

TOGETHER LEARNING TRUST

CASTLE HILL SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 15 October 2024 at 3.30pm at the school

Minutes

Governors Invited:	Til Wright (TW)	Chair
	Jayne Askew (JA)	Staff Governor
	Kristy Dyson (KD)	(Vice Chair) Parent Governor (to 17:05)
	Emma Firth (EF)	Co-opted Governor
	Joan Haines (JH)	Co-opted Governor
	Steve Perren (SP)	Principal
	Katrina Whale (KW)	Staff Governor
Governors Absent	Richard Instone (RI) (remotely)	Co-opted Governor
Invited Guests Present:	Carol Carpenter (CC)	Clerk
	Allanna Hoyer (AH)	Business Manager (to 16:30)
	Dan Pearce (DP)	Deputy Principal
	Michael Crinnion	Trustee, Together Learning Trust (to 17:05)
Meeting Started at:	3:30pm	

Item No.	Agenda Item	Action
1	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted for RI.</p>	
2.1	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for this meeting's agenda items.</p>	
2.2	<p>Minutes of the meeting on 25 June 2024</p> <p>Governors agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2024 be approved and be signed by the Chair as a correct account.</p> <p>Matters arising (not covered by agenda)</p> <p>All actions from the previous meeting had been completed.</p>	
2.3	<p>Q: Do we keep a copy of all Governor Meetings including minutes, agendas, reports and attachments?</p>	

Agreed as an accurate record.

Signed: Print Name: Dated:

	A: Yes, we have copies of all meeting documents, they are kept in our Governor File Cupboard.	
3	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>New members to be formally approved None for this meeting.</p> <p>Terms of office up for renewal or due to end Governors were advised that their term of office renewal dates had been re-set on joining TLT to end in February 2028, however governors won't be held to remain to these dates if they do not wish to be.</p>	
4.	<p>Overview of the new Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference and Handbook</p> <p>TLT Trustee MC introduced himself. Governors can contact him if they would like him to attend and observe at any further meetings. He gave an overview of the new Scheme of Delegation and advised governors that the table at the end of the document highlights each level of responsibility.</p> <p>Q: Where do we stand with virements, governors are always informed prior to virements, will that stay the same? A: Nothing changes regarding how the decisions are made. We are not involved in terms of finance unless it comes whole Trust finance issues.</p>	
5.1	<p>Compliance Documents</p> <p>Code of Conduct and Declaration of Business and Personal Interest forms All Governors have signed and returned the Code of Conduct and Personal Interest forms.</p> <p>Training All governors have completed their Safeguarding training.</p>	
6.1	<p>Voting in of Chair and Vice Chair Governors unanimously agreed that TW would remain as Chair and KD would be Vice Chair.</p>	
6.2	<p>Allocation of Link roles Governors agreed to retain their Link Governor roles as per the previous year, but The Chair advised governors to let them know if would like to relinquish or pick up any particular areas.</p> <p>TW- Safeguarding KD – Health & Safety EF - Curriculum JH – Finance & Teaching & Learning.</p>	

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6.3	<p>RI & KW Staff Wellbeing and Behaviour Regulation</p> <p>RI & KW are in school on different days so are finding it difficult to meet to discuss their areas.</p> <p>Action: Chair to contact RI re potential change of link area. Action: Chair to send the updated governor visit reports list out to Governors.</p> <p>Confirm size and composition of LGC The committee is currently one Parent Governor short. SP will send a letter out to parents advising of the vacancy. There has been limited response previously and finding parents who can attend can be hard. The after-school club facility is useful as many parents face a logistical challenge in attending meetings. Governors discussed that the parent governor doesn't have to be parent at the school.</p> <p>Comment. When the letter goes out, can you talk about flexibility and the offer of after school club provision for parents. A. Yes, I will do. Comment – We are also underrepresented from a diversity point of view. A. We have tried to get more parents from ethnic backgrounds into school. It is hard to recruit governors in general, it is also about having a diversity of voice and opinion.</p>	TW TW
6.4	<p>Appoint governors to the Head Teachers Performance Development Panel (HTDPD) The Governors appointed to the HTPDP are TW and JH. The School Improvement Partner, Jackie Nellis and TLT CEO David Lord will also attend the meeting.</p>	
7.1	<p>Skills Audit Feedback</p> <p>The results of the Skills Audit were discussed. Other governors have limited opportunity to chair meetings due to the size of the board and there being no sub-committees. The Chair is happy to mentor anyone who would like to learn about chairing and TLT are running some training for Chairs and have discussed succession planning at other schools.</p> <p>Action: Chair to speak to Central Team regarding updates and report back to the committee.</p>	TW
7.2	<p>Governance Self review feedback The Clerk advised governors had completed a different document to the TLT document.</p>	CC/TW

