



BOLDER ACADEMY
FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING MINUTES

Company Registered Number: 8932893

Chair: Andrew Dodge

Clerk: Rebecca Wilson (**RW**)

Date of meeting: 28th March 2023 at 8:00am

Venue: Bolder Academy

Attendance:

Name	Governor	Other	Present / Apologies / Absent
Rajiv Chandra (RC)	Co-opted Governor		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)	Appointed by Trust		Apologies
Wendy Smith (WS)	Appointed by Trust		Present
Heidi Swidenbank (HS)	Ex-officio	Headteacher	Present
Eileen Sheedy (ES)	Appointed by Trust		Present
Carin Thakrar (CT)	Parent Governor		Present
Kate Biant (KB)		School Business Manager	Present
Adam Bones (AB)		Deputy Head	Present
Greg George (GG)		Finance Director	Present
Anjum Palumbo (AB)		Head of Maths	Present
Gwyn Arlow (GA)		2IC Maths	Present
Natasha Taylor (NT)		Head of Science	Present
Sarah Farmer (SF)		Head of English	Present

The meeting was declared quorate.

Agenda item

Action

1. Assessment Data and Staff Retention

AB explained that Year 11 had two formal assessment windows in November and February, which take place under exam conditions. He highlighted that history and geography have gone backwards since November, recognising that some curriculum areas require greater focus. Improvement is evident against languages, although catch up work is still required. AB outline the data that had been circulated and highlighted that coursework is also submitted for some subjects.

Q: A Governor queried the reliability of the data, and asked if there was scope for surprises.

A: AM confirmed that most subjects had covered all papers, and the school has also undertaken a lot of moderation since November. He acknowledged that results are dependent on student preparation and grade boundaries, which have been changed.

Q: A Governor queried the impact of coursework.

A: AB confirmed that coursework is likely to boost grades.

HS also emphasised the importance of student attendance and engagement.

1.1 Maths

AP explained that the maths department had built from the November assessments, in preparation for February. Specific points relating to exam techniques and preparation were tackled in spring 1. Before the mocks students were given access to School Online, which covers past papers and question technique; information has also been shared with parents. Students can also access Maths Genie. AP outlined the ongoing focus and confirmed that June 2017 boundaries have been used for assessment. She also confirmed that engagement has taken place with parents, if needed. Maths clinic is also available for students who wish to attend. AP outlined the focus regarding curriculum development and also acknowledged the need to prepare for A level teaching.

1.2 Science

NT confirmed that 41 students are taking triple science and outlined the results for the three subjects. She also detailed next steps and recognised the need to support specific students. A further 105 students are taking double science and following the November mock exams some students have been moved down to the foundation tier paper, which is positive. NT outlined the next steps to be taken and confirmed that concerns regarding under achieving pupils will be raised during parents evening. The course will be finished by Easter and NT detailed the approach to the next stage. NT also outlined curriculum development, coupled with the benefits of using booklets. The planning for A level was detailed across the three science subjects, recognising the importance of continuing to focus on staff development and retention.

1.3 English

SF outlined the key actions since the November mocks. She highlighted the value of looking at specific students across all subjects and developing an understanding of the wider approach being taken. The situation with English Language was positive, and the areas of focus regarding English Literature were expanded on. SF further outlined the curriculum development focus across Key Stage 3, 4 and 5.

AD thanked staff for their feedback and asked for questions. VE highlighted that the updates have been very comprehensive and are useful to Governors.

Q: A Governor asked if the move to the foundation tier was considered positive.

A: NT confirmed that this very much depended on the student, recognising that this change is in the student's best interest; the communication with parents is key.

Q: A Governor asked how students can develop a passion for maths.

A: AP explained that students need to see an improvement in order to become more engaged, and students are actively supported in achieving this.

AB confirmed that tutoring continues throughout the week, and outlined the impact of further strategies. HS confirmed that face to face engagement is working, rather than online.

AB, AP, GA, NT and SF left the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from AM.

3. Declaration of interest

No one declared an interest that may conflict with the meeting agenda.

4. Minutes of previous meeting (31 Jan 23)

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising/actions

The following point was highlighted:

- **MAT Group.** AD explained that the MAT Group had yet to meet, noting that HS has completed pre-research.

6. Chair succession

AD outlined progress regarding Chair succession and explained that VE has agreed to Chair from the end of August. AM has agreed to be Vice Chair and WS will be the Safeguarding Governor.

7. HT Report

AD referred to the Headteachers Report and asked for questions.

Q: A Governor asked if there were further updates since the report had been written regarding the Sixth Form.

A: HS confirmed that there were no further significant updates and highlighted the need to look at the detail of the funding element regarding the sports academy.

