



## MEETING OF THE ASPIRE ACADEMY COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Venue: Aspire Academy

Time: 4.00pm

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**Present:** Wendy Middlemas (Chair), Sheryl Cardwell, Michael Carey, Felicity Greeves, Catherine Hill, Bob Keen, Colin Simkins (Principal)  
**Together with:** Kath Buddle (FCAT Governance Administrator and minute taker)  
**Apologies:** Alana Frith

### Action

#### 1. Preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and particularly Bob Keen, the new Parent Governor, and Felicity Greeves, who is replacing Tony Nicholson as the Executive Principal at Aspire.
- 1.2 Apologies from Alana Frith were noted.
- 1.3 It was noted that Steve Parsons had tendered his resignation as a Sponsor Governor and that there was a need to find a replacement as soon as possible.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Felicity Greeves declared her positions as a Governor on the Unity Academy Council and as a representative on the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Board.

#### 3. Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) Promotional Film

Governors viewed a recently produced film promoting the work of FCAT, its ethos and vision for the future. The film included student and staff perspectives and aimed to demonstrate the journey travelled over the last 18 months.

FG explained that 390 FCAT teaching staff had seen the film at an away day just prior to the start of term and that the film would be shown to all FCAT academies' governors.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved.

#### 5. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

**5.1 Link to Fischer Family Trust online training programme** (Item 2 from the minutes) – the Clerk confirmed that the link for this and information about two Fylde Coast Teaching School twilight courses for Governors had been circulated.

**5.2 Proposals for FCAT's consideration** (Item 2 from the minutes) – the Chair reported that concerns raised at the previous meeting had been forwarded to FCAT and subsequently acted upon. A revised Scheme of Delegation and Code of Conduct were due to be approved by FCAT Directors at their meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015. An analysis of FCAT governor skills would be brought to the next round of academy council meetings. This



would influence a training programme for FCAT governors though a significant amount of training would be delivered at the forthcoming Away Day on 11th March 2016. In response to the request for a process whereby Governors could be kept informed of general FCAT developments, a regular agenda item to prompt discussion on this had been added to the Academy Council agenda templates.

The Chair explained that she was in the process of developing a draft quality assurance framework for use by the Academy Council. FG welcomed this as a potential model for all three academy councils.

- 5.3 Website page for Governors** (Item 3 from the minutes) – Governors confirmed that they had access to the web page. The Clerk agreed to check out Mr Keen's access.

Clerk

### **Challenge**

In response to a question about the Pay Policy, which was originally identified as an agenda item for this meeting, the Clerk explained that this had not yet been finalised but would be brought to the next meeting for information.

Clerk

## **6. Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

- 6.1** The minutes of the meeting were approved.

## **7. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

- 7.1 Proposal for Governors to support the review of work presentation and book scrutiny as identified in DfE visit report** (Item 8.1 from the minutes) – the Chair explained that this would be one of the areas to be scrutinised by Governors at a future meeting.

- 7.2 Budget projections for future years** (Item 9.2 from the minutes) – FG confirmed that the budget was healthy and transfers to the Reserves had been made.

- 7.3 Risk Register** (Item 10 from the minutes) – regular reports from the Risk Register would be brought to future meetings.

*John Woods, Assistant Principal: Achievement joined the meeting for the next item.*

## **8. Teaching and Learning**

### **8.1 Review of Summer 2015 Examination Results**

John Woods, Assistant Principal: Achievement provided a summary of the recent GCSE examination results. Only 39% of students had achieved five A\* - C grades including Maths and English which was disappointing as the predictions had been 45%. However, the 39% matched the performance in the mock examinations. All three separate Science subjects had only just failed to meet targets by 3%, though results in Core Science and Additional Science had been more disappointing, missing targets by 32% and 28% respectively. Maths too was an area of concern for the Academy.

GCSE French, Geography, Dance and Religious Studies had performed better than expected as had BTEC Music and Travel and Tourism. Performance in History had been disappointing at 14% less than the target prediction. It was noted, however, that a lot of results had only just missed the target predictions and that if grade boundaries had remained the same



as last year, would likely have improved towards national floor targets.

### **Challenges**

In response to a question about the potential to improve results through the appeals process, the Assistant Principal explained that re-marking so far had raised achievement by just 0.4%, though the Academy was still waiting to hear results of appeals for six GCSE English results.

