



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB
MINUTES – Part I**



Date: Monday 24th April 2023 at 4:00pm

Present:

Mrs C. Millson (Chair) (CM)
Mrs J. Padget (JP)
Mr G. Kelly (GK)
Mr D. McGarvey (Vice Chair) (DM) (From item 5.1)

Apologies:

Mr R. Taylor (RT)
Mr D. Baxendale (DB)

In attendance:

Mrs K. Key (KKY) (HT) –Headteacher
Mr C Leigh (CLH) – Acting Deputy Headteacher
Mrs H. Weigh (HWH) – Assistant Headteacher
Mrs N. Phillips (NPS) – Director, Operations & Finance
Dr A Howells (AH) – TLA Director of Quality
Mr D. Twambley (DT) – TLA Chief Operations Officer
Clerk: Mrs C. Gritton

Administration

- Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from DB and the meeting was quorate. (RT subsequently advised that he had not been aware of the meeting and his apologies were accepted. RT was invited to and attended the Cheshire Studio School (CSS) LGB meeting on 2nd May 2023). The Chair noted that since the last meeting, James Whittaker had retired, Karen Key had been appointed to the role of Headteacher, and Chris Leigh to the role of acting Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher role from September 2023, interviews were being held later this week. The committee acknowledged James Whittaker’s significant contribution to the Knutsford Schools over many years. Karen Key was congratulated on her appointment and she and Chris Leigh were welcomed to the meeting in their new roles
- Declarations of Interest - There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest. All papers and policies noted had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, unless otherwise stated.
- The Minutes of the meeting of the KA LGB held on 9th January 2023, were approved.
Matters Arising – Paper 3.0 KA Matters Arising Action Log was received and Actions noted thereon. It was confirmed that Cheshire Studio Schools Ofsted report had been uploaded to the school website. The school continues to be Good. Governors were pleased with the outcome and asked that the LGB’s thanks and congratulations be shared with staff and students..
It was reported that the school has received 6 nominations to date, for the role of KA Parent Governor with the closing date for nominations is Tuesday 25th April 2023, following which an election will be held. **It was agreed that** consideration will be given to proposing possible Appointed Governor appointments from the nomination pool, should suitable candidates with appropriate skills be identified. CSS is also running a Parent Governor nomination process, but to date there have been no nominations. **It was agreed that** consideration could be given to asking KA nominated parents whether they would consider being referred for appointment the CSS LGB, should there be no CSS nominations at the closing date. The skills audit of current CSS governors would need to be considered as part of this process.
Governors noted that a helpful finance narrative had been provided by the Trust and thanked AH and the finance team for actioning the LGB’s request. The latest monthly accounts had yet to be received, due in part to the Easter vacation.
Governors noted that further teacher strikes were planned and were made aware of how they may affect the school. The HT was keeping the Chair informed.
It was reported that the Local Authority (LA) continue to produce admission data for parents, which shows the number of school places available against PAN at Year 7. In-year transfers are not calculated against

PAN and parents are often believing that there are places, when this is not the case, but the school are working with parents to support them.

4. School Performance and Welfare

4.1 School Improvement Priorities (SIP) Paper 4.0 HT Report KA LGB 9.01.23 (the Headteacher's Report)

uploaded to GH prior to the meeting, was **received**. The HT reported that school performance continues to be strong. The school's strengths lie in KA and CSS' unique curriculum offer, the well qualified, hardworking and committed staff, the support and accountability afforded to the schools by the Trust and the Good Ofsted reports, noting these strengths. English and Maths remain strong. The next steps are to continue to embed the curriculum and the Knutsford Way, to introduce an ambitious academic programme from Year 7-13 and to prioritise reading and oracy across the curriculum. Three, core values of Ambition, Respect and Kindness, are being introduced along with behaviour relational practice to further support students who are struggling to engage and the development of the personal development curriculum. HT has spoken to the students about these steps and parent feedback has been positive.

Challenge: Governors asked what subjects the academic enrichment programme would introduce. It was reported that the school was looking at ways to introduce Ethics, Sociology and Philosophy, currently only taught at KS4 and KS5, at an earlier stage to improve cultural capital and provide debating skills' higher level opportunities at any earlier age.

Governors noted that the priorities spoke well to the Ofsted key development points, which had been noted by the LGB prior to inspection. **Governors also noted that** progress between the timing of KA's and CSS' inspections had been good, especially in reading.

4.2 Admissions and Pupil Number Update **CLH reported that** Yr7 admission numbers for September 2023 are currently at 220, with 11 on the waiting list. The waiting list is shorter than previous years' and appeals' numbers are fewer. It is unlikely that the school will admit above Pupil Admission Number (PAN) as there are smaller cohorts in feeder schools' years, but projected numbers are healthy for KA's September intake.

4.3 Pupil Progress and Attainment **It was confirmed that [ACTION HT]** the data and accompanying narrative would be circulated to governors as soon possible after the data becomes available. Governors will be able to post questions to GH following the upload of that report].

5. School Welfare

5.1. Attendance **CLH reported that** there had been an uplift in attendance since it was last reported and is at 93.1%, which, particularly when compared to the national average of 90.8%, is strong. However, whilst the school has strategies in place and aspires to improve on this figure, a slight drift following Yr11 leaving, is anticipated. At 12%, persistent absence (PA), is better than the national average, but work is ongoing to reduce the school's PA. Yrs 7 and 8 have particularly good attendance.

