

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Strategic Governing Body of
Phoenix Academy and White House Academy
Tuesday 5th December 2017 @ 5pm at White House Academy**

| Name | Position | Attendance |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sarah Hall (SH) | Co-opted STEP Governor (Chair) | Present |
| Christine Baldock (CB) | Co-opted STEP Governor | Present |
| Valerie Warner (VW) | Co-opted STEP Governor | Apologies |
| Alun Evans (AE) | Head Teacher, Phoenix Academy | Present (except 7.15-7.25pm) |
| Jayne West (JW) | Head Teacher, White House Academy | Present (except 7.15-7.25pm) |
| Christopher Taylor (CT) | Parent Governor, Phoenix Academy | Present until 6.50pm |
| Nikki Dobbs (ND) | Staff Governor, White House Academy | Present until 7.15pm |
| Gareth Ward (GW) | Parent Governor, White House Academy | Present |
| Lynsey Cooley (LC) | Staff Governor, Phoenix Academy | Apologies |
| Other Attendees | | |
| James Hooper (JH) | STEP Head of Projects & Communication | Present (except 7.15-7.25pm) |
| Sarah Morgan (SM) | Clerk to the SGB | Present |
| Ben March (BM) | Chief Finance & Operations Officer | Present |
| Lynn Bannister (LB) | Business Manager | Present until 7.15pm |
| Bill Langham (BL) | Observer – Prospective new Governor | Present until 7.15pm |
| Shaun Bowler (SB) | Observer – Prospective new Governor | Present until 7.15pm |

| No. | Agenda Item | Action |
|---|--|------------------|
| STEP First – We are all one Team | | |
| 1 | <p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u> SH welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Bill Langham and Shaun Bowler, who were considering applying to become Co-opted Governors and were attending as observers. Apologies had been received from VW and LC and these were accepted.</p> <p>JW explained the evacuation procedures should the fire alarm sound.</p> | |
| 2 | <p><u>Quorum</u> SM established that the meeting was quorate.</p> | |
| 3 | <p><u>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and/or Conflict of Interests</u> The 2017/18 Pecuniary Interests list had been previously distributed. CB declared an additional interest and she would forward this to SM. SH had recently changed her role and SM would amend this on the list.</p> <p>There were no interests declared by those present regarding agenda items.</p> | CB SM |
| 4 | <p><u>STEP Scheme of Delegation</u> Governors noted the draft Scheme of Delegation, which had been circulated and was a lengthy document. This was due to be approved by Trustees later in the month. SH encouraged governors to read the parts applicable to the SGB, especially the grid of responsibility. The document provided a good source for governors to refresh their knowledge of the job descriptions and responsibilities</p> | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | (governors should read the job descriptions before a visit). SH and AE acknowledged that the document was very thorough and useful. SH had highlighted some questions and these had been forwarded on to the Trustees for a response. | |
| 5 | <p><u>STEP Governance / SGB Membership</u></p> <p>a) Governor Vacancies SH was currently the Interim Chair but, due to a change in her job, she was now in a position to take on the role on a more permanent basis. ND nominated SH for the position of Chair and GW seconded the proposal. SH was unanimously elected as Chair of Governors on a show of hands. SH was thanked for her continued support.</p> <p>There were no volunteers for the position of Vice Chair and so this position would remain unfilled. AE, JW and SH to discuss further.</p> <p>Noted that there were still vacancies for Co-opted Governors and SH asked BL and SB to introduce themselves and give some background. BL had been a governor since 1987 across three different schools in Surrey where he had been Chair and Vice Chair. His employment covered the Police, the Ambulance Service and funeral director (family business). SB had his own businesses and his wife and mother were teachers.</p> <p>b) The Trust Governor System SM informed Governors that STEP had invested in a new online IT platform, The Trust Governor. The system would store all meeting papers securely, to view during meetings, thereby eliminating the need to print. Governors would also be able to access and amend their own profiles on the system (SM had already pre-populated the data). A demonstration session on the new system had been scheduled for Wednesday 10th January @ 6pm at High Cliff Academy and all governors were strongly encouraged to attend.</p> <p>c) STEP email addresses Governors had already been notified that only STEP email addresses would be used for governor business from 1st December. SH was still waiting for the IT Department to contact her regarding setting up STEP emails on her mobile phone. SM to chase.</p> | <p>AE/JW /SH</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>SM</p> |
| 6 | <p><u>Feedback from the STEP Board of Trustees</u> Copies of the draft STEP Board of Trustees meeting minutes from September had been circulated along with an update and STEP Compass summary, for information. Ben March, Chief Finance & Operations Officer, was welcomed to the meeting as the Trust's representative as Paul Glover was attending another meeting in London. BM highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How STEP was one team, working together consistently • BM mentioned the new Chair and Vice Chair of the STEP Board of Trustees (reported at previous meeting) • High level objectives had been set for the CEO, Mark Ducker and these covered 'one team', the compass and the wider community • The STEP Compass with the Mission, Vision and Values, was at the heart of everything • The Trustees' current focus was the STEP Standard (outer rim of the compass) and this was being considered this year and expectations would be circulated in due course • A robust strategy was being set for the East Sussex schools | |
| STEP Way – We agree to do things like this | | |
| 7 | <p><u>Admissions</u> There were no reception applications for 'Outside of Age Group' to consider.</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| <p>8</p> | <p><u>STEP Policies and Procedures</u></p> <p>Governors noted that the following STEP Policies had been reviewed, updated and approved by the Board of Trustees and were available on the STEP website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Safeguarding Policy ➤ Communications Policy ➤ Anti-Bullying Policy ➤ Attendance Policy ➤ EYFS Policy ➤ Intimate Care Policy ➤ Investment Policy ➤ Off Site Policy ➤ Positive Handling Policy ➤ E-Safety & Social Media Policy <p>CT reported that he had been previously concerned that the links to some STEP policies on the Academy websites had not been working. However, he was pleased to update that all links were now working.</p> | |
| <p>9</p> | <p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>SM had circulated a safeguarding training list and she confirmed that all governors had undertaken relevant training in 2017. CB, SH and CT were still to complete the safer recruitment online training and AE requested that this be addressed before the next meeting.</p> <p>CT reported that East Sussex had produced a new format for the safeguarding audit and this needed completing by January. PA had completed theirs the previous day but WHA were still to complete theirs (the previous version had been done in September).</p> <p>CT had carried out safeguarding audits for both academies (attached). Referring to the key issues arising for the SGB for Phoenix, CT reported that the links had been rectified and the visitors leaflet had been produced. The Academy were sourcing a new CCTV system and they would report back to governors with the quotes.</p> <p>Referring to the key issues arising for the SGB for White House, CT talked about an area outside where pupils did not feel safe. This was in the corner of the field and some pupils reported others opening the gate onto the road. However, JW said this was always locked. Pupils had also reported others speaking to strangers through the fence but staff had not witnessed this. JW confirmed that there was always a member of staff present when pupils were outside and she was surprised that this had been raised. CT suggested that an inside boundary of cones could be placed in the playground as had been done at Phoenix Academy. JW added that all pupils had received NSPCC training about online safeguarding and AE and ND confirmed that there were very strong filters in place.</p> <p>SH had recently attended an area governor forum meeting and heard how the Vice Chair at the Community College had been working with Hailsham schools on safeguarding issues. SH would pass on their contact details to CT.</p> <p>CT reported that a check of the White House single central record showed that a personnel file of a new member of staff was missing a health clearance document. This had been flagged as missing and JW confirmed that this had now been addressed. Similarly, the training register had not been to hand and JW confirmed that this was now in the front of the file.</p> <p>Finally, JW confirmed that CCTV was in use at WHA, internally and externally, and this had in fact, been used for an incident that day. CT was thanked for his report.</p> | <p>CB/SH /CT</p> <p>SH</p> |

