

Oldfield School: Addressing the Issues

ISSUES RESULTING IN PRE-WARNING NOTICE LETTER

1. The Ofsted S8 Inspection on 11 – 13 December found that ‘the school’s governing body has too little understanding of its statutory responsibilities. Its members are over reliant on information provided by the Headteacher and it does not ensure that complaints, grievance and whistleblowing procedures are sufficiently robust to enable stakeholders to have confidence that their concerns will be held in [the] proper manner.’
2. In their S8 Monitoring Letter, Ofsted suggested that ‘An external review of governance should be undertaken, in conjunction with the Department of Education, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.’

KEY AREAS TO ADDRESS FROM THE EXTERNAL REVIEW, OUTLINED IN THE NASH REPORT

AREA	ACTION	PERSON	TIME	SUCCESS CRITERIA
1. Governance at the Academy is weak: governors are not able to articulate a clear, consistent and strategic direction for the school and are not involved with long term planning.	• Acting Head in place	MW	May 2014	New governance and leadership
	• New chair of Goves appointed	SW	Mar 2014	
	• Strategic Development Plan for school developed based on clear shared vision by	SW/MW	Sep 2014	

	governors and SLT.			
<p>2. Governors have limited induction and training, which has led to a lack of understanding of all governance roles and responsibilities. This is particularly evident in relation to the specific role of safeguarding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors' CPD annual training programme established to include strategic planning, induction, appraisal • All Govs completed Level 1 Safeguarding training at www.thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Home 	<p>SW</p> <p>All Govs / SLT</p>	<p>April 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p>	<p>Comprehensive and ongoing training programme in place for govns and slt: more effective and consistent governance and leadership</p>
<p>3. There is a lack of transparency and accountability within the trust structure, which further limits the effectiveness of the governing body. There are no independent members of the trust who can hold governors and the senior leaders to account or challenge the existing members. There is a potential for conflicts of interest in having staff as member of the academy trust; academy staff are accountable to the company directors and the company directors and accountable to the members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of an Interim Academy Board (IAB) to review and implement new governance structures to provide greater transparency and accountability in order to improve effectiveness • Members to have profiles of suitability shared with all stakeholders; • Members to include an 	<p>SW</p>	<p>May 2014 – Aug 2015</p>	<p>Full and transparent review of the academy's governance structure</p>

	external educational expert and a governance expert and not be employees of the trust			
4. Information sharing between the school and the governing body is poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised confidential issues and action database set up Formatted report for monthly meeting of chair, vice chair and head. Agreed issues to be agenda-ed and reported to Gobs at each FGB meeting 	DW SW/MW SW/MW	June 2014 June 2014 June 2014	Gobs have full awareness of the performance of the academy and / or access to that information
5. Governors lack the necessary information, skill, training and confidence to challenge the Headteacher, senior leadership team and staff effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual / induction training on the role or / relationship between a Head and the Chair of Gobs. Governor representation at Parents' Evenings 	SW SW	June 2014 May 2014	Clear understanding by both parties on the role, responsibility, remit and relationship between a head and the governing body

<p>6. Risk management is not embedded within the culture of the organisation and this limits the governing body's oversight of financial management in the academy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management to be embedded as integral part of long term financial planning. Supported by targeted training intervention. 	SW/SLT	May 2014	<p>A more proactive approach to risk management is adopted and embedded</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk register to be reviewed regularly by SLT and Gobs; and regularly reviewed at FGB 	SW/SLT	May 2014	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of chair of F&GP committee, incl. training requirements, to be clarified in job description. 	SW	May 2014	

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED				
ISSUE	ACTION	PERSON	TIME	SUCCESS CRITERIA
3.1 The governing body must establish an Interim Academy Board (IAB) and delegate their power and functions to this Board until the end of August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established and ratified • IAB Constitution written • Circulated to all stakeholders 	SW	May 2014	More transparent and effective governance
3.2 There should be no more than six members of the IAB. The majority of members of this Board will be governors with the necessary skills to be able to implement the changes required. An external educational expert and a governance expert should also be appointed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles written on each IAB member highlighting strengths / expertise for the role and shared with stakeholders; • To include an educational expert and a governance expert 	SW	May 2014	More transparent and effective governance
3.3 Under the guidance of this IAB, the governing body must review and revise the governance structure of the academy trust. Those appointed as members should not, as a rule, be employees of the trust. An ideal structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAB to follow the recommended 3.3 point i model 	IAB	Sep 2014	A more balanced and objective board of academy trustees