Challenge: Governors asked what initiatives are being used to encourage attendance. It was reported that the school works with EWM (Education Welfare Management), who has supported the school with process improvements and with individual cases of absence. Mrs Murphy and the team have been doing impactful work to engage absent students.

DM joined the meeting during this discussion at 4:40pm

Challenge: Governors asked whether there is any evidence that absence affects students' progress. It was reported that nationally pupils statistically identified as PA have a reduced level of achievement.

5.2 Behaviour **HWH reported that** Ofsted had commented on the school's good behaviour record. Staff have worked hard to improve behaviour, post Covid challenges. Internal exclusion processes and facilities have been developed and a whole school detention system is now in place. Staff are supportive of the systems and processes and feel supported in their consistent provision across the school. The systems and processes have been clearly communicated to staff and students and attendance at detentions has improved significantly. The systems and processes are robust and having a positive impact and HWH has clear

oversight of where escalation is taking place and of students who are anticipated as possibly needing additional support.

Challenge: Governors asked whether there are many return detentions. It was reported that there are cases of return detentions.

Students know what the behaviour expectations are, but a small number struggle to manage their behaviour effectively for a variety of reasons. The systems and processes are identifying those students and the pastoral team and Heads of Year are having conversations with those students and their parents, to support them. The target remains to improve behaviour and reduce all suspensions. Students in internal suspensions follow the same lesson plans, as if they were in their timetabled lessons and there is a high expectation of the work being completed whilst in the reset room – which is more structured than when students are on fixed term suspensions out of school. Internal suspensions are regarded as deterrent to repeat poor behaviour and it is anticipated that over time, internal suspension figures will decrease. The gender profile of internal suspensions has shifted; more boys than girls have had internal suspensions and the school is supporting positive modelling of progressive masculinity as well as advising and supporting students about social influences outside of school. As behaviours leading to suspensions are seen greater in higher year groups, the school is also working with the lower year groups to encourage positive behaviours which should prevent them from being at risk of suspension later in their school life. The Reset (internal suspension) room is currently open 3 days a week, but will be opening 5 days a week from September 2023.

Challenge: Governors asked whether there is any more they/the community can do to support the school in its behaviour interventions. It was reported that the community support remains strong. Cards are handed out to local shops with contact details for issues' reporting, the school's links with the local PCSO is good and staff are confident that any anti-social behaviour outside of school is dealt with quickly (where it is appropriate for the school to act).

5.3 Safeguarding CLH reported that the safeguarding team have all completed their level 2 and 3 training. The Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) review has been deferred to early Autumn, due to the clash with the CSS Ofsted inspection, but safeguarding procedures are constantly under review.. Swans counselling attend the school one day a week with a focus on high priority behaviour and are a tremendous support to the school. There has been good support for parental workshops. The Government is due to provide guidance on supporting children who are trans gender and it will be made illegal for adults working with children, to not report suspicious sexual activity. It is anticipated that these matters will be reflected in the next Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance from September 2023. The Trust has introduced the online safeguarding tool, CPOMS across the Trust (already in use at KA) and collaborative work and reporting consistency across the Trust schools is proving helpful. Children in Need (CIN) and Looked After Children (LAC) numbers are higher than usual for this time of year and it is challenging meeting the needs of those children, but the school continues to do its best to support them. **[ACTION: SLT will share the monthly safeguarding bulletin on GH].**

6. Policy Updates

6.1 The Charging and Remissions Policy was approved. AH thanked NPS for her work on updating the Policy, which now includes managing refunds' expectations and the useful appendix addition.

Challenge: Governors asked whether the school still collects donations towards supporting all students being able to access school trips. It was reported that donations to the 'school fund' are still accepted **[ACTION: the school will remind parents and stakeholders about this and communicate the benefit and outcomes of previous donations].**

6.2 Link Governor Monitoring It was reported that the Chair will carry out a safeguarding link governor review visit shortly and Mr Hermitt (of the CSS LGB) will be asked to support the HT carrying out a Health and Safety review.

7. Other Matters

7.1 Local Matters

7.1.1 - Staffing Update – this was reported under part 2 matters.

7.1.2 – Site Matters - It was reported that there will be an upgrade to the staff, 6th form and student toilets over the summer, with trans gender considerations being taken into account.

7.1.3 Risk Register Current priority risks are support staff recruitment difficulties. As reflected across Trust schools and nationally, it is difficult to recruit Teaching Assistants (Tas), cleaners and administration staff. The Trust Board is aware and is looking at ways to make those job offers more attractive, but different schools have different challenges, so the Board is having to be creative in its thinking.

7.2 Matters to Share with the Trust Board

- Governors thanked AH and the finance team for the provision of the finance narrative.
- Governors welcomed the written Trust Board update circulated in April and looked forward to further developments in communications between the LGBs and Trust Board.

7.3 Matters from the Trust Board to Share with the LGB The information in the GH link **7.5 Feedback from the Trust Board held 29th March** was received.

7.4 AOB

- **AH reported that** the trust Chairs' Forum had discussed ways in which the Trust might better celebrate success.
- **AH thanked Governors** for participating in the Trust Equality and Diversity survey. Due to relatively small LGB numbers it is challenging to retain anonymity and produce school level analysis. The decision has been taken to report at Trust level and this will be used to demonstrate compliance with the recent DfE request to publish diversity information on governors and Trustees.
- **Challenge: A Governor asked if all covid tutoring funding had been spent. it was confirmed that** all post Covid tutoring funding had been spent, funding revision days during school holidays, which had been well attended and impactful.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 19th June at 4:00pm	Meeting Closed 6pm
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Minutes approved:

Date:.....