Asked about how the results compared with last year's results, the Assistant Principal explained that they were roughly the same as last year (40% for the two schools – Bispham High and Collegiate - combined).

In response to a question about the reasons for the poor results in some areas, the Assistant Principal informed Governors that the level of ability and knowledge of students coming into Year 7 was inconsistent, particularly in Maths and that the Academy needed to focus on this to ensure adequate improvement where necessary. Asked if the Academy carried out further baseline testing once the students came into Year 7, the Assistant Principal confirmed that this had not happened this year but that there was an opportunity to target students as required in the future. The Principal acknowledged that the focus this year had been on improving English, in which the Academy had achieved a 58% A\* - C grade pass rate, possibly at the expense of Maths. This had now been rectified and work was in place across each year group to address the shortfall in Maths.

Governors noted that the final results for many of the subjects mirrored the statistics at Data Collection Point 3 and queried the accuracy of the data being collected at Data Collection Point 4. The Assistant Principal explained that Data Collection Point 3 was informed by the results of mock examinations as opposed to teacher assessments as at Data Collection Point 4. The Academy Council agreed that reliability of data was paramount and suggested that the results from the mock exams might provide a more realistic baseline in terms of predicting final grades.

Asked about the reasons for success in the three separate Science disciplines as opposed to the Core and Additional Science courses, the Assistant Principal explained that only the highest ability students were entered into the separate Science exams so would perform better than students taking the other Science exams.

In response to a question about Progress 8, the Assistant Principal confirmed that this would measure levels of progress attained by students in the future and that the figure was set for the Academy by the DfE. FG explained that the Academy might be in a position to challenge the targets set if they were felt to be unrealistic.

Asked about the results in IT, the Assistant Principal reminded Governors that the Academy had inherited 13 different sets of students all studying slightly different curricula around the subject and that the actual GCSE IT course had only been taught from April 2015. The Academy has already reviewed its IT provision and made radical amendments for the delivery of this subject over the coming year.

In response to a question about the performance of students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, the Assistant Principal confirmed that the gap between these and non Pupil Premium students had narrowed but that this



was due, in part, to the poor performance of non Pupil Premium students. Special Educational Needs (SEN) students had matched the performance of non SEN students which was encouraging and reflected the focus on SEN improvement by the Academy and FCAT.

There had also been some examples of exceptional individual performance with one student achieving 100% in Biology and Chemistry and 93% in Physics as well as 100% in History and English Literature.

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal for his report and asked that thanks and congratulations be passed on to staff as appropriate.

*The Assistant Principal left the meeting.*

*Catherine Hill gave apologies and left the meeting.*

## **8.2 Principal's Report**

The Principal provided a summary of his Report outlining the good start to the new academic year and improvements in student attendance and punctuality.

17 staff had left the Academy towards the end of last year and 10 new staff had started, including graduates from the Teach First Programme, which worked with high achieving graduates to find them opportunities in challenging schools nationwide. The recruitment of new and enthusiastic staff had stimulated a positive atmosphere in the Academy and a confidence that teaching and learning standards would improve.

An Open Evening was planned at the current Academy site on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and a promotion event for existing and potential new parents at the new site between 11.00am and 2.00pm on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015.

The Principal reported that he had been disappointed with the recent results but acknowledged the efforts of the staff who had worked exceptionally hard to achieve those gained. He explained that the Government agenda was now focussed towards the core subjects and that these would form the basis of the timetable for the year. Staff had proved themselves to be very resilient and were committed to the challenges in the year ahead. A number of exceptional future leaders had been identified and he was convinced that this would prove beneficial to FCAT over time.

There was some concern about the impact on student progress of the move to the new Academy building which would take place in October/November. The current site is due for closure at 3.30pm on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October therefore students cannot be taught in school on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October so a 2 day programme of aspirational activities for students off site has been planned. Due to the fact that staff are not able to access the new site before being trained on systems in the new building students will not be allowed to return to school after the half term holiday until Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November. Parents have been informed of these changes and would be reminded again in the Principal's imminent Newsletter.

The Principal acknowledged that the quality of teaching had not been strong enough the previous year and that this was the major focus for the Academy



this year. Classroom observations and training linked to leadership would increase this year.