<p>would be:</p> <p>i. The Chair and no other governor</p> <p>ii. The Head plus up to two staff reps (ideally not SLT) but no other employees being governors</p>				
<p>3.4 Those appointed to the governance structure must demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as members and trustees and to establish and implement clear and robust lines of accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills requirement determined for FGB. Audit of governors' skills completed; • Cycle of training and additional members as appropriate • IAB to appoint all Governors • Job descriptions to clarify respective roles • Review roles of Clerk to governing body / Bursar / company secretary 	<p>IAB</p> <p>IAB</p> <p>IAB</p> <p>SW</p> <p>IAB</p>	<p>June 2014</p> <p>July 2015</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>Sept 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p>	<p>More transparent and effective governance</p>
<p>3.5 Serious consideration should also be given to working with the Department to replace the current</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academy to research the implications of 	<p>IAB</p>	<p>Sept. 2014</p>	<p>A revised / replaced funding agreement</p>

<p>Funding Agreement and Articles with the latest versions. These have the advantage of providing academy freedoms while strengthening the local accountability.</p>	<p>replacing the current Funding Agreement and Articles with the latest versions.</p>			<p>and articles is in place for the 2015/16 academic year</p>
<p>3.6 The governing body must secure full compliance with safeguarding requirements. This must include ensuring that: appropriate checks and safeguards are in place; that governors are aware of their individual and specific responsibilities for safeguarding; the Single Central Register is structured in the recommended format and stored securely and the Child Protection policy is reviewed with particular attention paid to the procedures for allegations against staff and governors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All govts/staff to have completed Level 1 safeguarding training either in school or through: www.thehub.Bathnes.gov.uk/Home • Safeguarding training to be written into Governors' Job Descriptions and become part of new Governors' induction process • All training certificates stored with Bursar • SCR formatted according to recommendations • Stored in protected online access file • Child Protection policy 	<p>All Govs/MW/staff</p> <p>SW</p> <p>JM</p> <p>MW</p> <p>DW</p>	<p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014 and then ongoing</p> <p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p>	<p>All govts in compliance with safeguarding requirements</p>

	<p>reviewed by SLT/IAB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead governor for Safeguarding appointed with clear role to include audit of SCR and related processes • Current Child Protection policy to be reviewed and revised, ratified and circulated to all stakeholders • BaNES Child Protection Audit (Nov. 2013) • Single safeguarding training record established and regularly reviewed 	<p>SLT/IAB</p> <p>SW</p> <p>Govs / SLT</p> <p>MW</p> <p>SW/MW</p>	<p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p> <p>Jun. 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p>	
<p>3.7 All policies and procedures at the academy must be reviewed to comply with legislation. The processes for staff to follow when raising concerns must be open, fair and transparent so that members of staff have confidence in the grievance, whistleblowing and complaints processes. There must be one clear and transparent complaints' procedure so that parents have confidence in that process. There must be a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Grievance, Whistleblowing, Anti-bullying and Complaints policies and procedures revised, resulting in one Complaints procedures policy for parents and staff 	<p>SW/MW</p> <p>DW</p>	<p>Sept 2014</p> <p>July 2014</p>	<p>Clear, effective, transparent policies and procedures in place</p>

<p>central log for all complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central log for all complaints established • Periodic staff attitude survey implemented 	<p>IAB</p>	<p>May 2014</p>	
<p>3.8 Governors must understand fully their responsibilities for financial management and governance to ensure that the trust secures full compliance with the financial requirements set out in the funding agreement and the academies financial handbook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in Financial Governance set up • Responsible Officer appointed • B&NES contracted for Responsible Officer support • Treasury Management strategy and policy developed • Report on school fund regularly available. 	<p>SW</p>	<p>Sept. 2014</p>	<p>Financial management and governance in compliance with financial requirements in agreement and academies' financial handbook</p>
<p>SW</p>	<p>Apr 2014</p>			
<p>JM</p>	<p>Apr 2014</p>			
<p>JM</p>	<p>June 2014</p>			
<p>JM</p>	<p>May 2014</p>			