

MEETING OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 24 September 2024

6:04pm–7:58pm

MINUTES

Constitution & Attendance:

Headteacher (1)		LAC Members (11)	
Theresa Moses	Headteacher	Vishal Patel	Chair
		Ben Chappell	Co-Vice Chair
		Harriet Clay	Co-Vice Chair
		Georgia Gill	LAC member (parent) (<i>online attendance</i>)
		Patrick Hutchinson	LAC member
		Emma Jayawardana	LAC member
		Wesley Joseph	LAC member
		Sonia Meggie	LAC member (<i>online attendance</i>)
		Nicol River	LAC member
		Jennifer Wheeler	LAC member (parent) (<i>online attendance</i>)
		Hollie Reynolds	Associate LAC member

Apologies:

Wesley Joseph

Nicol River

Also in attendance:

Louise Hake

Governance Professional, WLT

Papers issued for review:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the previous meeting (18/06/24) & status of actions • Headteacher's Report • PAX Analysis of Attendance 23-24 • Attendance from EWO July 24 • School Development Plan Sept 24 • LAC Governance Priorities 24/25 • WLT Safeguarding Policy, Paxton version • Governance Impact Statement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Development Plan 24/25 • Parent Survey Summer 24 • CEO message to the LACs • Paxton EYFS Policy 2024-27 • Admissions Policy 26/27 • Behaviour for Learning Policy 24/25 • Curriculum Policy 24/25 • SEND Policy 2024 • Paxton Attendance Policy 2024 |
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BUSINESS		ACTION
1.	COMMITTEE BUSINESS	
i.	Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting of the Paxton Local Academy Committee. Apologies for absence were received in advance and accepted at the meeting, as outlined above.	
ii.	Declarations of interest When asked by the Chair, all LAC members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest related to the meeting. The Governance Professional reported that the annual declaration of interest form would follow in due course.	
iii.	Appoint Chair The Governance Professional confirmed that the Trust Board Nomination Committee members had agreed that VP would serve a year's term as Chair of Paxton LAC, and he was duly appointed.	
iv.	Appointments, vacancies and recruitment The Chair noted that the Paxton Local Academy had one vacancy, which was not yet being recruited. He also acknowledged that the term of office for both of the parent-elected LAC members would be coming to an end next September, so that parent elections would need to be held in the summer term of this academic year.	
v.	Confirm link roles and receive annual plan All link roles had been confirmed at the last meeting and were unchanged. The Chair reported that he would carry out the link role for Health & Safety. The Governance Professional advised that the Governance Link Role Planner for 2024/25 would follow in due course.	
vi.	Minutes of the previous meetings and status of actions The minutes of the previous meetings held 18 June 2024 were agreed by the Academy Committee as a true and accurate reflection of discussion and were signed by the Chair. The Chair talked through the status of actions, and it was noted that the parent who had shown interest in joining the LAC had withdrawn. All other actions were completed or covered in this agenda.	

2.	ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	
i.	<i>Playground update:</i> The Headteacher invited the LAC members to tour the new playground at the back of the school. Looking at the playground, the members were impressed and declared that this new outdoor space would be an asset to the school. The Headteacher shared that	

each year group took turns to spend time in the new playground and the pupils had enjoyed it.

Updated Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher wanted to highlight some key points from her report as follows:

- *Staffing capacity:*

Staff numbers had increased for the start of the academic year. A new Deputy Headteacher had been employed, and the Assistant Headteacher was no longer classroom based. This meant that there was more capacity to support and mentor the five ECTs (Early Careers Teachers). Due to delays regarding his DBS checks, the Y4 teacher was yet to start. There was one more teacher who would start in October.

- *School roll:*

Numbers on the school roll had increased significantly to 269, which the Headteacher acknowledged was remarkable given the London-wide trend for decreasing rolls. The Reception intake was large enough for two classes. Regarding the Reception cohort, the Headteacher revealed there appeared to be a higher than usual number of children interacting with a social worker. Staff were being vigilant to detect any safeguarding issues. There were four children with significant SEND needs that had not been disclosed before they started at Paxton.

A member queried, *Q: Why would parents not want to have extra help put in place for their children as soon as they started in Reception?* **A (HT): I think perhaps the parents are afraid of being judged. We will work with them to earn their trust.**

A follow-up question was tabled, *Q: How are SEND needs identified for older children?* **A (HT): Our SENCo Lead refers children for assessment, but the waiting list is about three years. In the meantime, we have in-house mental health support if needed.**

- *Nursery provision:*

The Headteacher was delighted to report that the new Nursery had opened with 25 children. For the first time since the Covid pandemic, Paxton staff had undertaken home visits which were crucial in understanding the children's needs and their individual contexts. Meeting their teacher in their own familiar environment had also helped to settle the children in school. The Headteacher shared that many of the cohort had English as an Additional Language. The Headteacher concluded that the new nursery provision at Paxton had made a promising start and invited questions.

