

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategic Governing Body of
Applegarth Academy and Wolsey Junior Academy
Held on Monday 29th February 2016 at 6pm
At Wolsey Junior Academy**

Name	Position	Attendance
Ryan Arde'	Headteacher, Wolsey	Present
Selina Boshorin	Community Governor	Present
Darlene Browning	Staff Governor, Wolsey	Apologies
Tammy Curtis	Staff Governor, Applegarth	Present (until 7.35pm)
Mark Ducker	STEP CEO and Executive Principal	Present (from 6.15pm)
Rob Elliott	Parent Governor, Wolsey	Present
Alex Farley	Acting Deputy Head Teacher, Wolsey Junior Academy (Observer)	Present (until 7.35pm)
Lesley Fish	Community Governor	Present
Nina Goel	Community Governor	Present (from 6.20pm)
Marisse Green	Parent Governor, Applegarth	Absent
John Halliwell	Headteacher, Applegarth	Present
Mark Riddaway	Community Governor, Chair	Present
Graham Smith	Community Governor	Present
Naomi Walters	School Business Manager, Applegarth Academy	Present (until 7.35pm)
Carol Fagan	STEP Governance Clerk	Present

STEP First – We are all one team

1 Welcome and Apologies

- To welcome governors to the meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He introduced Naomi Walters, the recently appointed School Business Manager at Applegarth Academy, and Alex Farley, Acting Deputy Head Teacher at Wolsey Junior Academy.

- To agree whether any apologies received are to be accepted**

Apologies for absence had been received from Darlene Browning, due to illness, and from Jo Sims, due to a family commitment. The Governing Body accepted these apologies. Apologies

	were also noted for Liz Parry, who was unable to clerk the meeting due to illness. The acting clerk was asked to pass on the governors' best wishes to Liz for a speedy recovery.
2	<p><u>Quorum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To confirm that the meeting is quorate <p>The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p>
3	<p><u>To review the register of Pecuniary and Business Interests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors to declare any pecuniary or personal interests in any agenda item for this meeting <p>Governors were asked if they had any known pecuniary or other potential conflicts of interest in the current agenda and none were declared.</p>
4	<p><u>Governance Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Note any SGB membership changes <p>There had been no changes to the SGB membership since the last meeting.</p>
STEP Way – We agree to do things like this	
5	<p><u>Finance Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on current budget position for each academy <p>Governors were in receipt of financial reports provided by the Business Managers of each academy.</p> <p>Applegarth Academy:</p> <p>Naomi Walter, School Business Manager for Applegarth Academy, invited questions relating to her reports. The following point was raised:-</p> <p>Question: The forecast for agency costs was looking considerably higher than originally budgeted for. What was the reason for this?</p> <p>Answer: There were a number of staff on long-term sickness absence and it had been necessary to cover the posts with agency staff. This had impacted on the budget. In addition, virtually every member of staff had been off sick for at least three days during the first half term. Whilst every effort had been made to cover these absences internally it had been necessary to go out to agencies for some.</p> <p>There were no further questions relating to Applegarth's budget report.</p> <p>Wolsey Junior Academy:</p> <p>In the absence of Jo Sims, Business Manager for Wolsey Junior Academy, Ryan Arde' invited questions relating to her report. The following points were raised:-</p> <p>Question: Could an explanation be given for the anticipated deficit?</p> <p>Answer: Ryan explained that, in addition to an end of year forecast deficit, the academy had been hit by a lot of staff sickness over the autumn and early spring terms. It should be noted that two members of staff appointed last year had been taken on through an agency. This was therefore showing on the supply budget rather than staffing costs.</p>

Governors were advised that, whilst an end of year deficit of £145K was forecast, the academy had a carry forward of £111,827. In addition, £25K had been set aside for building works which were not going ahead. These factors would reduce the deficit to approximately £25K. Proposed strategies for reducing the deficit further would be outlined later in the confidential part of the meeting.

Ryan explained that the academy was looking at creating additional teaching posts to provide capacity for covering sickness absence in future, to ensure that these costs did not escalate in the way they had done this year.

Question: Was there scope for STEP to build its own bank of teachers to cover sickness absences across the Trust?