The Academy had received praise for its Pupil Premium Programme from Sean Bullen, Principal at Millfield Science and Performing Arts College, and a nationally recognised expert in this field. The proportion of Pupil Premium students was 68%, the third highest in the North West and a significant issue for the Academy. Performance of Pupil Premium students was running parallel with non Pupil Premium students in Years 10 and 11 and in the lower school, Pupil Premium students were out performing non Pupil Premium students. A full report on Pupil Premium would be brought to the next meeting by the Deputy Principal (D.H.C).

Clerk  
(agenda)

### Challenge

Asked about how the off site activities on the 2 Aspirational Days (22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October) might impact on student attendance, the Principal reassured Governors that arrangements had been made to ensure that attendance at the activities counted as attendance at the Academy. Governors discussed the potential for alternatives to the students to be off site after half term for 3 days but agreed that there were no other options. They commended the student programme that had been developed. Following a suggestion from Governors, the Principal agreed to strengthen the message about the logistics of the move in his current newsletter.

## 9. Strategy and Governance

### 9.1 Academy Action Plan 2014-2015 – final update

Governors reviewed the Action Plan for the previous year which had been Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rated in terms of achievements. The Principal reminded Governors that the Plan had been developed by himself and the Executive Principal at the time and had been linked to DfE requirements.

### Challenges

Asked about Priority 5.1 (improve Literacy and Numeracy skills across the Academy) which had been rated Red/Amber, the Principal explained that, although improving, there was still work to be done to address literacy, particularly at Key Stage 3. This was an Ofsted requirement and an important area for the Academy.

Asked about Priority 5.3 (creation of high quality schemes of work for all learners), the Principal explained that this had been scored Red/Amber because at the time of publication not all the schemes had been completed. However, this action had since been fully concluded and could now be re-graded Green.

### 9.2 Academy Improvement Plan 2015-2016

The Principal summarised the key points from the action plan for this academic year which had been informed by the recent exam results and aligned to the Open Academies Visit on 1 June 2015, Ofsted and School Evaluation Form (SEF) themes.

### Challenges

Following a discussion on the potential to reduce the number of permanent exclusions at the Academy, the Principal agreed to include this as an outcome under Priority 4: Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare.

Asked about how the Plan would be measured for impact, the Principal



Action

explained that a more detailed plan of action to meet the priorities would be developed for staff by Half Term and shared with the Academy Council members at the next meeting.

Clerk  
(agenda)

Governors approved the Plan and the circulation of it to parents, once acronyms had been explained.

**9.3 Pupil Premium Review**

Governors considered a report on Pupil Premium audits carried out across all three FCAT academies by Sean Bullen in June and July 2015. The quality of documentation and the clarity of roles and responsibilities in respect of Pupil Premium at Aspire had been praised.

A full update report on Pupil Premium would be brought to the next meeting.

**9.4 Chair's feedback on FCAT developments**

The Chair reported that she had requested a meeting with the Chair of Unity Academy to discuss their recent Ofsted visit and any learning that could be transferred over to Aspire in advance of an inspection here.

The next FCAT Directors meeting would take place on 24<sup>th</sup> September and the Chair would report back any issues to the next Academy Council meeting.

**9.5 Renewal of Register of Interests**

The Clerk was asked to chase outstanding returns from Governors.

Clerk

**9.6 Review of Governor Responsibilities**

Following a brief discussion, the following positions were approved:

- Safeguarding Governor – Alana Frith
- Vice Chair – Alana Frith
- SEN Governor – Mick Carey
- Pupil Premium Governor – Wendy Middlemas

Governors were informed that English as an Additional Language (EAL) was becoming an increasingly significant issue for the Academy and that there might be a need to appoint an EAL Governor position in the future.

**9.7 Proposed Published Admission Number (PAN) for 2017 – 2018**

A PAN of 180 (same as for 2016-17) was confirmed for 2017-18.

**10. Departmental Challenge**

Following a brief discussion, Governors agreed to review the performance of Expressive and Performing Arts (EPA) and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at the next meeting and asked the Principal to provide 15 minutes presentations from each of the respective subject leads.

Principal

*Mick Carey gave his apologies and left the meeting.*

**11. Review of Risks**

The following risks were identified:

- Move to the new building
- Performance of identified subject areas
- Impact of Progress 8
- Imminently awaited Ofsted visit.



Action

**12. Date and Time of next meeting**

Day: Wednesday

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Time: 4.00pm

Venue: New Aspire Academy building

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_