10 Educational Standards

Governors had received an Assessment Update documenting the changes in assessment. Any questions should be forwarded to AE.

a) Head Teacher Reports

A new format for Head Teacher Reports had been introduced and two reports circulated. This would enable easy comparison of data in the future.

ai) Phoenix Academy

AE highlighted the following:

- Rapid improvement was being made in several areas
- Outcomes were significantly below average. There was a legacy issue but outcomes were expected to improve this year
- There had been significant staff movement last year
- 19 pupils attended the Nursery last year. Currently, there were only six
- With 46 spaces across the school, AE had to accept three pupils who had had fixed term exclusions at other schools. However, they had been successfully integrated and had received no FTE yet
- During terms 1 and 2 in 2016, there had been days of exclusion last year. This had reduced to eight days during the same terms in 2017. AE was grateful to Paul Glover for his support (legal support was available for exclusions)
- It was noted that, if extra pupils were admitted after the census, the funding for them would not be received until the following year. This would cause issues if the pupils had high needs and required support
- All teachers were working at the teacher standard
- Staff absence was high (two members in particular). Governors should question this in future when comparable data was presented
- 2018 targets had been set with Jennese Alozie, STEP Head of Standards
- There had been six exclusions this term, five for the same child. This child had now received a placement with the Local Authority for two days a week and attended Phoenix for the other three days. SH was notified of all exclusions

Questions / comments from governors:

