



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams MINUTES – Part I



Date: 1st March 2021 at 4pm

Present:

Mrs C Millson (Chair)
Mr D McGarvey (Vice Chair) (From 5.23pm)
Mr D Baxendale
Mr R Taylor (RT)
Mr P Woodhouse
Mrs V Young (VY)

Absent: Mr T de Jong (TdJ)

In attendance:

Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher
Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher
Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher (Items 1 to 6 inclusive and item 9)
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
Mrs N Phillips – TLA Director of Finance & Governance
Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed. Mr McGarvey had sent apologies that he would be late for the meeting.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2020 were approved, subject to the Chair's name being correctly spelt as Mrs C Millson.
4. **LGB Composition**
 - 4.1 The Chair informed the LGB that Mr Stride had tendered his resignation to the LGB as of 28th February 2021. The Chair wished to thank Mr Stride for his contribution to the governing body over the last 6 years, he had attended many meetings and was always prepared and had contributed much governor challenge.
 - 4.2 It was noted that three appointed governors' terms of office expire this academic year; VY, TdJ and RT. Those Governors were asked to advise the Chair as to whether they wish to be reappointed, so that the Chair can make a recommendation to the Trust Board Governance and Search and Committee for approval.
 - 4.3 Governors were asked to update their confirmations on Governor Hub and to contact NP or the Clerk if they have any questions on how to do this. Thanks were given to those who have updated their confirmations.
 - 4.4 The Chair offered congratulations to Mr Whittaker and Mrs Key on their recent appointments as Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher respectively, to both Knutsford Academy (KA) and Cheshire Studio School CSS). The Chair noted that there had been a rigorous interview process and the LGB looked forward to continue working with them both.

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

5. **Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB**
 - 5.1 The COO confirmed that following the request of this LGB, the approved Trust Board Minutes are now being uploaded to governor hub – in the resources section, for all Trust schools to access.
6. **Finance Update**
 - 6.1 The current out-turn for the year is currently estimated to be a deficit of c.£35,000 against a planned deficit budget of c.£114,000. This is mostly due to savings in staffing costs as x2 staff have been seconded to The Oaks Academy, and some support staff vacancies have not yet been filled. Dependent on when these vacancies are filled, there is potential for some further savings in the year.
 - 6.2 The monthly accounts will begin to be posted on Governor Hub from this month
 - 6.3 **Governors noted that there is a minimum 5% of GAG target for reserves and asked whether there is a maximum, noting that KA's reserves are currently at around 17%.** The COO advised that there is no maximum in the Reserves Policy and that where there is an excess above 5%, the Trust would look to

reinvest in the school. KA has recently been in a period of growth and has needed to adapt to increased pupil numbers with increased staffing – and lagged funding has caused the current (planned) in-year deficit position. Reserves had been built up in anticipation of this issue and it was recommended that the school wait for this to stabilise before looking to spend any excess reserves. The position will be clearer at the end of the school year. The COO is meeting with all Trust schools' Headteachers to discuss school repair, maintenance needs and long-term capital programme plans. **Governors asked what is the route to report those plans back to the LGB.** When the next budget is tabled at the LGB meeting, the reserves section will be expanded to explain the mechanics of drawdown and spending plans.

Governors received the Report and thanked NP and the COO for the information.

Improving Education and Opportunities

7. Covid-19 Update

7.1 Review of Risk Assessments – Mr Routes has updated the risk assessments following the Government announcement to reopen schools on 8th March 2021. Most provisions needed were already in place. The Government have recommended that pupils wear masks in classrooms and the school has chosen to adopt this practice, which will be reviewed at Easter. Teachers will not be wearing masks in classrooms as it is not conducive to normal delivery of teaching and there is a two-metre exclusion zone at the front of classrooms.

Governors asked whether any strong parental feelings are anticipated about the wearing of masks by pupils It was reported that a small working group of students had discussed and agreed that it is not sensible or prudent for them to wear masks and the school will work with any families expressing a need for exemption from wearing a mask. Heads of Years are writing to parents to inform them of the return to school provisions and the mask requirements will be covered in that letter. Pupils complied with the mask-wearing requirements in school, without issue last time. **Governors asked whether the school has a supply of masks** It was confirmed that school does have a small supply, but pupils mostly bring their own.

7.2 Remote Learning Offer – (Appendix 3.2) Since Christmas, most online lessons have been live and the pupils have had online registration and assemblies. All staff have been teaching to their normal schemes of work, so the normal curriculum has been covered. After two weeks of live, online lessons, staff, pupils and parents were surveyed. 98% of parents said that their children attended online lessons and 84% reported the remote offering as good or outstanding. Parents complimented the Teams structure and reported that whilst the live interaction was good, some younger and SEN pupils were struggling with using Teams five days a week for five hours a day. Staff thought this comment understandable and this led to a two-week relaxation of the usual timetable and the introduction of one self-supported study session per subject. Feedback was positive and all pupils have now returned to their normal, live lessons' timetables. 81% of pupils, report that they feel they are making very good progress.

Non-attendance and remote lessons' engagement is monitored and followed up by Faculty Heads. Heads of Year also monitor and support follow-up on attendance. TA advocates are in contact with SEN pupils each week and use is being made of the Teams break-out room function to further support those students.

