



**BOLDER ACADEMY**  
**FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING MINUTES**

**Company Registered Number: 8932893**

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**Chair:** Andrew Dodge  
**Clerk:** Rebecca Wilson (RW)  
**Date of meeting:** 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 8am  
**Venue:** Bolder Academy

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**Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Governor</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Present / Apologies / Absent</b>
Rob Collie (RC)	Appointed by Trust		Present
Andrew Dodge (AD)	Appointed by Trust		Present
Victoria Eadie (VE)	Appointed by Trust	Also a Member	Present
Fran Heaphy (FH)	Staff Governor		Present
Jo Killingley (JK)	Parent Governor		Present
Andrew McCaffer (AM)	Co-opted Governor		Present
Wendy Smith (WS)	Appointed by Trust		Present
Heidi Swidenbank (HS)	Ex-officio	Headteacher	Present
Eileen Sheedy (ES)	Appointed by Trust		Apologies
Birinder Tember (BT)	Parent Governor		Present
Kate Biant (KB)		School Business Manager	Present

The meeting was declared quorate.

Agenda item	Action
<p><b>1. Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted for ES.</p>	
<p><b>2. Declaration of interest</b></p> <p>No Governor declared an interest that may conflict with the meeting agenda.</p>	
<p><b>3. Membership</b></p> <p>AD highlighted the requirement to have additional capacity on the Board to support succession planning. The Chair appointment also needs to be looked at in time, and there is also value in having input from new governors. He acknowledged the importance of actively managing a larger Board, to ensure it works well during a period of transition. The Board unanimously agreed to co-opt the following Governors with immediate effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Andrew McCaffer</li> <li>- Rajiv Chandra</li> <li>- Kay Grewal</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Minutes of previous meeting (1 Feb 22)</b></p> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>5. Matters arising/actions</b></p> <p>The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Governor visit.</b> JK to visit the school in February to discuss the impact of the diversity workshops with students. <u>This visit will take place in the summer term.</u></li> <li>- <b>Staff retention.</b> <u>AD will send a letter to all teaching staff seeking strategic feedback regarding retention.</u></li> <li>- <b>Governor induction.</b> RW will add new Governors to the NGA.</li> <li>- <b>Governor emails.</b> <u>RW will resolve the ongoing issue with RC email.</u></li> </ul>	<p>JK</p> <p>AD</p> <p>RW</p> <p>RW</p>
<p><b>6. Headteacher Report / SEF</b></p> <p>HS highlighted that her report was longer than normal, explained that it had been an opportunity to reflect on and prepare for Ofsted. Exit interviews have been undertaken and all staff who leave Bolder have a 1:1 meeting. Strengths and positive feedback focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School ethos and values</li> <li>- Students</li> <li>- SLT – well supported</li> <li>- Workload – mixed feedback</li> </ul> <p>More negative feedback focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workload – staff who are new to teaching highlighted this, alongside the balance with additional responsibility.</li> <li>- Staff have left teaching for new opportunities.</li> <li>- Feedback was mixed regarding middle leaders.</li> </ul> <p>AD referred to the Headteacher’s Report and asked for questions, highlighting that <b>Quality of Education</b> was the first section.</p>	

Q: A Governor highlighted that science and English were strengths of the school but were not highlighted as such in the report.

A: HS explained that the four subjects listed as strengths will be highlighted to Ofsted for a deep dive; she further outlined this process.

Q: A Governor queried the other areas of focus for Ofsted.

A: HS explained that this depends on the day, noting that staff absence is a consideration.

Referring to the **Behaviour and Attitudes** section, a Governor highlighted that the focus was on text, and a summary of data would be valuable. HS confirmed that she will look at adding an appendix, detailing this information. She also highlighted that low self-esteem and self-confidence amongst students was a concern, recognising the challenges that families are managing. Place2Be provide councillor and therapy support to students, and they also work with families and offer workshops; a second support group is being considered. VE recognised that additional family support is a priority across all schools.

Q: A Governor queried the impact of staff turnover on students.

A: HS explained that teachers have yet to leave, and this would not be easy to measure. VE highlighted that there was scope to capture the impact of mid-year moves in the short term, and HS confirmed that English classes will increase for the summer term, recognising that initially class sizes were small.

Q: A Governor further queried the impact on learning.

A: HS explained that the level of staff absence has had the biggest impact.

Q: A Governor highlighted that half of all internal exclusions sit against Year 8 and asked if the year group had been more affected by the pandemic.

A: HS explained that Year 9 has had to manage the greatest impact from the pandemic. She confirmed that data analysis is more detailed and is managed on an individual basis.

VE highlighted that schools do not necessarily put their strongest staff against Year 8, and FH recognised the emotional and behavioural support required by Year 8.

VE confirmed that it was the same for Year 7.

Referring to **Attendance**, it was noted that staff absence continues to be high.

Q: A Governor queried to what extent staff absence was down to the pandemic.

A: HS confirmed that it was a mixed picture; currently three members of staff are off with COVID-19.

Q: A Governor asked if parental resistance to the introduction of unisex toilets has lessened.

A: HS explained that last week parental resistance was focused on a different issue; the focus tends to fluctuate.

