



Local Governing Board to The Learning Partnership

**KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB
MINUTES – Part I**



Date: Tuesday 24th June 2024 at 4:00pm

Present:

Dr C. Millson (Chair) (CM)
Mrs D. Baines (DMB)
Dr D. Baxendale (DB)
Mrs D. Nicholl-Timmins (DNT)
Mr G. Kelly (GK)
Mrs A Sennett (AS)
Dr R. Taylor (RT)

Apologies:

Mr D. Walton (DW)
Mr J Lawes (JLA)

In attendance:

Mrs K. Key (KKY) - Headteacher
Mrs A. Thatcher - (ATR) Deputy Headteacher
Mr C Leigh (CLH) - Assistant Headteacher
Mr C. Parr - (CPR) - Assistant Headteacher
Mrs H. Weigh-Williams (HWH) - Assistant Headteacher

Clerk: Mrs S. Pomeroy

Administration

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed it was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from DW. There were no additional Declarations of Interest made with the business of the meeting.

All papers and policies referred to had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, unless otherwise stated.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Governors approved the minutes of the LGB held on 7th May 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

The Matters Arising report was received. All actions on the report had been completed or were placed on the meeting agenda. The following matters arising were discussed:

- The last three sets of management accounts had been uploaded to Governor Hub.
- No further information was available regarding the leisure centre. Negotiations were continuing between the Trust, Cheshire East and Everybody Leisure.

3. Governor Skills Audit

The clerk confirmed that there were no major training needs identified for the board from the audit. Governors asked what the Trust's position was on Safeguarding training for governors and whether it was best practice to complete basic awareness training alongside staff or to complete training specific to their roles and responsibilities as governors. The clerk would follow up with the Trust.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

4. School Improvement Plan (SIP) [Update 2023-24]

The Headteacher referred to her report and provided an update:

Priority 1- Quality of Education

- ATR had led on this and had worked to add the 'fizz' to teaching and learning.
- Consultation had been carried out with stakeholders on the 'Marking and Feedback' Policy to be launched in July 2024. A new approach to marking was proposed which involves more informed feedback which will have a greater impact on student progress.

- Next steps-The school would adopt the WalkThrus approach, a selection of 150 evidence-based teaching strategies rooted in a deep understanding of how learning works.

Q. Why is the school changing the marking policy?

R. The school has taken account of the wealth of research available on the quality and impact of feedback from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and from the DfE and it was the right time to make a change. The aim is to introduce the best practice which has the minimum impact on staff workload but the maximum impact on student progress. The Trust has bought into the Walkthrus approach which recommends a combination of feedback methods such as written, whole class, live feedback and self/peer assessment.

Q. How does self/peer assessment work?

R. Peer to peer assessment is already in operation but is not consistent across faculties. CPD will take place to ensure a consistent approach. Assessment will focus on what went well, even better if and next steps. Staff will model good feedback to students. The school will also work with the school parliament. Students have discussed inconsistencies in approach, and they want high quality feedback to help them progress.

Q. Do teachers providing timely feedback on tests/exams in a consistent manner?

R. There is a system in place where staff have a given window in which to mark tests and input a grade. Faculties set deadlines for end of unit tests. The school will consider more closely its assessment arrangements and how feedback is provided. The school is mindful of any changes which would increase staff workload.

Q. What has been the impact of the introduction of the “Knutsford Way?”

R. This can be seen in the Quality of Education and qualitative assessments; data has continued to improve. The “Knutsford Way” is evident in lesson monitoring where the use of retrieval starters can be seen. These help students to improve their short and long-term recall of previous learning. Student voice has also shown that students prefer the consistency of this approach. This is especially so for students with SEND needs.

Q. The school is using online programmes for setting homework such as Tassomai and Sparx. How valuable are these programmes?

R. They are designed for a particular purpose and have AI embedded within them. They respond to a pupil’s needs and support their learning and it can feed into lesson planning The Head of Maths demonstrated the Sparx programme to governors at the LGB meeting in May 2024.