Q: How many of the nursery cohort have moved from private settings? **A (HT): Only a few children. Most of the children have come straight from home care.**

Q: Can parents opt out of home visits? **A (HT): No – we give the parents a date. Some parents were out when we visited and we will keep a close eye on these children.**

The Headteacher pointed out that staff had visited younger siblings who were starting in Nursery, and this had proved helpful in getting to know the whole family of older pupils in the school.

- *Summer term assessments:*

A good level of development at the end of Reception had been maintained for the last 3 years. The Deputy Head was currently assessing the baseline data for this year's diverse Reception intake. The Headteacher explained that disruption in staff had caused a dip in the Phonics results for Year 1. The Year 4 multiplication check was an impressive score: however, this year group was reported to be achieving significantly below statutory levels in other areas, and the Headteacher believed this was due to the diverse languages and cultures of the pupils in this group. The Headteacher disclosed that staff were disappointed with the Year 6 Statutory Assessment Test results: 54% of pupils were at age-related expectations, compared to 78% last year. However, more pupils were at greater depth (14% compared to 7% last year). The Headteacher revealed that only some children got 'booster' lessons and so this year all children would receive them in order to improve their scores.

A question was tabled, *Q: When will you start to prepare Y6 children this year?* **A (HT): The Assistant Headteacher has already started to model lessons and this will continue until the new teachers are fully confident.**

- *Attendance:*

At the end of Spring 2024, almost half of the school had 100% attendance (94 pupils) but by the end of the year, 82 pupils had below 90% attendance. The Headteacher explained that key to getting children back into school was better family relationships, and this had started with the Nursery home visits. The Education Welfare Officer had come into the school to support families, and levels of good attendance had increased, but there was no change in persistent absenteeism. At the moment, Paxton had 92% attendance, as compared to a national average of 95%.

Regarding persistent absenteeism, a question was tabled, *Q: Is there a correlation between high levels of absence and lower outcomes in Paxton's assessment results?* **A (HT): Although it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly why an individual child has a lower outcome because it may also be due to other issues, such as SEND, any missed school is a missed learning opportunity.**

The Headteacher described that Paxton send home information regarding the ramifications of coming into school late, which also impacts on pupils' time for learning. She noted that attendance often improved higher up the school, when parents truly understood Paxton's expectations. There was a need to start conversations about attendance and punctuality as early as possible after a child joined Paxton.

Another question was tabled, *Q: How do you approach absenteeism with SEND children?* **A (HT): There is little difference in our approach: we try to have an honest conversation with the parents. We can offer the parents mental health support as well as the children. We want to foster positive relationships with**

	our families and to try to support them. We need to build trust so that the parents know that difficult conversations come from a place of caring. The Headteacher concluded by confirming that this trend of increased absenteeism was a problem for all Croydon schools. She also pointed out that the small number of pupils at Paxton often meant individual pupils skewed the data. • <i>New parents' coffee morning:</i> The link members for Parental Engagement reported an increased level of interest from parents who wanted to be a part of their children's school journey. The PTA had eight new members to make a total of 25 members.	
ii.	Agree key strategic monitoring priorities Before the meeting, the Headteacher had circulated a baseline School Development Plan, which she had RAG-rated. She confirmed that she would now remove all the green points (i.e. objectives that had been met) to finalise the plan. The Chair had circulated a list of LAC Governance Priorities, which was the result of discussion at the last LAC meeting. Members agreed to refer to this list when planning their school visits and to regularly RAG-rate their progress towards completion of each objective.	
iii.	Agree strategic review sessions Due to timing restrictions, the LAC members agreed an <u>ACTION: to email their suggestions for review sessions to the Chair to be finalised at the next meeting.</u>	ALL

3.	SAFEGUARDING	
i.	Annual Safeguarding training, including updates to KCSIE and the WLT Safeguarding Policy Trust-wide Safeguarding training, with a follow-up quiz to check understanding, had been recently organised for all LAC members. For those members who had not yet completed this training, the Governance Professional took an <u>ACTION: to re-send the Safeguarding information and the link for training by email.</u>	
ii.	Approve WLT Safeguarding Policy, Paxton version LAC members approved this policy.	LH

4.	REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION	
i.	Agree Paxton Governance Impact Statement The Chair had circulated this Statement before the meeting. He reminded members that it would be included on the Paxton website so that interested parties could learn more about the LAC's role, and its aims and achievements. The Headteacher thought that the document should include the Celebration Calendar, since this successful piece of work was a direct result of LAC members' discussions.	

