

VECTOR LEARNING TRUST

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Minutes of the Axe Valley Local Governance Committee meeting Held at Axe Valley Academy On Thursday 21st September 2017 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Jeremy Walden, Julie Paddick, Juliet Henham, Liz Heron, Louise Wain, Mandy McDonagh, Martin Huscroft, Mary Cleare, Mike Huskins, Paul Evans, Sean Little, Steve Green, Bec Davey (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: None

ABSENT: None

IN ATTENDANCE: Martin Brook (MB) (left 6:59), Laura Jenkins (LJ) – Deputy Headteacher, Kevin Cumming (KC) – Assistant Headteacher

WELCOME

JW welcomed all to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

None

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes from 13th June 2017 (part I and part II), 4th July (part II) and 18th July were **agreed** as a **true record** and signed by the chair.

4. SAFEGUARDING

No new issues. All governors have received the annual update on level 2 Safeguarding training.

ADDITIONAL ITEM:

JW introduced MB who had been invited to the meeting to provide an update following the Trust meeting regarding post 16 provision at Axe Valley.

MB started by apologising for being unable to attend the meeting held on 18th July 2017. He confirmed that the Trust is committed to providing a post 16 provision at Axe Valley for the next two years but the trustees voted to consult on the change to Axe Valley to become an 11-16 year establishment effective Autumn 2019.

The consultation begins on 25th September. There will be a full staff meeting held for Axe Valley staff at 3:45 on Monday. Members of staff who are unable to attend will be emailed on

Tuesday. A letter will be posted to all parents on Tuesday. Holyrood Academy staff will be told on Tuesday. An assembly for year 11 will be held.

Consultation information will be provided to all relevant parties. There will be a press release in the local paper on 3rd October 2017 and a general meeting will be held at Axe Valley on 10th October 2017. The consultation will last for six weeks and end on 7th November 2017.

SL asked about the wording within the letter to the parents. MB explained that the letter had been composed by him and Heather Burnett. SG has looked at the original version and has given his thoughts. **ACTION:** MB to send the clerk the letter for the governors to see by the end of Friday 22nd September. Governors are then to provide their comments to the Chair who will discuss them with MB. There can be no delay. The letter will go out on Tuesday and will be from the Trust.

Unless the consultation produces anything significant, the application could be fast tracked. If there are significant issues the trust would have to put forward a full business case. The DfE guidance shows that the closure of a sixth form centre is one of the examples of possible fast tracking.

MH wondered whether there was a plan in place to reassure the current years 12 and 13. MB suggested that they be spoken to by Dave McCormack (Vice Principal – Head of sixth form) to reassure them that their two years study will be completed at Axe Valley.

It was agreed that the years 12 and 13 are told at the same time as year 11 during an assembly. This will be on Wednesday.

MH reiterated that the staff must be discrete as are being advised prior to pupils and parents.

LH wondered what would be done to reassure the current year 11's as to what provision is available for them. SG commented that this is a good point and advised that the Academy is currently advertising a careers advisor position.

JW advised governors that if Axe Valley were to ever consider offering a post 16 facility that there would need to be at least 250 pupils with between 13 and 15 courses being offered to make it viable.

PE thanked MB for his reassurances. MH agreed.

JW thanked MB for attending. MB left 6:59.

5. SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD

SG and JW have looked at the SCR. DCC have recently issued a revised spreadsheet requiring additional (historical) information. Lucy Ford (SG's PA) is aware of the changes and aims to have it completed by the end of the year. JW advised governors that they may need to provide information.

