional Development page 1, Thrive training would be available. This focused on the development of emotional and wellbeing of children in school.
- Page 2. The Academy Improvement Plan (AIP4) had been given to governors and a summary Self Evaluation made available to governors as an attachment for the meeting.
- In respect of pupils, behaviour was an area for improvement although the survey results showed significant improvement in staff perception this area.
- **Governors noted that there was a drop in the staff wellbeing survey**, from 93% agree to 90% agree, **and asked about the approachability of Senior Leadership Team.**
The Head stated this was an area for investigation.
- In respect of Pupils' Achievement there would be an assessment summary available at the next meeting. The input from Gareth Ward as Assessment and Outcomes Link governor was welcomed on this.
- Page 3. In respect of the curriculum, the priorities for the children were the guiding principles and improvement in reading was seen as crucial. Reading levels were significantly below expected reading ages and part of timetable priority was to narrow the gap in this area.
- There was a six weekly curriculum review of curriculum decisions.
- The recent inset had been useful with all staff having the same input from Tim Mills Step's Head of Teaching and Learning.
- The Head would appreciate governors' challenge in respect of the curriculum and its needs led impact.
- In respect of the Behaviour and Safety of Pupils the ABC (Activate, Believe, Connect) approach had been adopted across the academy and had impacted on all aspects of learning. It allowed for consistency of approach for children to regulate their behaviour and gave them a sense of empowerment.
- There had been a significant drop in the monthly fixed term exclusions although these were still above the national average.
- Governors were welcomed to come into the academy to speak with pupils about the behaviour approach. Accurate feedback from pupils would be supportive to the SLT.
- The Safeguarding Lead in the academy was Andy Fisher.

- **In respect of First Aid and the administration of medicines, governors asked what would happen if the qualified staff person was absent.**
- It was confirmed that another member of staff was timetabled to go on a training course, as soon as available, to ensure that there would be adequate cover in the event of the absence of the one qualified staff member.
- **Governors asked if there was training for Paediatric First Aiders in Mental Health First for children.**
- The Head would look into this. The Head of White House Academy stated that Clare Meredith was a Primary Mental Health Practitioner appointed 3rd January 2017.
- In respect of attendance, whilst there had been some improvement, it remained inadequate.
- The Head Teacher highlighted the impact three children were having on the overall attendance at the academy.
- In respect of ESBAS (East Sussex Behaviour Attendance Service) although the academy had requested support, the service currently had no capacity. One child was being referred to the Flexible learning Provision at College Central but required an assessment from ESBAS first.
- **Thanks were given to the Head of Phoenix Academy for his report.**

The Chair invited the Head of White House Academy to present her report to governors.

- The Head stated that she was the interim Head appointed 3rd January. Her background was in School Improvement and the development of School improvement plans. She had a very visible presence within the academy and was on the gate both morning and afternoon. It was key that all stakeholders knew and invested in what the academy was trying to achieve.
- The Head met weekly with the Inclusion Leaders to review wrap around support and agree actions. The Raising Attainment plan was reviewed every six weeks to ensure its actions were being undertaken.
- A key message was that accountability for standards and expectations was a distributed responsibility.
- More training for support staff on phonics and emergent reading had been identified and since this, there had been improvement in phonics.
- In respect of the website, this was now compliant in respect of statutory obligations.
- Children were wearing the new school uniform with pride and this helped reinforce standards.
- A key aim of the Academy Improvement Plan was to get children secondary ready and to instil a conduct for learning ethos. This required a whole team approach and some conduct was not at the expected level.
- Achievement was not at the expected standard and this was a key priority for the academy.
- **Governors asked for clarity on the figures presented in the Head's report and the feasibility of the predicted increase.**

The Head stated that currently secondary ready represented the current position for year six.

On track to be secondary ready was the projected figure if the children's needs were met through intervention support and booster classes.

	<p>Predicted to be secondary ready were the figures if pupils received lots of booster high quality teaching.</p> <p>Priorities, actions and impact were reviewed at six weekly intervals and the subsequent set identified.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the teaching was good enough for the predictions to be realised. All staff had responsibility for getting the children ready for their learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect of the Quality of Teaching and Learning, the Head’s round of monitoring began this week. There was a coaching model for teachers and CPD would be identified within teachers’ development plans to support their move to the next level. • Attendance was 93% and the academy was working with families to improve this. • Behaviour was recorded in a book daily. This was checked weekly for instances of repetition and actions were taken to help children modify their behaviour. • There was also a celebration of good behaviour. • Governors asked if families were supportive of strategies to improve behaviour. <p>The Head stated that parental response was variable and that there was a culture amongst some parents of sending their children to another school. A collective understanding was required to modify behaviour rather than try and tackle it through child mobility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked where the crisis plan/critical incident plan was kept and what would happen if its accessibility was compromised due to fire. Possible practice could be the issuing of the crisis management plan to all staff. <p>The Head was currently working on systems in respect of locking of the academy gate, and the register which was centrally kept. The Head welcomed the support and sharing of practice from Gareth Ward in this area.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of White House Academy for her report.</p> <p>The Executive Head for the Academies stated that the two Heads had made incredible differences to their schools with their care and commitment to raising standards. There was considerable hope for the future for the two academies, their pupils and their families.</p>
14	<p>Safeguarding (A copy of Keeping Children Safe in Education was circulated with the agenda)</p> <p>Governors were informed they must read, and understand, the DfE document ‘ Keeping Children Safe In Education’ September 2016</p> <p>Action Governors would be asked to sign an undertaking they have done this at the next meeting.</p>
15	<p>Finance Report from Ben March STEP Chief Finance & Operations Officer</p> <p>This was minuted in Part B of the minutes as confidential.</p>
16	<p>Premises</p> <p>The Head of White House Academy referred to the safeguarding audit and the need for a fence between the car-park and the field.</p> <p>The Head of Phoenix Academy had no key points on premises.</p>
17	<p>Academy Improvement Plans (Phoenix Academy AIP circulated with the agenda)</p>