- Was there a specific reason for the drop off in nursery numbers? AE felt that this was most likely due to Phoenix only offering morning sessions (parents were entitled to 30 hours provision for free). Noted that the Early Years Leader supported both academies
- Was six pupils in the Nursery sustainable? AE reported that STEP were considering options for September. Would the Nursery be viable even with full time pupils and no spaces? What would it take to make it viable? JH had carried out a study and he would report back to governors in March
- What were the benefits of having a Nursery? AE explained that pupils were far better prepared for Reception if they had been in the school for an extra year. JH emphasised that schools provided the best nursery provision
- Request - Could the report note the dates covered please
- Request - Regarding staff absence, it would be helpful to include the number of staff the figures related to

JH

aii) White House Academy

JW reported on the following:

- She had completed her report with AE
- Mobility continued to have a negative impact
- A teaching action plan had been implemented

- Attendance was an issue, in particular with one parent who was refusing to send their child back to school after several incidences
- A completely unfounded allegation had been made against a member of staff. This had been investigated and subsequently passed on to the Police due to the false accusation. Staff felt vulnerable

Questions / comments from governors:

- SH questioned the timing of the SGB meetings as this one fell too early to receive the latest data drops. Future meetings should be reviewed and AE to raise with Trustees and SM to raise with the Governance Team
- Was the County's 'Get a Grip' campaign, which focused on school attendance, promoted by the Academies? AE felt that this was aimed more at secondary pupils and they had not given out the leaflets
- ND raised the issue of current pupil-teacher ratios. She emphasised the difficulties in running at the current staffing levels. Staff were pulling together but ND felt that she could not physically give the attention to all pupils that she should be (she was unable to work with more able pupils, for example). JW responded that the SENCo was looking at provision but there was currently a backlog of processing as historically, children with additional needs had not been picked up

AE/SM

AE and JW were thanked for presenting their reports.

c) Timetable for getting to 'Outstanding'

AE explained that outstanding was the long term goal but this may not be achieved for three to four years and could not be dated at this stage. Governors needed to ensure that aspirational targets were set and the Academies were making rapid improvements.

d) 2018 KS1 and KS2 Targets

These had already been agreed in September.

h) Lead Governor Reports

Standards

GW had carried out Assessment and Outcomes Audits at both Academies during the last fortnight. He talked through his reports and these would be distributed to governors after the meeting.

GW/
SM

Pupil Premium

CB had circulated two visit reports relating to Pupil Premium at both Academies. An additional audit was to be completed. CB reported that Phoenix were 'narrowing the gap'. At White House, Andy Fisher had been in charge of pupil premium since September. He and JW had drawn parents' attention to the funding, encouraging eligible parents to sign up at parent evenings.

SEND / Inclusion

ND and LC had not had an opportunity to carry out a visit due to workload. They would attempt to complete this soon.

LAC

CT reported that there were no LACs at White house but two at Phoenix (in Years 4 and 6). Neither were making expected or better progress and support strategies had been discussed. One pupil had received no exclusions and the other eight days in 2015/16, two in 2016/17 and none in 2017/18. AE added that one pupil had now moved schools.

i) Ofsted Framework

SM had sent out three relevant documents that day, for information.

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| | <p><u>j) STEP Code of Conduct</u> AE confirmed that all staff had completed the STEP Code of Conduct Declaration at the September INSET day. CT to verify this on his next visit.</p> | CT |
| 11 | <p><u>Academy Improvement Plans</u> The AIPs had been presented, discussed and approved at the previous meeting.</p> <p>Governors would contact the Head Teachers to arrange their Spring term monitoring visits. Safeguarding would be in the first two weeks of term and Standards would be after the next data drop.</p> <p>Regarding the next Governor Day, SH emphasised that this needed a purpose. Date to be set at the next meeting.</p> | SM |
| 12 | <p><u>Website Compliance</u> VW had carried out website audits for both Academies (attached). SH noted that there was some old information on the governance page of the WHA website. LB to remove. SH also felt that the governors page was 'buried'. JW suggested adding a governor 'spot' to the home page. LB to action.</p> <p>CT left the meeting at this point (6.50pm).</p> | LB LB |
| 13 | <p><u>Financial Management</u> A confidential minute was taken for this item.</p> | |
| 14 | <p><u>Premises</u> There were no premises items to discuss.</p> | |
| STEP Ahead – We invest in our future | | |
| 15 | <p><u>Governing Body Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors acknowledged that the recent STEP training sessions on 'The role of STEP Governor/HT Reports and Assessment' plus 'Finance' had been useful • SH had booked to attend two ESCC training sessions but both had been cancelled. She had however, attended a Governors' Forum and this had been interesting • Two STEP training sessions had been arranged for the Spring term; Introduction to The Trust Governor System on Wednesday 10th January and Safeguarding, changed from Tuesday 27th February to Thursday 1st March • Regarding future training needs, these could be addressed through Governor Days. Noted that there was much documentation available from STEP and governors should take some time to refer to relevant documents <p><u>Governor Day</u> Governors had attended their first Governor Day in October and VW had circulated a report. CB had found the day very useful but did feel the lunch was poor (she would re-visit to try again). ND stated that there had been several issues with the lunches including transportation from Phoenix, and JW confirmed that this was being looked into.</p> <p>SH felt that the day had been somewhat rushed and she would have liked more time for the audit. AE agreed that the programme set should probably have been split over two visits. The audit would be repeated during the summer term Governor Day.</p> | |
| 16 | <p><u>SGB Self Evaluation for 2016/2017</u> Governors acknowledged receipt of the completed evaluation. It was suggested that the evaluation be repeated between the next two Governor Days. SM to arrange.</p> | SM |