6. SLT - OUTCOMES

A report had been forwarded to governors prior to the meeting. KC confirmed that there has been a significant improvement in the sixth form results, although they are still not where they should be. The main issue is the accuracy of the predictions. PE wondered why the staff do not know the performance of the pupils well enough to correctly predict the results. KC confirms that they need to do more independent assessments. SG agrees. Too often subject leaders give lots of support and pupils are able to access materials and support. There needs

to be more 'cold' assessments. JH wondered about Mock results. SG confirmed that mock results are often low and staff seem to be too optimistic with how much pupils will improve between the mock and actual exams. SL wondered if the reduction of the amount of coursework and increase of exams in the future will make a difference. SG advised that this is mainly for GCSE level rather than A levels. JP was concerned that there is too much of a focus on targets and is worried that more testing won't help. LJ confirmed that it is not more tests that are required but how they are being tested. JP asked if teachers knew what to do next. SG confirmed that all year 13's will have a Personalised Learning Check (PLC) which will be broken down into a pupil friendly RAG rated responses to results and assessments. Will use the 'Smith Proforma' which will provide a list of what to do and when by. It will show the pupils what they need to do to reach a certain grade. KC confirmed they will use a more appropriate form of testing to show the pupils how they get to where they want to be. KC is extremely disappointed with the KS4 results - bottom quarter of schools nationally. Most able/boys/disadvantaged have most disparity. LW wants to know why it is always the same problem. She has been a governor for seven years and it has always been the same 'group' of pupils – why have things not improved? JP confirms that need to see where the problems start to occur. SG advised that one issue is that the pupils do not have high enough expectations. Lost some of the year 11's last year – some either did not turn up to exams or came to the exam but did not take it. SG believes it is the schools fault, not the pupils. There is a cultural issue. High achievers see less able pupils who have given up and see they are doing better than them, so why try? They are not inspired. What SG found upsetting was how pupils did not seem to be upset by their results. PE wanted it noted that this was just one cohort. It does not necessarily mean that the strategies in place at the Academy are wrong. LH wondered if the Academy has details of non-academic items; prefect applications, sports events – have these differed? KC has suggested that the pupils set themselves aspirational targets – at the moment the Academy wants it more than the pupils do themselves. SG advised that at a meeting with staff it was a sombre mood at the start. What has been done is not good enough – need to know what to do now. Comments from the staff recognise that by their actions they need to make last year a rogue year. Changes have been made to improve. The new Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) was presented to Governors with the rest of the paperwork ahead of the meeting. As a result of this year's outcomes, the leadership team have taken a fresh look at it, how assemblies are done, aspirations, how to speak to the students, what it expected of them. Homework is one of those drivers. ClassCharts is where homework is set and where pupils can get the relevant resources. It is accessed by parents and pupils and can be via the school website or an app. It is being used by all staff for all pupils. SLT are also able to see what teachers are setting. They are also able to see who has accessed the site. SG has introduced Academic Mentoring. This will be a data driven process to allow the students to be shown what they need to do to get to the next level. It will be assertive and will be for all students regardless of predictions. No mentor will have more than a few pupils. When SG asked teachers who would like to mentor, 66 came forward. This is all with the goodwill of the teachers, they are not receiving any additional time to do this. SG wants the mentors to meet with the pupils six times over the year for around ten minutes (plus prep time and 'chasing'). When data comes out about a pupil, the mentor and mentee will meet to discuss what the results mean and talk to the subject leaders and parents. The mentor will become a hub to help. The meetings will not be the only time, the mentors will be the link to the pupils. SG will give mentors a checklist at specific times during the year e.g; March – revision timetables. It will not just be 'have you prepared a revision timetable' but it will be 'show me your revision timetable'. Supportive, yet determined. Mentoring works – and it will work at Axe Valley. SG also has a different attitude to those who are disruptive to the learning of others. There have been two PEX's recently and neither have been for a single circumstance but for persistent disruption. Have to think of the greater good of the whole cohort. Not just hoping for things to change but actively making

changes. PE suggested that in the future it be discussed how the Academy rewards success. MC wondered if, with hindsight, the Academy can look to see what went wrong. SG confirmed that this was looked at two months prior to the exams but could not get things to change quickly enough. MC says Progress 8 is not good enough. PP pupils are not achieving – She asked if governors could help in any way perhaps visit schools where they are doing well, to see what the difference is. PE states that PP pupils are not a ‘group’. Their abilities are always varied. MH wondered if link governors should step back for a while but SG confirms that they should continue to be in contact with their subject leaders. KC advised that the exam analysis meetings are hard to attend. He wants and needs to move on to this year. SG said that usually, results are mixed with some good departments and some bad. Usually issues can be pinpointed to a specific subject but this year it was across the board so hard to pinpoint. It was the attitude of the year group. Only one exception for the GCSE results which was Biology.