Governors commented that the students have become accustomed to completing homework on their phone at different times and lose the rigour of sitting down to complete paper-based homework. AT responded that a hybrid model is used, especially at Key Stage 4.

The 9 Its have been introduced and the school is looking at consistency across the school. These are:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 Read it | 4 Revise it | 7 Apply it |
| 2 Retrieve it | 5 Spell it | 8 Flip it |
| 3 Practice it | 6 Pod it | 9 Bespoke it |

Q. What were the outcomes of the two faculty reviews?

R. The reviews support the long-term work to improve the subjects. Food and Nutrition-the curriculum was re-structured and re-sequenced. The Key Stage 3 review looked at rationale and impact. A theoretical aspect has been introduced to complement the practical lessons. Business studies- the review was progress driven with the aim of increasing progress and attainment.

Q. Would the school consider offering a GCSE in food technology?

R. Food technology is covered in Hospitality. The SLT is reviewing the full curriculum offer and would check whether there is a GCSE course on food technology.

Priority 2- Reducing the SEND Gap

- This will always be a focus area for the school.

- The Headteacher would circulate the data on the attainment gap. **ACTION (Done)**
- Good teaching and learning is good for all pupils.
- Adaptive teaching would be the focus next year.
- There has been a significant amount of SEND training in 2023-24. Staff knowledge in areas such as ADHD and autism has increased, and the impact of the training has been assessed. Staff have been consulted on further training needs.
- The SEND department is well-structured. The school has two expert colleagues in post.
- The Trust SEND review was very positive. The Headteacher would circulate the report on Governor Hub. **ACTION (Done)**
- Staff are integrated in classrooms.

Priority 3- Reducing the Pupil Premium (PP) Gap

- Current PP gap (PP2) in KA: -0.83 (21/188)
- Next steps include targeting PP students for holiday revision workshops, in-school intervention and additional support in-class.

Priority 4-Relational Practice

- Staff feedback identified 'restoring relationships' and 'updates on relational practice' as further areas for development.
- A Relational Practice Protocol will be presented to staff in September 2024 and the aim is to embed the approach. The challenge is to ensure that parents also use the approach.

Priority 5- Personal development and extra-curricular uptake.

- Extra-curricular provision has been mapped from Year 7 onwards.
- 62 clubs are offered, and extra-curricular uptake continues to be strong.
- The school will continue to respond to student and parental feedback.
- A new Breakfast Club is running on both sites, including free breakfast for PP students.

Q. Is there a good take up of the Breakfast Club?

R. Take up is better at the Westfield Drive site.

Q. Do students run any clubs?

R. One student has started a War Hammer club. Next year more clubs will be offered at lunchtime and 6th form students will be involved in running them.

Priority 6-Enrichment

- Summer Term Year 7 SOW first teaching in progress.
- Scholars' Programme -proposal drafted. It is an ambitious programme but is still in the early stages.
- Library installation scheduled for July 2024. The aim is to embed the library into the whole school Reading strategy.
- Key Stage enrichment will become part of the Q of E work.
- The register of more able students has been revised.
- There is an ambition to calendar events.

Q. Are there any leadership roles for pupils for the library/after school clubs like the Sports Leaders programme?

R. There is a leadership thread which runs from Primary school into Secondary. It provides a sense of pride and responsibility for pupils.

5. Priorities for 2024-25

The Headteacher provided an overview:

Priority 1-Quality of Education

- This priority would carry over with the focus on improving the quality of Teaching and Learning (years 7-13).
- Revision strategies to be explicitly taught.
- The Homework 'its' to be carefully audited and tracked to ensure homework positively impacts on student progress.

Priority 2-Reading and Oracy

- Further develop the whole school reading strategy to now make use of the new library (BR) and the existing library (WD).
- Focus on oracy. Pupils will be taught presentation skills and how to cope with feeling nervous when speaking to an audience. There will be opportunities to develop oracy through debating clubs, assemblies, in lessons, competitions and events.