Answer: John Halliwell explained that Applegarth and Wolsey academies were hoping to create teaching capacity for September which could be shared across both sites in times of crisis. Ryan added that, following a meeting with Ben March, STEP's Chief Finance & Operations Officer, and Jo Sims, School Business Manager, Wolsey Junior Academy had put structure in place to reduce supply costs. Two new teachers would be joining the team and when in place this would reduce the supply costs. The two new people would take on the designated roles of inclusion leaders and leader of a core subject. The inclusion role had previously been shared between two schools. Whilst such high calibre appointments had not been predicted in the budget, and would obviously have a knock-on effect, they would really strengthen the team and ensure that statutory duties were more than covered.

Question: Was the academy insured against long-term staff absences?

Answer: It was confirmed that insurance was in place. John would look into claiming back the costs of covering the long-term absences of two teachers. **Action: John Halliwell**

Question: In terms of planning next year's budget, were negotiations already going ahead with STEP to ensure sufficient financial capacity to cover the risks identified?

Answer: It was confirmed that negotiations were taking place to ensure that the academy would not be in a deficit situation next year.

The Chair thanked Naomi and Ryan for the responses to their questions.

6 Update on any Planned Building/Refurbishment Works at either Academy

(Mark Ducker joined the meeting at this point)

Applegarth Academy: John reported that, since the last meeting, work had been taking place to convert Applegarth's ICT Suite into a training facility for STEP. The initial focus would be the provision of ICT and SIMS training for STEP staff. Governors were encouraged to visit the training facility when it was finished. iPads had been provided in every classroom to enable the delivery of cross-curricular ICT and staff meetings had taken place to look at developing their use. Thanks were recorded to Tammy Curtis for all the work she had put into this initiative.

John went on to state that, whilst it was not yet known what next year's budget would look like, the academy had been putting together a wish list for the development of its site and grounds, and in particular the outside EYFS area. Quotations were being sought in readiness for work to

	<p>take place during the summer, pending budget information and governing body approval. A proposal would be brought to the next meeting. Action: SGB Agenda Item</p> <p>Governors were informed at this point that, since the last census, pupil numbers had increased by 34 and this would bring in additional income.</p> <p><i>(Nina Goel joined the meeting at this point)</i></p> <p>Governors asked the following questions:-</p> <p>Question: Would the new training facility offer opportunities to generate external income?</p> <p>Answer: Whilst the facility would initially be used solely for STEP, the long-term plan was also to offer external training. John explained that Applegarth had been asked to pilot a new SIMS system. One of the academy’s IT technicians would be fully trained on the system and able to provide training for other schools as and when the system went live. This would be a valuable opportunity to generate income for the central STEP fund. This was a very exciting opportunity for STEP and an excellent facility to have on site.</p> <p>Wolsey Junior Academy: Ryan reported that the demountable had now been signed off. As mentioned earlier in the meeting, plans to convert the ICT room into a staff and PPA Room had been put on hold due to the budget situation. These plans would be revisited at a suitable time in the future.</p>
7	<p><u>Policy Updates</u></p> <p>Draft STEP Attendance Policy: Governors were advised that the STEP Attendance Policy had been updated and a draft would be presented for the Board of Trustees’ approval at its meeting on 21 March. A copy would be sent to governors following the Board meeting. John expressed a view that the policy should include mention of nursery children who were non-attenders. The clerk was asked to forward this suggestion to the Company Secretary. Action: Clerk</p>
8	<p><u>Safeguarding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress with targets on the Safeguarding Action Plans <p>Selina Boshorin, Safeguarding Governor, stated that arranging to meet with academy staff had previously proved something of a challenge. However, she had now scheduled visits for 19 April and 20 June and would obtain copies of the safeguarding audits ahead of these. During her visits Selina would also ensure that the single central records were signed off at both schools. Action: Selina Boshorin</p> <p>Governors had been made aware of the key actions arising from the safeguarding audits, which were around the development of training across the sites. John reported that this had been a priority this term and he would provide Selina with details of the training undertaken. Action: John Halliwell</p> <p>A governor asked the following question:-</p> <p>Question: Did the safeguarding governor carry out an internal audit in preparation for the local</p>

authority audit?

Answer: Selina replied that this would be discussed during her forthcoming visits. Lesley Fish offered to forward a template. **Action: Lesley Fish**

As Safeguarding Governor, Selina was mindful of the need to complete safer recruitment training. The clerk advised that a number of STEP governors had undertaken the online training offered by the NSPCC. The cost was approximately £30, which governors could claim back by requesting a governor expenses form from the academy office. Selina agreed to look into undertaking this training. **Action: Selina Boshorin**

STEP Up – We all succeed together

9 Headteacher's Reports for each academy

- **Governors to raise any questions/observations**

Governors were in receipt of the Head Teachers' Reports for both academies. John and Ryan were thanked for the clarity of their reports. Governors questions were invited and the following points were raised:-

Applegarth

Question: The report stated that a teaching and learning review had taken place at Applegarth Academy. Could the mechanics of this be outlined for governors?

