

## **School Improvement Review 2017-2018**

### **Priority 2: To further strengthen the effectiveness of the Governing Body to support and challenge the school.**

#### **Summary**

The school joined The Shaw Education Trust in October and as such the conversion to an Academy has brought about some changes to the governance of the school. Although the Governing Body was renamed the Academy Council, membership has remained constant.

The role of an Academy Council is an important one. It is to provide focused governance for the Academy at a local level and it is the intention of the Shaw Education Trust Board to ensure that the responsibility to govern the Academy is vested in those closest to the impact of decision-making. The Academy Council monitors the Academy's key performance indicators and acts as a critical friend to the Headteacher and the Academy's senior leadership team, providing challenge where appropriate.

The Academy Council has aligned its systems and processes to those required by The Trust. It has reviewed its effectiveness and communications with all stakeholders.

The following actions have been implemented or strengthened during the course of the year:

- A yearly planning calendar is in place, which identifies all actions and timescales. Monitoring activities and school visits are planned.
- All visits undertaken by the Academy Council members are recorded onto the appropriate form. Parental blogs are written and published on the website summarising the purpose and findings of the visit.
- The Academy Council has reconstituted according to SET requirements and now includes both a Teaching and non-teaching representative.
- Statutory designated Academy Councillors' roles have been assigned. These are:
  - *an Academy Councillor with responsibility for special educational needs and inclusion;*
  - *an Academy Councillor with responsibility for safeguarding;*
  - *an Academy Councillor with responsibility for statutory grants (including pupil premium);*
  - *an Academy Councillor with responsibility for health and safety;*
  - *an Academy Councillor with responsibility for finance.*
- Members are familiar with both SET policies and those policies that are individual to The Meadows.
- Revised terms of reference have been developed for each sub committee.
- Academy Councillors are committed to their own development and have attended training, both face to face and in the form of webinars.
- Focus mornings have been established where all members are invited to visit the school as a large group, to focus on different aspects and to see the school in action. This is in addition to termly visits where members meet with subject leads
- The above monitoring activities and appraisal of information enables Councillors to have an accurate view of the school's performance and progress against priorities for improvement.
- The Academy Council has a clear procedure in place to actively listen to pupils, parents and staff.

- The Academy Council has met with SET regarding future strategic developments of The Meadows. This has secured the sustainability of the school and potential opportunities for growth are actively being pursued.

**From Miss A Spilsbury (Chair)**

Our role last year in supporting our academy governance involved many detailed and meaningful conversations amongst ourselves and also with Shaw Education Trust. We are always keenly aware of the financial pressures that continue to exist and having cut things back to the core, we were able to plan our work in a much smarter way. In some instances we were able to reduce the frequency of meetings and also combine sub committees so that we became more focussed in our approach.

Our focus morning which Academy Councillors attended enabled us all to observe and be involved in areas we would not normally be. For the forthcoming term we plan to have a more integrated relationship with other Academy Councils to investigate where we can achieve economies of scale by working closer together. Our work is made so much easier by the detailed comprehensive reports that are prepared for us by Mrs Procter which are greatly appreciated as well as the support given to us by Shaw Education Trust to whom we are indebted to for delivering additional training at no extra cost to both Academy Councillors and Staff.

You can find out more about the duties of the Academy Council and its members on the school website.