Priority 3- Reducing the disadvantage/SEND gap

- The school will further develop whole school strategies to narrow the PP and SEND gaps.

Priority 4- Personal development

- The SMSC, PSHCE and PD journey has been created and these elements now need to be brought together.

Priority 5- Community and stakeholder engagement

- The school will continue to hold parents' evenings online.
- One event per year for each year group will be planned. Parents want to feel more connected to the school.

Governors commented that many of the priorities are assigned to just two members of the SLT and queried the impact of this on their workload. The Headteacher explained that every member of the SLT and Heads of Faculties also have their own development plans.

Education

6. Admissions and Pupil Numbers -CL/CP

Governors **received** and **noted** the latest data on pupil numbers:

- Numbers are stable across the school.
- KA-1235 in total on roll as of June 2024.
- CSS-118 in total on roll as of June 2024.
- 166 places are confirmed for Year 12. The school may have to consider entry criteria in the long-term.

Q. How many pupils will be admitted in September 2024?

R. 230. This equates to an extra 10 pupils and is unusual as most schools are under-subscribed.

Q. Is it a possibility that the school could take in a whole extra class next September?

R. If this were requested by the Local Authority, they would provide additional funding. There may be an increase in applications from pupils currently at private schools if VAT is added to fees.

7. Attendance-CLH

The headteacher's report provided governors with a detailed breakdown of attendance across the period October 2023-June 2024.

- Attendance remains strong across the Academy when compared to national data (Yr7-11).
- Overall Attendance: DFE = 91.2% / FFT= 91.0% / Knutsford Academy = 93.1%
- PA (Persistent Absentee): DFE = 25.3% / FFT= 25.0% / Knutsford Academy = 14.6%
- The Local Authority key worker provides a good service to the school and offers advice, focus and support.
- The school is working to ensure that its practice aligns with that set out in the DfE's "Working Together To Improve School Attendance" which becomes statutory from August 2024.

Q. Has attendance recovered to pre-Covid-19 levels?

R. No, it is still below, as it is nationally. Knutsford Academy attendance is excellent and we have received two national awards this year for attendance.

Q. What are the reasons for this?

R. There are several factors involved such as mental health issues, school becoming less important for some, and more parents working from home, making it is easier for pupils to stay at home.

Q. What do teachers do when students are on study leave?

R. They work on developmental tasks which are related to whole school priorities/faculty priorities such as reviewing the curriculum, enrichment and transition.

8. Behaviour-HW

The Headteacher informed governors that HWH had worked hard on improving behaviour and this had a positive impact on teaching and learning. The focus would now be on developing and extending the rewards package.

The Headteacher's report included a detailed breakdown by year group and pupil characteristics on behaviour:

- Behaviour in Year 7 is very good. The current Year 7 students will be good role models to the new Year 7 intake in September 2024 when both year groups will be taught at the Westfield Drive site.
- Behaviour in 6th form is good.
- Strategies are in place to address some concerns in Year 10.
- There had been two permanent exclusions and a further one is pending.

Q. What are the issues with Year 10?

R. There are no differences in the ability profile of this cohort. Changes have been made in staffing to react to the absence of the Head of Year and David Cole has taken over as Head of Year. Changes have also been made to detention procedures.

Q. What are SLT detentions?

R. These have added another level of sanctions to detention procedures. They take place on Fridays for 90 minutes and are linked to reducing the number of internal suspensions.

Q. Are the students struggling with their courses? Would they benefit from a CSS pathway?

R. The students are facing a range of challenges. The school is good at getting the students in school and then providing interventions and support to meet their needs. There is a focus on working on behaviour sanctions with Year 9 students currently to prepare them for Year 10.

Governors acknowledged the good work which has taken place in school in relation to behaviour and noted that the consistent approach had had a positive impact.