7. HEADTEACHER’S REPORT

A report had been forwarded to governors prior to the meeting. **Staffing and Staff Absence:** SG confirmed that there did not seem to be a pattern over the terms but will continue to monitor and compare. JW asked about a careers advisor. SG confirmed it is being advertised next week.. **Student recruitment:** Had an open day on 20th September. MH & JW attended. A lot of recruitment work was also done prior to the open day. Still do not know numbers – will have to wait until receive the applications. (The reception area of the Academy has been improved. The DVD from the prospectus is on permanent loop). **ESFA recovery plan:** The recovery plan is underway. KC and SG have looked into the curriculum structure. Need to restrict the number of groups and increase the number in each group. Average numbers are low 20’s in KS3 and under 20’s in KS4 which is unsustainable. Need to look to see how can increase the class sizes without restricting options. e.g IT or Computing, but not both; Performing Arts instead of Music and Drama. Look into BTECs – pupils can do better doing these. MM wondered when these changes would take place. SG confirmed it would be with the current year 8’s when they choose their options. JH has concern over the image of the Academy. JW believes that the only way the image will be improved is with the results. MC wondered if it would be possible to have more positive cover in the local papers, and wonders if the Trust marketing person is able to produce more promotional stories. SG confirmed that this is underway. JW said that there is a need to get the good work the Academy does out in the town and surrounding area. Use the Guildhall for events (more footfall),. JP advised the governors about a program that Exmouth Community College do where the year 7 parents meet with the tutor and pupil. SG confirmed that Axe Valley will be starting a ‘meet the tutor’ session which is at 2pm on 11th October 2017 (This has since been cancelled because the meet the tutor event took place in July before students started and year 7 tutors will be calling all parents before half term).

8. CHAIR’S BUSINESS

The Trust are changing the required make up of a PEx committee and removing the necessity for a governor from the other Academy to be on the panel. (It has sometimes proved difficult for this to take place). JW should like Axe Valley to continue to request a governor from Holyrood (or another school governor if this is not possible) to be part of the committee as it is felt that a degree of independence is important. Governors agreed.

9. CLERK’S BUSINESS

Clerk asked governors if they had registered for 'The Key' which is a website available for governors with up to date information which the trust subscribe to. **ACTION:** Clerk to advise governors of the registration details.

10. POLICIES

SG has been provided with the VLT policy review. Some of the policies are to be approved by the Trust (some with appendices relevant to the individual Academy) and some are to be agreed by the Academy itself. Alongside the statutory policies there are also a number of non-statutory which the Academy may choose to adopt or continue to use. SG asked the governors which of these they should like to retain or adopt. He suggested that he bring the revised policies to the November meeting for approval. JW was concerned that along with all the work that the SLT are doing to make improvements to the school that this would take the focus away from teaching and learning. He suggested that 4-5 only be brought to the meeting in November. PE offered to look through the policies and track the changes. SG thanked PE for his offer and will bear it in mind but will continue to ask the SLT to look at the policies. That way the person responsible for the area relevant to the policy will have ownership. SG will bring as many policies as possible to the next meeting. Governors agreed.

11. RISK REGISTER

SG had previously distributed the Risk Register to governors. The completion is an annual process and the register covers possible incidents that may affect the provision of education. SG asked governors if they wanted any items to be removed or added or any of the scores amended. Governors were happy with the register.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:44

CHAIR:

Approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting;

..... Signed

..... Date

Action	By Whom	By When
Send letter to parents to clerk to forward to all governors via Egress	MB	22.09.2017
Advise governors of the registration details.	Clerk	01.10.2017