7.3 Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) (Appendix 3.3) – Each of the faculties are developing a best practice way of working in their subject area. Collaboration across the faculties is helping progress those best practices. Governors who are parents of pupils at the school, reported that they find the online structure a positive strategy for preparing the pupils back for classroom learning. All Heads of Faculty have identified the key learning covered so far, in their subjects and when the pupils are back in school they will be in a better position to assess gaps in that learning. It is anticipated that gaps will be greater in lower-ability pupils, but all faculties have recovery plans in place, incorporating low-stakes assessments to allow time to rebuild relationships, to build and inspire excitement for learning. All Heads of Faculty are confident that once the pupils return, learning will catch up.

7.4 Catch-up Premium – Whilst agencies are offering bought-in staff for catch-up support, the school would rather invest in its own trusted staff, who already know the pupils, their academic strengths and weaknesses and how to fill any knowledge gaps. It is thought that this approach will have a greater positive

pupil impact than bought in agency staff could. Two governors offered to re-start tutoring support that the had given pre-covid. Thanks and a note of consideration for the offer were given.

7.5 Covid-19 Testing Programme – There is a staggered return to school for Year groups and by Friday 12th March, all Year groups will be back in school. Yr11 are being tested for Covid-19 this Friday (5th March) and all 1300 pupils (for whom consent has mostly been obtained) will be tested three times across the first two weeks back at school. The logistics for this have been very carefully planned, including the provision of a bus to bring students in for testing and return them home. Consent has been obtained from the majority of parents to testing. Once the in-school testing phase is complete, pupils will begin to test themselves at home, twice-weekly and staff begin home-testing this Wednesday. The kits to do this are expected at school on 8th March. **Governors asked who carries out the on-site testing.** There are eleven staff trained in total, some teachers, some lab technicians, some TAs and some cover supervisors. There are also bought in ‘Swabbers’ to supervise and support the pupils whilst doing their own swabs. **Governors asked whether there are any DBS concerns around those Swabbers.** The Headteacher confirmed there are no concerns as the Swabbers will never be left unattended with a pupil as school staff will always be present and the agencies from which they come may send them with DBS checks. Governors were reassured by this. Four hundred lateral flow tests have been carried out since January, at the school and there has been only one positive case of Covid-19.

7.6 Staff Wellbeing – A staff survey showed that 89% of staff feel that communication is good and 94% feel well-supported. In all cases where feedback was not as positive, staff were asked how the school can improve and this was followed up by a ‘You Said, We Did’ table of constructive comments and outcomes. Staff had weekly meetings with their Heads of Faculty and Heads of Faculty regular meetings with the Deputy Headteacher ensured good communication flow. It was reported that a number of staff are nervous about the return to school but they are kept fully informed of the plans and the communication flow will continue for support.

7.7 Numbers of Pupils Attending School – All Year groups are in the 90%s. Yr12 is 98% and Yr7 has the lowest attendance figure at 92%. **Governors asked what the anticipated figures are for return on 8th March.** The Headteacher is not aware of any parents intending to keep their children off school.

8. School Performance – (Appendix 4) The Headteacher noted that without the students attending school, performance was harder to track. Data provided was upto the end of last term. Attainment is broadly on-track. KS4 Progress is +0.17, a healthy figure for this point in the academic year and the data will be updated soon as part of progress point2. The Pupil Premium (PP) Progress 8 figure is -0.64 which is lower than expected and whilst it is inconsistent with the data of the last few years, it is not a surprise given the Covid-19 situation. The Deputy Headteacher is aware of who sits in that group and action plans for their support on return to school are being implemented. There was nothing to highlight in KS5 which was showing extremely sound data, representative of where the school wants to be at this stage.

Schools are yet to be advised of the details of evidence needed to support Yr11 and Yr13 teachers assessed grades this year. It is anticipated that the system will broadly mirror that of last year, when the school operated with integrity and was broadly happy with the outcomes. This year’s results’ days are the week beginning 9th August, to allow for appeals. Whilst there are no appeals detail as yet, it is believed they will be based on procedural issues. Details from exam boards are expected at the end of the month.

8.1 Governors asked whether the figures provided for Spanish were a reflection of historic issues. It was acknowledged that there had been some difficulty with entering pupils at the right level, but the recent Head of Faculty appointment is addressing this. That Head of Faculty is making some radical changes to the way languages are taught and the progress is outstanding, so much so that languages results are expected to improve dramatically over the next few years.

9. Student Welfare (Including Safeguarding)

9.1 As expected, there are fewer safeguarding issues at this time of year, but lockdown has affected students and levels are expected to rise again as the year progresses.

9.2 The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) team have been invited into school to carry out an inspection during the week beginning 26th April 2021. Their visits are always productive; they note moderate concerns and help re-focus the team.

9.3 Mrs Weigh has been appointed Designated Teacher for Looked After Children to support those and vulnerable pupils and maintain the academic records of those pupils. There has been an increase in numbers on-site of the vulnerable pupils and they have been invited in for a taster session to prepare them for the 8th March reopening.

10. LGB Roles – The Chair asked if anyone would be willing to act as Health and Safety governor. There were no nominations. The Chair noted she would consider if the Health and Safety governor from Cheshire Studio School could perhaps do the role. *Since the meeting the Clerk has confirmed that this is not possible - the Health and Safety governor for Knutsford Academy does need to be a governor from Knutsford Academy. **The Chair therefore asks governors to reconsider volunteers for this role – to contact the Chair before the next meeting.***

11. Local Matters - Nothing to Report

12. Policies – Governors asked why the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) Policy was a school Policy, rather than A Trust Policy. There are different requirements for NQTs at primary and secondary levels. Trust guidance is provided on drafting if needed.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 21st June 2021 at 4pm. Meeting Closed 5.30pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....