AD asked for an explanation for newer governors regarding the Gatsby Framework. HS explained that this was essentially a careers programme against which all schools are expected to deliver; she outlined the approach in greater detail. HS confirmed that the school was managing a fluctuating picture due to mobility, and there is also a pattern of pupils returning to home education.

Q: A Governor queried what was meant by home education.

A: HS explained that some pupils may have been signed off through CAMHS. Alternatively, they may be accessing the Woodbridge offer, which has scope to provide outreach. VE confirmed that for vulnerable pupils this was a very positive offer.

Q: A Governor queried why home education would be a red flag to Ofsted.

A: HS explained that Ofsted are critical of schools that actively off roll.

HS highlighted that staff had provided positive feedback from a recent staff survey regarding workload and wellbeing.

AD referred to the recent Ofsted publication 'Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent Absence' and confirmed that the school is addressing all its recommendations. HS added that the school's approach is also supported by the safeguarding report.

HS

## **7. FAR Committee Report**

RC confirmed that the accounts were still running a deficit. He explained that there is risk in relation to energy costs, and the school is considering joining a bigger group of organisations managed through a broker to secure a more competitive deal. The Board agreed to this approach in principle, noting that the level of commitment to Zenergy Buyers Club has yet to be agreed; the Board will agree the final details by email. RC highlighted that the school was looking to TPET for ongoing financial support; AD will write to the DfE to secure approval. Two internal audits have taken place and the reports have been circulated with the meeting paperwork; no areas of concern were highlighted. The Committee continues to monitor teacher and pupil absence, and KB is managing snagging issues regarding the building. HS confirmed that the mound will be removed, and the intent to increase the height of a section of external fence is ongoing. RC highlighted that the Committee considered a new contract to lease photocopiers, costing £75k over 3 years, which is recommended to the Board. AD confirmed that the Board agreed to the new photocopier contract.

## **8. Managing parents & pupils post lockdown**

The Board broadly discussed the challenges faced by HS and school staff regarding the management of parents and pupils post lockdown:

- It was recognised that many parents are very supportive but are not overly vocal.
- Starting a PTA has been challenging.
- A small group of parents are extremely challenging, recognising that many families are managing significant challenges of their own and there is a wellbeing element; some parents are demonstrating significant anger.
- Engagement through social media can be a significant issue.
- Nationally, parental complaints to Ofsted have tripled this year.
- This friction is not passed to staff, and predominantly managed by the SLT.
- The impact on the SLT was acknowledged.
- If staff experience abuse or violence they should call the police.
- Parental challenges and issues with student behaviour are clearly linked.
- Value in using pastoral mentors to diffuse situations, allowing the level of response to be staggered.
- There is a need to re-engage with parents face to face.
- The LA has given some money to HEP to support family workers.

## **9. Chair's report**

AD confirmed that his report has been circulated and asked for questions. He thanked WS and JK for their support during a PEX panel; the decision was upheld.

## **10. Safeguarding report by DSG**

Referring to the recent Review Report, HS was asked what she had taken from the process. HS confirmed that the process had been very good, and the range covered was valuable. Interconnections between staff was helpful, and it has been useful to focus on other areas e.g. medical records. The Board discussed scope for additional medical support in school and it was recommended that this be considered in greater detail.

Q: A Governor queried the approach to breakfast, for students in need.

A: HS confirmed that this has been set up in Compass. KB is also engaged with the National Breakfast Club and is in the process of confirming numbers. VE highlighted value in an open offer to all pupils and staff, highlighting that staff must sit with pupils. The Board discussed the scope for local sponsorship and RC confirmed that he will look at this in greater detail.

RC

#### 11. Governor Training / Visits

WS confirmed that she had had a very positive visit to the English Department on Fri 11 Feb and provided a brief update.

#### 12. Development session – 7<sup>th</sup> June

AD explained that the first 45 minutes of the development session will be an opportunity to further induct new governors and get to know everyone, and there will also be time with the SLT when they will outline their roles. The value of staff contributing at the start of Board meetings was highlighted, and a rolling programme of SLT and pastoral mentors will be considered for next school year.

RW  
(Agenda)

#### 13. Meeting dates, 2022-23

The Board agreed the proposed meeting forecast for 2022-23. RW confirmed that she will send out meeting invites.

RW

#### 14. Finance paperwork

RW confirmed that Governors have seen the finance paperwork up to February.

#### 15. Policies

Governors ratified the following policies with the underlined changes noted:

- Staff Discipline and Misconduct
  - HS explained that this was not a Browne Jacobson Policy and she had wanted greater detail. The policy used was from another school and had been legally approved.
  - Para 10.3, reference to para 9.1 should read 10.1.
  - Appeal against dismissal – three governors.
  - Appeal against written warning – two governors.
- Preventing Extremism
  - Front dates need changing.
  - Risk assessment will also be added to the website.

HS

HS

#### 16. AOB

RC confirmed that he will organise a dinner for Governors on 28 Jun.

RC

BT highlighted that some parents have raised concern regarding the availability of vegetarian and vegan food; there is not enough to go around when tit is a popular choice. He also suggested meat free Mondays. HS noted these points.

#### Next meeting date

- Tue 17 May 22 at 8am, at Bolder Academy

Meeting ended at 9:35 am.

Signature: Andrew Dodge

Name of Chair: ANDREW DODGE

Date: 17/05/2022