AD confirmed that ES will visit the school and look at the pastoral support plans. ES suggested that Governors engage with pupil voice pupil voice for Year 11; RC confirmed that he would look at this.

ES
RC

HS confirmed that AD and VE had visited the school to meet with herself and Adam Bones to consider the two key challenges being managed by the school which are behaviour and staff

recruitment and retention. Referring to behaviour, HS explained that there were a core group of students who were difficult to manage. These students tended to be in-year admissions and had clear social and emotional needs. She explained that these students had a limited history with the school and the curriculum offer does not always fit these students. Referring to staff recruitment and retention, HS highlighted that vocational subjects are difficult to recruit against, which impacts on the curriculum offer that is a better fit for the more challenging students. Student behaviour also impacts on staff retention. HS further outlined the process and impact of in-year admissions, which is compounded by a lack of external early help. AD acknowledged the challenges being managed by the school regarding staff recruitment and highlighted the benefits of increasing leadership capacity. He suggested that the school advertise for a Deputy and an Assistant Head, with appointment subject to candidate quality. VE expanded on the importance of ensuring sufficient capacity and support within the SLT, which will ensure further support throughout the school. The financial pressures being managed by the school were acknowledged, and VE highlighted the alternative of potentially supporting through Springwest. VE highlighted that this needed to be a priority within the budget, and RC confirmed that he was meeting with GG and AM to consider the budget in further detail. RC also expanded on the focus regarding budget planning, which will ensure decisions are fully informed. Referring to behaviour, VE confirmed that the needs of individual students have been considered and AD highlighted that eighteen students are of concern. HS proposed a Governor Panel be arranged to engage with parents. This will ensure Governors have an understanding of the students involved, and will also help parents understand the impact their children are having on others. FH confirmed that the Behaviour Policy supported teaching staff and acknowledged the benefits of being able to remove students from class. She also acknowledged that education was in crisis, and to maintain wider perspective she highlighted that behaviour at Bolder was not bad compared to other schools. VE acknowledged this point and highlighted the gap in SEND provision. It is important to identify a child's specific needs as early as possible, which is compounded by challenging recruitment with SEND specialists. HS also acknowledged the impact of the pandemic. She highlighted that behaviour was generally good, although a small number of students have a disproportionate impact. Governors discussed the impact of staff turnover on more vulnerable students and ES confirmed that the CAMHS waiting list was unmanageable. HS also highlighted her concerns regarding the impact of poor behaviour on the learning of other students. Governors agreed to be more engaged with challenging parents and HS confirmed that she will initiate the process with AD, noting that AD could work with WS and VE possibly with RC.

HS / AD

8. FAR Committee report

RC confirmed that he had chaired the last FAR Committee, in place of AM. A session is also planned with GG and AM to look at the school finances in depth, and work on the budget assumptions going forward. RC confirmed that the school was in a good cash position, and the balance sheet was strong. He acknowledged the need for the school to have a mitigation plan, the aim of the meeting being to review the budget and have an understanding of the choices available. RW confirmed that she will circulate the budget assumptions and the internal audit report.

RW

9. Impact of cost of living crisis on schools

AD asked HS to outline the impact on the school of the cost of living crisis. HS explained that the biggest shift was in hunger and behaviour around food, and confirmed that Breakfast Club was free. There has been an increase in children taking food that they have not paid for

and the school actively signposts to foodbanks over the holidays. Uniform has also been a focus, and the school will give uniform to families if there is a need. Referring to school trips, HS confirmed that the fifth option has been pulled because it is too expensive, noting the significant escalation in activity centre costs. ES highlighted the value of having second hand uniform to support the transition to secondary. RC highlighted that Sky staff would be willing to support. VE also highlighted that staff are managing increased rents but receive relatively low pay. FH outlined the latest union update.

10. Chair's Update and Safeguarding Report

AD referred to his report and confirmed that there were no questions.

11. Governor Training / Visits

AD confirmed that CT had completed governor induction training, and visits have been arranged.

12. Finance paperwork

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

13. Policies

Governors ratified the following policies:

- Appraisal Policy, no changes. VE, AM and WS will be on the HT performance management panel going forward.
- Pay Policy
- Grievance Policy, no changes
- Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy, will go to FAR for next review in three years.

RW

14. AOB

RC gave an update regarding Sky engagement and confirmed that support is available, including areas such as contract review. Governors also discussed mental health needs in greater detail.

Next meeting date

- Tue 16 May 23 at 8am, via Zoom

Meeting ended at 10:00 am.

Signature: 

Name of
Chair: Andrew Dodge

Date: 16th May 2023