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	<p>Action: Clerk to work with Chair to merge the answers into the new document.</p> <p>Chairs Review Five responses have been received. At the Chair's Meeting tomorrow TW will discuss what the process is for collating the information. External governance reviews were also discussed. TW will enquire whether one of those is scheduled.</p> <p>Action: Chair to discuss Chairs Review Questionnaires and Governance Reviews at Chair's Meeting and report back to the committee.</p>	TW
8.	<p>Staff Pay Recommendations - LGC to approve and submit form for Pay & Remuneration meeting.</p> <p>The committee approved the current incremental pay rises but SP advised they may receive one further UPS application letter at which point they would send in a revised staff pay recommendation form.</p>	
9.	<p>Review and agree admissions arrangements</p> <p>SP advised he has discussed this with TLT as Castle Hill's Admissions Policy differs from the standard TLT. He has put the needs criteria into an admissions policy proforma and is awaiting a response from TLT.</p> <p>Action: To bring to the next meeting.</p>	SP
10.	<p>Policy review</p> <p>Policies had been distributed to Governors by TW prior to the meeting and had been reviewed and recommended to the LGC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&S TLT • Assessment • Monitoring Evaluation policy • Bereavement • Prevent Risk assessment • Equality • Visitors • Online Safety • Safeguarding • Single Central Record TLT • Intimate Care Policy <p>TW thanked Governors for their reviews and their input. RESOLVED: That the above policies be ratified by the LGC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Evacuation – TW will contact RI. • Attendance TW - will contact RI. 	

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	Action: TW to contact RI re these policies, to bring to next meeting.	TW / RI
11	<p>Headteacher's Update including Finance Report</p> <p>JH and TW have met with AH for their finance monitoring visit. AH advised all year-end journals have been prepared and the audit is taking place this month. They have a new accounts system and new budgeting software in place.</p> <p>She summarised her finance report highlighting:</p> <p>They are over budget on teaching costs due to one staff member having extended parental leave and another taking ill health retirement. The pay rise for NJC staff of £1,290 was paid in August, there is an underspend against the budget, but several roles are out to advert. It is hard to recruit TAs. They have received thirty-five applicants for nine live vacancies and hope to recruit seven and two for casual back-fill. They are receiving a lot of applications from Nursery Managers and SENDCOs. Internal supply staff have been doing a lot of casual hours. £60k surplus at the end of August.</p> <p>Q: Can you explain about the supply staff? A: We have a bank of casual TAs that do casual and back-fill where needed. Comment: It makes sense and is cost effective as well rather than using supply agencies. It saves money and makes sense not having strangers in the school.</p> <p>The original catering budget figure was incorrect. £39k surplus against gas due to 70% reduction. TLT have introduced an energy management system which is working well. Savings made of £3,1k by emptying the pool over the summer. MAT Top slice based on 8% of GAG funding. AH continues to monitor all cost centres. She anticipates a £10k saving at year end.</p> <p>Governors discussed TLT's requirement that trust schools retain 5% of income. School is trying to get reserves up to £200k while continuing to employ teachers and ensure teaching and learning standards remain high. SLT and Learning Facilitators are leading some classes due to the level of the budget with on Learning Facilitator leading one class.</p> <p>School currently has twelve banding appeals in with the LA and may get some funding backdated which should enable them to employ</p>	