Answer: John explained that the academy had commissioned a registered Ofsted inspector to undertake a 360 degree evaluation of the school and predict an Ofsted grade. The review had been based on the latest Ofsted framework and had particularly focused on literacy, numeracy, quality of teaching, behavior & safety, welfare and leadership & management. The school had been graded outstanding in all areas apart from children's outcomes. Outcomes were not yet judged outstanding as standards were not yet at national average. However, accelerated progress was seen in children's books, data and the quality of teaching.

The review had given the leadership team an opportunity to be challenged and questioned in the same way as they would during an Ofsted inspection and everyone had performed very well. The academy had been working particularly hard on developing reading and maths but writing had also come out very strongly. This showed that the reading provision and enhanced writing opportunities in the afternoons were having an impact.

Governors congratulated John and his staff for a very positive outcome. The following questions were raised:-

Question: Had staff been given prior notice that the review would be taking place?

Answer: John confirmed that staff had been made aware of the review. However, provision on the day had not been any different to that of any normal day. The outcome was a testament of 'Success for All' and the academy's very structured maths lessons. Many governors had already seen from children's books that the quality of provision was very strong.

Question: Had any suggestions been made during the review which were new to the leadership team?

Answer: There had been nothing identified which the school had not previously been aware of.

Discussions had been around developing layers of the curriculum, so that it was consistently outstanding, and maximizing learning opportunities. The suggestions made in this regard had been very useful.

Question: The Head Teacher's report mentioned further development of discovery lessons. What did this involve?

Answer: John explained that the academy's discovery lessons were in the very early stages. The new leader for discovery would be presenting suggestions at tomorrow's leadership meeting. If everyone in the team was in agreement the proposal was for each teacher to become a specialist on particular subjects, which would be rotated every term. This would give teachers the opportunity to really develop their knowledge of a subject and become more creative about how to teach it. Developing children's mastery and understanding of the subjects would particularly help the Year 6 transition to secondary school.

Question: The suggestion for subjects to be rotated each term was noted. Had the academy considered keeping teachers' specialisms running for a full year?

Answer: This had been considered initially, but it was felt that rotating specialisms each term would avoid the risk of de-skilling people in other areas of the curriculum. Having a focus on one particular subject area each term should improve teachers' work/life balance and give them opportunities to see a real impact.

Question: Would the academy be using support staff in the same way?

Answer: This was being considered

Wolsey

Quality of Teaching – Recorded in Part B of the minutes

Question: The report referred to mock SATs tests. Was this a new initiative?

Answer: Ryan explained that the mock SATs tests were new to Wolsey. The autumn data had identified that some children needed support to help them achieve their full potential in the end of year SATs. The mock SATs had therefore been introduced to get children used to test conditions. All SLT members were working with Year 6 classes until the end of the SATs. Groups had been broken down further and this was already showing a noticeable impact. Feedback from children, staff and parents was that the mock SATs experience was very positive.

Question: Were the mock SATs as formal as the official tests?

Answer: The mock SATs were very similar to the official tests and run on the same timings. The school day would be organised in exactly the same way as it would be during the official tests. It was hoped that this would alleviate any anxiety before children came to sit the real tests.

Question: Were children given prior warning of the mock SATS and did this in itself create any anxiety?

Answer: Whilst the mock SATs might create some anxiety it was felt preferable for children to