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 17 | <u>Correspondence to the Chair</u> SH confirmed that she had not received any relevant correspondence. | |
| 18 | <u>Previous Minutes and Matters Arising</u> The minutes from the previous meeting held on 20 th September were approved and signed. SH confirmed that the Trustees were happy for Chairs of Governors to attend their board meetings, as observers. All other action points had been addressed. | |
| 19 | <u>Any Other Urgent Business</u> SH reported that, at the recent Governor Forum, student and staff mental health and well-being had been discussed and SH questioned whether this should be a future agenda item? Should this be centrally driven? BM responded that this could feature in a staff survey, which would then be followed up by the Trust Standards Team (there was an 80% staff response previously. Additionally, CB noted that students' well-being was covered through Thrive and the Head Teacher Reports. SH suggested that governors bear this issue in mind throughout future meetings. | |
| 20 | <u>Meeting Impact</u> SH felt that the meeting was rushed as there were so many agenda items with the important ones not being given the time they deserved. AE acknowledged that more time had been spent on the Head Teacher Reports this time as these were a new format which he felt he should run through. In future though, there would be an expectation that governors would have read the reports and be ready with questions. JH agreed with this and suggested not going through papers that had already been circulated but rather, give a brief synopsis and invite questions. BM felt that the brief finance report delivered earlier had been the correct length as the work had been completed elsewhere and highlights only needed bringing to the attention of governors with questions then invited. BM added that, for a relatively new SGB, they were doing a tremendous job and he did not feel the meeting was overly rushed. Finally, AE suggested that future meetings should focus on the governor audits completed as these contained much information and actions. | |
| 21 | <u>Next Meeting Date</u> The SGB would next meet on Monday 22 nd January 2018 @ 6pm at Phoenix Academy. | |
| 22 | <u>Publication of Minutes</u> Items concerning specific staffing plus finances would be recorded as confidential (Part B). | |
| 23 | <u>Confidential Matters</u> BL and SB were thanked for attending the meeting as observers and they left the meeting at this point along with JH, LB, AE, JW and ND (7.15pm). A confidential minute was taken. | |

The meeting closed at 7.30pm
SM 271217

Summary of Action Points

| <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Action</u> | <u>Owner</u> | <u>Status</u> |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 | <i>CB to forward additional business interest to SM and SM to add this and SH's amended interest to the list</i> | <i>CB/SM</i> | <i>Completed</i> |
| 5 | <i>AE, JW and SH to discuss further, the position of Vice Chair</i> | <i>AE/JW/SH</i> | <i>High</i> |
| 5 | <i>Governors to attend demonstration session on TTG</i> | <i>ALL</i> | <i>High</i> |
| 5 | <i>SM to chase IT Department re. SH phone access to STEP emails</i> | <i>SM</i> | <i>Chased</i> |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9 | <i>CB, SH and CT to complete safer recruitment training before next meeting</i> | <i>CB/SH/CT</i> | <i>By next meeting</i> |
| 9 | <i>SH to pass on safeguarding contact to CT</i> | <i>SH</i> | <i>Completed</i> |
| 10 | <i>JH to report back in Spring on Nursery viability</i> | <i>JH</i> | <i>Spring</i> |
| 10 | <i>AE to raise meeting timings with Trustees and SM, with the Governance Team</i> | <i>AE/SM</i> | <i>Completed</i> |
| 10 | <i>SM to circulate GW's audit reports</i> | <i>GW/SM</i> | <i>Completed</i> |
| 10 | <i>CT to verify that all staff had completed the STEP Code of Conduct Declaration</i> | <i>CT</i> | <i>Medium</i> |
| 11 | <i>SM to add Governor Day scheduling to next agenda</i> | <i>SM</i> | <i>Completed</i> |
| 12 | <i>LB to make two amendments to the WHA website</i> | <i>LB</i> | <i>High</i> |
| 16 | <i>SM to arrange SGB evaluation between next two Governor Days</i> | <i>SM</i> | <i>Early Summer</i> |

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