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	<p>another teacher, however they need the banding secured before they can do that.</p> <p>Q: Are we talking about holding a surplus versus no teachers in class? A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: In terms of salaries do Learning Facilitators earn similar wages to teachers? A. Yes, they earn a good wage but they are not teachers and can have varying skills so a lot of support and scaffolding can be required. We have one less SLT member currently. It requires further discussion with governors and TLT on how we move forward.</p> <p>Q: How is the role of Learning Facilitator Plus working? A: It is working well, giving us real value for money and enriched input.</p> <p>SP advised they have worked hard to resolve issues with one class that has some challenging pupils with varying needs, some that need their own space and some that need 2-1 support however, SLT have supported the transition to make it work.</p> <p>Q: If there is a potential vulnerability, it requires a conversation with The Trust, you are also in the OFSTED window? A: Yes, we are in the window between now and 2025. We are facing dual pressures between the need for a teacher and balancing the books. We have a £140k surplus this year however, this may not be possible going forward. If we could show £140k for three years this may work which is why the banding element is important to ensure it is sustainable.</p> <p>Comment: I think you have an urgent need for a teacher. A: I meet with DL and the finance team monthly; we are trying to work with a slimmed down SLT and less teachers so that we are self-sustainable.</p> <p>Comment: It can impact staff wellbeing and stress levels. A: We are coaching staff in classes, so they are supported.</p> <p>Comment: You need experienced, qualified teachers to maintain the quality of education for the pupils. If the children need a teacher, I must question why they haven't got one, A Learning Facilitator is not a qualified Teacher. A: I agree and we are trying to secure the funding to get one.</p> <p>Comment: It is unsettling that a school can't afford teachers. A. We self-funded the NJC pay raise the last few years which comes to around £200k per year, prior to that finances were robust. The change to academy status with ICAT took some of the DfE funding and we have the demands from TLT that the books must balance. I am putting pressure on the LA to secure the additional funding and have been talking to them prior to the Summer Holidays. I hope to have teacher by Spring Half-Term if not by January. Hopefully they will backdate the payments to September. Banding appeals go to head of SEN at LA.</p>	
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	<p>Q: What proportion of the budget is staffing costs? A: 86%.</p> <p>Governors thanked AH and she left the meeting at 16:30. SP summarised his report:</p> <p>Attendance figures pre pandemic versus current are similar now following the pandemic slump. Figures are adjusted for pupils with long term absences. There has been a reduction in persistent absence from last year. Students with the highest absence are often the ones with the highest needs. School work closely with the families and the strategy is working and absence is going down. New students in primary and early years are transitioning well. One hundred and thirty pupils on roll. Staff attendance was previously reported on using SAM but TLT don't use it.</p> <p>Comment: It bothers me that we don't have that. A: We are working with TLT to see if they can come up with something using ITrent. We have one hundred and thirty-four employees. Having reduced our teachers from eighteen to fifteen. One ECT left and on with long term health issues. Losing ECT's to other schools when fully trained is an issue.</p> <p>Q: One hundred and thirty-four employees what is the FTE? A: I'm not sure, a lot are lunch time support and ETA's. SLT are in classes to address shortfalls. We have lost some ETA's, one resigned, one retired, we have an ETA advert out at the moment. An SLA has been completed to try to recruit a Speech & Language Therapist, we hope to have one in place by next July.</p> <p>Q: If money was no object, would you change your staffing model? A: It depends on external factors, if some LFs leave could employ more teachers. We have to be responsive to each situation however we would like to get more teachers in place.</p> <p>Q: SLT have moved into classes, is that due to finances? A. It does reduce the capacity of the SLT to do what they used to do, they are flexible and hardworking, but it is not ideal</p> <p>Q: Is it less than ideal for you? A: Yes, it is less than ideal for everyone, we are now down one SLT and one has gone half time plus they are in class.</p> <p>Comment: This is the sign of the times across all schools, it is the first time I have heard it at CHS. A: There are issues with the LA funding some schools differently. There seems to be bias toward LA schools rather than academies which I have raised with the Heads of LA Special schools.</p> <p>Peer reviews continue with Kirklees special schools, outcomes were in the previous Headteacher Reports. It has been useful for sharing good</p>	