	<p>overcome this before sitting the real tests.</p> <p>With regard to outcomes, Wolsey had been working very closely with Applegarth to improve the guided reading system. One of the deputy head teachers, who was leading reading, would be visiting Applegarth to look at ‘Success for All’ to see if the two schools could put something in place together.</p> <p>Question: Were parents told about the mock SATs, in order to prepare their children?</p> <p>Answer: This was confirmed. Letters would be going out to parents by the end of this week informing them that mock SATs would be taking place next week.</p> <p>Question: How was John’s role as Executive Head Teacher of Wolsey Junior Academy working out, and was it sustainable?</p> <p>Answer: John explained that the overarching theme of his role was to look at utilising and developing strengths across the two schools. Whereas Paul Glover’s EHT role had been mainly strategic, John’s was focused on teaching & learning and developing the curriculum. John had found it very interesting to work alongside Ryan and his SLT to see the work taking place at Wolsey and felt this had benefitted both schools. With regard to balancing his time between Applegarth and Wolsey, this had required John to adjust to a different way of working. The enhanced leadership team in place at Applegarth meant that there was capacity in place to support John’s involvement at Wolsey. Additionally, Jeremy Meek, STEP Head Teacher, was currently based at Applegarth and able to provide extra support if required.</p> <p>Ryan stated that he had benefitted greatly from the two different EHT models, both of which had supported the leadership team tremendously.</p> <p>At the conclusion to discussion the Chair thanked the Head Teachers for their very comprehensive reports.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p><u>Academy Improvement Plans:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress against priorities/milestones <p>Progress on the AIP priorities was outlined in the Head Teachers’ Reports. The current focus for both schools was on reading, maths and developing the curriculum.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><u>Questions from the STEP Standards Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the Board of Trustees’ Standards Committee had met and identified some questions for SGBs arising from their review of autumn term data. The committee had asked the Applegarth/Wolsey SGB to consider the following question:-</p> <p>At Wolsey Junior Academy, the progress of Year 6 Pupil Premium children appeared low when compared with that at Applegarth Academy. What was the reason for this?</p> <p>Ryan responded to the question by asking governors to note that it related to in-year data. He explained that when John had taken up his post at Applegarth he had managed to close some attainment gaps which had previously been quite high. The gaps had Wolsey had not been as large. Wolsey was reviewing its reading system and looking at provision in Year 6 to make sure that every child made the required progress. Looking at the mock SATs results it was envisaged that percentages would rise at the end of the year. The school was now reviewing children coming into Year 3 and putting in support to close any gaps earlier.</p>

	Ryan was thanked for his response. The clerk would arrange for this to be forwarded to the STEP Standards Committee. Action: Clerk
12	<p><u>Primary School Accountability: DfE Guidance</u></p> <p>Governors were in receipt of the DfE’s guidance document – Primary School Accountability in 2016. John explained that the document outlined a number of changes around assessment, reporting, moderation and the fact that end of year scores were no longer levels. There had been recent changes to the deadline set out for teacher assessment, which had been extended to give more time for data to be digested and moderated. John added that this was a challenging time for schools across the country but, after this year, STEP academies would be moving to a ‘STEP Way’ in terms of assessment, which would be very helpful. Applegarth and Wolsey would establish the ‘STEP Way’ across the two schools, which would make it clearer for staff and governors.</p> <p>John was thanked for his helpful explanation.</p>
13	<p><u>Membership of SGB Committees</u></p> <p>The Chair stated that, from the summer term onwards the STEP SGBs would be establishing three committees – Standards, Resources and Children Family and Community. The Applegarth/Wolsey SGB had already convened its Standards Committee, comprising Graham Smith, Rob Elliott and Selina Boshorin, and the first meeting had taken place on 11 January 2016.</p> <p>At this meeting the SGB was being asked to agree membership of its Resources Committee, which was scheduled to meet on Monday 16th May. The committee would be responsible for overseeing the academy’s finances, logistics, HR and operational matters. Membership of the Resources Committee was agreed as Rob Elliott (Chair), Tammy Curtis and Nina Goel.</p> <p>It was suggested that Ben March, STEP’s Chief Finance & Operations Officer be invited to the first meeting. The need to recruit a governor with financial expertise was identified. The clerk would liaise with the central STEP team regarding this. Action: Clerk</p> <p>Governors were informed that STEP’s Board of Trustees recognised that SGBs might not currently have the number of governors required to establish all three of its committees. It had therefore agreed that SGBs could defer the establishment of their Children, Families and Community Committees until the autumn term. The governing body agreed this course of action.</p> <p><i>(Post meeting Note: Due to governors’ availability, the first meeting of the SGB’s Resources Committee was moved from 16th to Monday 23rd May 2016, 6pm at Applegarth Academy. The clerk would ensure that the Company Secretary and Business Managers were informed of the new date)</i></p>
14	<p><u>Annual Impact Statement</u></p> <p>The STEP Governance Team was in the process of checking whether it was necessary for SGBs to produce their own annual impact statements, or whether this requirement was being met within STEP’s Annual Report. Governors would be informed of the outcome. Action: Clerk</p>
STEP Ahead – We invest in our future	
15	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2016