	<p>The Head of Phoenix Academy had five priorities broken down into the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP). Staff had worked on the priorities and actions under these priorities had been agreed by the SLT and staff. Governors would see work on these when they came into the academy. The SEF presented a summary of where the academy was. Achievement was currently inadequate.</p> <p>The Head of White House Academy was in the process of developing an Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) and this would be ready for the next meeting. The key priorities had been identified in the Head's report.</p> <p>Action. In respect of governors' visits linked to the AIPs, it was agreed that individual governors would make arrangements with the Heads of the academies in the first instance.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>The Head of Phoenix Academy reported that targets had been set for staff and there would be a mid-term review in February. For new staff there would be an abridged version. In respect of the Head's performance management a date had been arranged.</p> <p>The Head of White House Academy stated the targets for staff starting in September required review. The cycle of teaching assessment was not yet completed. The monitoring of Teaching and Learning had begun and performance management would become part of this.</p> <p>The Executive Head stated that charting teachers' progression at White House was urgent in respect of pay awards.</p> <p>In respect of the Head Teachers' Performance Management it was agreed that this would involve the Chair of Governors. In the absence of Christine Baldock, Sarah Hall as Vice Chair would be involved.</p>
<p>STEP Ahead – We invest in our future</p>	
<p>19</p>	<p>Feedback from the STEP Board of Trustees</p> <p>On the 15th December, STEP had attended Ofsted feedback following inspection of one of the Junior academies. Whilst the results were a limiting factor, inspectors recognized the huge progress that the school had made and local media reports had been very positive. All STEP academies had a common assessment framework (CAF) for standardizing consistency of practice. This went to the STEP board and SLT meeting.</p> <p>The number of academies within STEP stood at thirteen with pupil population doubled. Growth was organic and in line with the STEP mission and vision. A decision would need to be made as to whether to include secondary academies within the Trust.</p> <p>The STEP principle was to develop services to match the current state of growth, Whilst there might be financial challenge, the trust was in a position to recover quickly. Project management was all done internally to support the London and East Sussex hubs of academies and based on the model of pairs of academies. This enabled the Trust to move more quickly with one governing board for two academies allowing for the sharing of expertise and practice.</p>

	<p>There would be a STEP inset day at the Amex Stadium Brighton on the 10th February 2017. All governors were invited to attend, places to be booked through the schools.</p> <p>Thanks were given to the Executive Head.</p>
20	<p>Governing Body Training</p> <p>The East Sussex Governor training manual had been distributed to governors. V Warner had booked on Governor Induction. C Baldock would book on this.</p> <p>Governors were advised that any travel costs for training would be met by the academies. Action. It was agreed that the governors' audit would be redone in the summer as this helped identify training needs. In the meantime governors would book themselves on courses and could approach John Wentworth, the Executive Head if they required any help.</p>
21	<p>Correspondence to the Chair (if any)</p> <p>There was no correspondence</p>
22	<p>Meeting Impact</p> <p>Governors stated they found the Head-Teachers' reports and information on finance very helpful.</p>
23	<p>Meeting Dates</p> <p>The meeting dates for the rest of the year are as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday 8th March 2017 Wednesday 17th May 2017 Wednesday 12th July 2017</p> <p>G Ward indicated he might be late for the meeting on the 8th March.</p> <p>B March stated that in future the central governance team would look at the governing board meeting dates across all academies in the trust as these need to feed into Trustee meetings.</p>
24	<p>Publication of Minutes</p> <p>The Finance section is confidential (Part B)</p>

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting closed at 7:40.

Summary of Action Points

Agenda Item	Action	Owner	Status
14	Governors to sign undertaking that they have read KCSIE document at next meeting	Chair	High
18	Governors' visits linked to the AIPs, governors to contact the Heads of Academies in first instance	Governors	High

19	STEP inset day at the Amex Stadium Brighton on the 10 th February 2017. Governors to book through academies.	Governors	High
20	Governors' audit to be redone in the summer term	Clerk	Medium

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting	
Chair's Signature	
Chair's Name	
Date	