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	<p>practice. SIP report was also attached containing information on how the sixth form is doing and redesigning the curriculum. Outreach work is being done and is successful. One pupil now has their own room which helps them regulate there and restricts access to other areas where they could pose a risk to other pupils.</p> <p>Comment: It is great you have managed to get them back into school.</p> <p>Lesson observations are ongoing with a focus on communication strategy.</p> <p>Comment: I find having examples of the reports helpful and the attachments are interesting and give further depth.</p> <p>End of year assessment report, some outcomes are slightly high but working with the progression guidance tool and the knowledge of the students to set challenging but realistic targets. RW is participating as part of succession planning.</p> <p>Q: Does dance still come from Sports Premium? A: Dance is funded through Pupil Premium.</p> <p>CPD is being done with teachers and support staff. PD success rates for support staff, 17 red have been allocated to the SLT for coaching.</p> <p>Q: What is your feeling re Ofsted? A: We are in the window between now and 2025. The SIP and SEF are available to see. Other news: The Sensory Garden has been completed and we have good H&S outcomes. Parallel Rhythms is providing great opportunities for pupils and for teacher training and discussions around pedagogy, we are also working with Teachers Direct. A governor monitoring visit has been done on the teaching school. EEF Partnership is looking at a specific area of focus and we are linked with Calderdale Teaching Hub to support the process for ECT Teachers.</p> <p>Governors Strategic plan and Staff Survey, some positives and some negatives, not happy with some of the responses particularly one negative response to, are children and staff safe in school.</p> <p>Q: Was it anonymous? A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: What support is available for staff? A: There is a huge amount, CPD, PD Training, our training offer is extensive so not sure why some staff aren't happy with the offer. Under are SLT effective? Nine people out of one hundred and thirty-eight disagree or strongly disagreed, there were seventy-nine responses to the questionnaire.</p>	
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	<p>Comment: It is hard to fill in if it is anonymous, you can't resolve things if you don't know who they are.</p> <p>Comment: Governors have to take it seriously, it is our duty to ensure we consider all options, my view is the offer available to support staff is significant, also the avenues they can use to make their life better such as Mental Health First Aiders and employee health care packages.</p> <p>A: We have a number of staff referred for OH Assessments, two staff wellbeing leads and a staff wellbeing group. The survey also said that Governors were not very prominent in school so we may need to look at ways to make them more prominent.</p> <p>Comment: We discussed Governors attending at staff briefing if it is on Teams it could be done.</p> <p>Action: SP to send invitation to TW and JH to attend staff briefing and clarify the strategic role of governors in school.</p> <p>Q: Do we need to provide feedback to staff about the questionnaire?</p> <p>A: I don't think that is necessary we do the survey annually we also complete questionnaires at parent's evenings.</p> <p>Q: You have no nursery pupils at present, are any likely to come in?</p> <p>A: We have five reception children, and I was asked about a place for a two year old but I referred them to SENDACT. One group next year may be a primary group as we seem to be getting an older cohort. Maybe they are delaying the time before they put children into special school.</p> <p>Comment. We are seeing some successful nursery placements in mainstream nurseries.</p>	SP
12.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>A Governor's Strategic Meeting will be held on Tuesday 3 December 15:30 – 18:00 where Governors will look at the link between governor strategy and TLT's strategy, the Scheme of Delegation and next year's Strategic Plan for Castle Hill. SLT will also attend.</p> <p>Harvest Festival Event will be on Friday 25 October 2024 at 13:45.</p> <p>Upcoming Key Calderdale Virtual Training events were discussed. To book onto Training please email: Deborah.tynan@calderdale.gov.uk Debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk</p> <p>Action: Clerk to check with TLT Central team whether governors automatically receive emails of available training.</p>	CC
13.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 26 November 2024 at 15:30.</p>	

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	<p>Governors were reminded of the dates of forthcoming network meetings.</p> <p>Strategic impact to ensure student progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors discussed staffing and the long-term capacity and funding for the school. • Discussed finance and the outcome is there is tight monitoring of finance and school is proactive in looking for funding. • Staff questionnaire has some negative aspects, but governors have heard from SP what is in place for the staff. 	
14	<p>Agenda, minutes and related papers - school copy</p> <p>RESOLVED: That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.</p>	
	The meeting closed at 5:40pm.	

MINUTE	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
6.2	Action: Chair to contact RI re potential change of link area.	TW	
6.2	Action: Chair to send the updated governor visit reports list out to Governors.	TW	
7.1	Action: Chair to speak to Central Team regarding updates and report back to the committee.	TW	
7.2	Action: Clerk to work with Chair to merge the answers into the new document.	TW / CC	
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9	Action: To bring to the next meeting.	SP	
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