	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate account of proceedings and were duly signed and dated by the Chair. A signed copy was passed to each Head Teacher.</p>
16	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on actions agreed at the previous meeting not previously covered on the current agenda. <p>Contributions to the Newsletter – Governors were reminded to submit contributions to the newsletter. <i>Action: All governors</i></p> <p>It was suggested that the newsletter include a short profile of each governor to introduce them to the school community.</p> <p>Training Feedback: Claire Slade, STEP’s Head of Teaching & Learning, had been meeting with head teachers and Chairs of governors this term to talk about governor training and how the new governance structure was working. The Chair had passed on the SGB’s feedback from the recent Ofsted training session. This feedback would hopefully be reflected in the training offered in future.</p>
17	<p><u>Update from the STEP Board of Trustees</u></p> <p>Mark Ducker explained that he would be attending future meetings of the Applegarth/Wolsey SGB now that Paul Glover had moved away from the Executive Principal role at Wolsey Junior Academy.</p> <p>Mark drew governors’ attention to some recent key developments for the STEP Academy Trust. These would be recorded in Part B of the minutes.</p>
18	<p><u>Governor Training</u></p> <p>Governors noted the forthcoming STEP governor training session to be held at Gonville Academy from 6-8pm on Wednesday 13 April. Cheryl Gilbert, Company Secretary, would be writing to governors shortly asking them to confirm their attendance.</p>
19	<p><u>Chair’s Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update governors on any Chair’s actions taken since the last meeting, and the receipt of any correspondence (Recorded in Part B of the minutes)
20	<p><u>Any Other Urgent Business</u> (To be notified to the Chair in advance of the meeting where possible, or at the start of the meeting)</p> <p>Links with Wolsey Infant School; Ryan reported that Wolsey Junior Academy was working very closely with the Infant School to look at assessment across years 2 and 3 and ensure a smooth transition. Ann Longfield would be providing a twilight session for staff at both schools to provide them with a shared understanding.</p> <p>The Chair added that the Wolsey Liaison Committee, comprising the head teachers, chairs of governors and business managers of both schools, continued to meet once a term. These meetings were helping to build positive working relationships and enable good practice to be shared. The Infant School was being moderated in all subjects this year and this should provide an assurance around the accuracy of data passed on to Wolsey Juniors.</p>
21	<p><u>Meeting Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider how discussion and decisions at the current meeting will have a positive impact

	<p>on the school and on children's outcomes</p> <p>Governors felt this had been a positive meeting. The constitution of a Resources Committee would enable governors to monitor the school's financial positions more closely to ensure value for money.</p> <p>Governors were very encouraged by the leadership of both academies, the close working relationship that was developing between the two and the strong focus on teaching and learning.</p>
22	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 6 June 2016, 6pm at Wolsey Junior Academy</p>
23	<p><u>Publication of Minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify any matters discussed to be recorded in the confidential Part B minutes. <p>The strategic governing body agreed that, following approval by the Chair, the Part A minutes could be made available for publication. The Part B minutes would remain confidential to the governing body.</p>
24	<p><u>Confidential Matters</u></p> <p>Members of staff, with the exception of the CEO, Head Teachers and Clerk, left the meeting to enable the SGB to discuss confidential matters recorded under Part B.</p> <p>There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.</p>

Action Points for SGB				
Date	No	Description	Owner	Status
29/2/16	5	Investigate an insurance claim to recover costs of covering the long term sickness absences of two teachers	John Halliwell	
29/2/16	6	Approve building/refurbishment works to be carried out over the summer holidays.	SGB Agenda Item – 6 June 2016	
29/2/16	7	Forward comments on the draft STEP Attendance Policy to Company Secretary	Clerk	
29/2/16	8	Undertake safeguarding visits to both academies and ensure that both single central records are signed off	Selina Boshorin	
29/2/16	8	Provide Selina Boshorin with details of safeguarding training undertaken by staff	John Halliwell	
29/2/16	8	Forward an internal safeguarding audit template to safeguarding governor	Lesley Fish	
29/2/16	8	Undertake online safer recruitment training	Selina Boshorin	
29/2/16	11	Forward SGB response to STEP Standards Committee	Clerk	
29/2/16	13	Liaise with the STEP Central Team regarding the recruitment of a governor with financial expertise and invite Ben March to first Resources Committee meeting	Clerk	
29/2/16	14	Advise governors as to whether SGBs are required to produce annual impact statements	Clerk	
29/2/16	16	Submit contributions to the newsletter	All governors	

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
Chair's signature	
Chair's name	
Date	