	There was no other feedback. The Chair took an <u>ACTION: to include the Celebration Calendar and then finalise the Impact Statement for publication on the Paxton website.</u>	VP
ii.	Propose Governance Development Plan LAC members held a general discussion regarding whether the objectives and success criteria were measurable. The Governance Professional pointed out that, unlike the list of link priorities, this was a document concerning more general governance skills. Confidence in their governance roles would be different for each LAC member: one member might need training in Ofsted inspections whereas another might need to learn how to analyse outcome data effectively. Each member would therefore need to RAG-rate each objective separately, according to their own opinion. The Governance Professional further pointed out that the Link Role Planner provided a framework for each link role, and the NGA provided training on best practice and effective governance. Regarding objective 3 (communication with the Trust), it was noted that LAC members had previously voiced frustration that channels of communication with the Trust felt unclear. Members did not feel that Trustees responded to LAC feedback in a timely manner, and members did not always feel fully informed regarding Trust issues. In response to this matter, the Chair explained that his reports to the Trust Board were changing. He would now use a Governance Dashboard to report key LAC messages, and the Board would provide written replies for feeding back to local level. It was hoped that this would improve transparency and communication. Items that members suggested for immediate communication were: (1) A lack of budget for staff wellbeing. A member suggested that perhaps some of the income from hiring the school premises could be used for this budget. (2) A need for more LAC input into the Trust Governance Forum agenda (or allowing time for an open Q&A session).	

5.	REPORTS FOR NOTING	
i.	Annual confirmation of key governance documents It was noted that these documents would follow in due course.	
ii.	Parent Summer Survey The Chair noted that the parent feedback was positive, which was testament to the Headteacher's and the staff's hard work. No questions were tabled.	
iii.	Receive Welcome back message from Trust Co-CEOs The members acknowledged the message from the Trust Co-CEOs.	

6.	POLICIES, REVIEWS, AUDITS	
i.	The following policies were approved: – Paxton Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024-27 – Admissions Policy 26/27 – Behaviour for Learning Policy 24/25 – Curriculum Policy 24/25 – SEND Policy 24/25 – Attendance Policy 24/25	

7.	CLOSING ITEMS	
i.	Summary dashboard messages The Academy Committee was asked to reflect on the key messages for reporting to the Trust Board: • LAC members had admired the new playground, which was an asset to Paxton. • The LAC were pleased that the new Nursery provision had opened at Paxton, and was making a promising start. • Paxton had some mixed outcome results, but the LAC felt assured that the increased Senior Leadership Team, who were no longer classroom based, would support and mentor new teachers to achieve better outcomes for next year. • Increasing attendance rates was a priority for Paxton, and the LAC would monitor attendance levels throughout the year. • The LAC were pleased that parental engagement was increasing (5 new members to the PTA bring the total to 25 members). • The LAC Governance Priorities were finalised, and LAC members agreed to RAG-rate them throughout the year. • The WLT Safeguarding Policy, Paxton version had been approved by members. • LAC members wanted to suggest that a part of the income from hiring the school premises could be used for a staff wellbeing budget. • The LAC requested to have input into the Governance Forum agenda, to increase their knowledge of the Trust. The Co-Chair noted each point and took an <u>ACTION: to complete the summary dashboard.</u>	VP

IMPORTANT GOVERNOR TRAINING AND VISIT DATES		
Governance Workshop 1	Mon 11 th Nov: 6–8 pm	Teams
LAC AU2 meeting	Tues 19 th Nov: 6–8pm	Paxton
Governance Learning Walk 1	Fri 29 th Nov: 10–11.30am	In person, venue TBC

Signed:



Date:

Summary of Actions: Paxton LAC Meeting: 24/09/24

	Agenda No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	2.iii	<i>Strategic review sessions:</i> To email the Chair with suggestions for insightful review sessions.	All	Priority
2.	3.i	Annual Safeguarding training: To email the link for training, KCSIE reading and the quiz, so that all LAC members could complete.	LH	Priority
3.	4.1	<i>Governance Statement:</i> To amend the draft and then finalise the Statement for publication on the Paxton website.	VP	Priority
4.	5.i	<i>Evaluation of impact:</i> To complete the summary dashboard.	VP	Priority