Welfare

9. Safeguarding: CLH

Key Points were detailed in the separate Safeguarding report. Governors commented on the good range of counselling services available and noted that some were free of charge.

- The Trust has developed a programme of Safeguarding audits which includes Trust audits, SCiES team and peer on peer reviews. The first peer on peer would take place this Friday.
- There are minor changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education for September 2024.

Q. Numbers of children at Child in Need, Child Protection etc are lower than last year. Are these figures realistic?

R. The thresholds for referral are much higher than previously and it is difficult if parents do not engage with social care.

Q. Is the "Staff Safe" system in operation yet?

R. No but training has been carried out and it will be linked to CPOMS.

10. Welfare and Wellbeing- Students:

- Year 7 had completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. The school is now awaiting the appropriate support to be supplied from MHST.
- This questionnaire will be completed with the new Year 7 next academic year, and the school expects further support from MHST.

- A Mental Health Audit was completed with the support of the Trust. The data is to be shared across the Trust.
- A member of the Student Support Team is now working full time in the Sixth Form offering a greater range of support.

11. Welfare and Wellbeing- Staff:

- Work is ongoing in line with the DfE's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter.'
- All requests so far received for flexible working have been approved.
- Staff voice and well-being meetings are offered.
- Strategies and initiatives are detailed in the Headteacher's report.

Q. How does the school measure well-being?

R. This is done through surveys and any concerns raised are addressed. Staff are also able to provide notes and comments. Staff absence rates and turnover can also provide an indication of well-being.

Governors commented that good behaviour in school has a significant positive impact on staff well-being.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

12. Local Policy Approval

None for this meeting.

13. Governor Training Update:

Governors noted the Trust Governor Conference to be held on 13.07.24, 9:00am to 1:00 pm. It would provide governors with the opportunity to network and attend workshops.

14. Stakeholder Engagement-Parents/Carers-JL

JL had been unable to attend the meeting, but an update had been provided in the Headteacher's report.

15. Stakeholder Engagement-Wider Community-JL

JL had been unable to attend the meeting, but an update had been provided in the Headteacher's report. Governors noted that several students had secured apprenticeships following work experience placements and asked if the school has a network of contacts which pupils are aware of. The headteacher responded that the school has a wide range of contacts, and opportunities are published to students. The school provides information and guidance on traditional academic routes and on apprenticeships.

16. Communication- to Trust:

- The Chair requested that minutes from Trust Board meetings be published on the Trust's website. The clerk informed governors that this would be done once the latest set had been approved at the Trust Board meeting on 18th July 2024.
- Governors requested that the Trust work with Cheshire East regarding better provision and outcomes for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school.

17. Communication- from Trust:

- Governors noted the Trust Governors conference to be held on 13th July 2024.
- The Oaks Academy had received an Ofsted rating of good in its recent inspection.

AOB

Governors requested further opportunities to gather staff and student voice during meetings in 2024-25. It was suggested that DNT could attend the student parliament and that staff from different departments could attend LGB meetings. 6th form representatives could also attend LGB meetings, and this would align with the oracy project. The clerk would work with the Headteacher and Chair to plan agendas for 2024-25.

The Headteacher presented CM with a card and flowers as it was her last meeting as both a governor and Chair of the LGB and thanked her for her long service and tremendous contribution to the school.

The meeting closed 6:15 pm.

LGB meeting dates 2024-25:

Monday 16th September 2024

Monday 13th January 2025

Monday 28th April 2025

Monday 30th June 2025

All meetings to take place in school at 4:00 pm

Apologies to the Clerk via Governor Hub or email to spomeroy@tlptrust.com

Minutes approved:

Date:

Summary of actions

Minute	Action	Action/Date
4.0	KKY to circulate data on the attainment gap-SEND	July 2024
4.1	KKY to circulate the Trust SEND report.	July 2024
16	The clerk to report that governors had requested that the Trust work with Cheshire East regarding better provision and outcomes for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school.	July 2024