

Local Governing Board (LGB) to The Learning Partnership



Sir William Stanier School LGB Part I – Meeting minutes

Date: 15th February 2024 at 4:30pm

Governors Present:

Mary Massey (MM) – Chair of Governors
Sean Houlston (SH) – Vice Chair of Governors
Samantha Kay (SK)
Sharon Yates (SY)

Apologies:

Lisa Hodgkison (LH)
Pamela Simpson (PS)

In attendance:

Nicki Gregg (NGR) – Headteacher
Nicola Glynn (NGL) - Deputy Headteacher & Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Michael Smissen (MS) – Vice Principal
Jim Barlow (JB) – Trust Director of Secondary Education
Dr Allan Howells (AH) – Trust Governance Professional
Mark Hill (MH) – Daven Primary School Chair of Governors (observer)
Emma Johnson – Assistant Principal

Clerk: Sharon Dutton (SD) - TLP

Governance and Administration

1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations

The meeting opened at 4:35pm and was confirmed quorate.

MM welcomed all to the meeting and asked each attendee to introduce themselves in turn to the rest of the group.

Apologies were noted and accepted from LH and PS.

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

The following documents were uploaded onto GovernorHub in support of the meeting:

- Education Associates Mike Cladingbowl QA visit 01.02.2024
- Getting to Good Plan 2023
- Data Dashboard Feb 2024
- Headteachers report to governors Feb 2024
- Progress Report Mar 22 Feb 24

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes of the LGB meeting held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 were approved and had been uploaded onto GovernorHub. There were no matters arising.

The following actions were carried forward from the previous meeting. Those highlighted green were confirmed as completed:

ACTION	By Whom	By When
SIP update to be included on next meeting agenda	NGR	15.02.2024
Behaviour (YR8) Chair will have a conversation with the Trust as we are looking at the long-term impact.	MM	15.02.2024
EAL Curriculum to revisit this subject at the next meeting.	NGR	15.02.2024
MM asked to reschedule the Student Voice, which was postponed due to Ofsted, for after Christmas.	Link Governor	Feb 2024

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

3. School Improvement Plan (SIP) – update

The Chair indicated she was pleased with the Getting to Good Plan 2023 which was easy to read particularly with the February 2024 updates and the updates highlighted in blue. MM observed that on the RAG rating evidence, SEND was still an issue of concern with some areas lacking progress.

MM requested that in future authors check all documents carefully as page numbers and clarifying dates were missing from the Progress Report. She also requested that the Headteacher consider incorporating information from the Getting to Good plan into the Progress Report by cross referencing and the addition of dates, timelines and statistics for in-progress and completed actions.

The Chair cautioned the authors of any reports of using the words such as “improve” without clear qualification.

Governor challenge:

How does the Progress Report align with the SIP?

Headteacher response:

The Progress Report is an overview of the school's position since the last full inspection with actions that are linked to the 'Getting to Good Plan'

Governor challenge:

Are there areas which have been completed?

Headteacher response:

Yes, these are the areas highlighted in green. It was considered important they were retained on the report to highlight progress.

It was noted that the Regional Director should be notified of the updates.

4. SEF – Latest Update

It was agreed the documents presented covered this area.

Education

5. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

The Headteacher confirmed that she had uploaded her report to governors for February 2024 onto GovernorHub.

Governor challenge:

Why is there a waiting list for each year group? Does the PAN need revising?

Headteacher response:

The waiting list is often inconsistent in that it is dependent on siblings, birth rates, building works and other variables. The high percentage of first choice applications which had nearly doubled in the last two years was an excellent achievement and highlights the confidence that the local community now has in the school.

Governor challenge:

What is the technical size limit of the school?

Headteacher response:

This is set at 1500. However, whilst the footprint is large the canteen cannot cope.

Governors congratulated the school management on the increased admission numbers.

6. Attendance

The Headteacher reported that there was an improving picture in this academic year compared to 2022/23 with the improvement plan now in place and showing good results. She presented a breakdown of attendance data which showed that attendance figures were up and absences down in all categories. She observed that the Department for Education was clearly concerned about attendance on a national level as evidenced by their “Attendance Matters” initiative.

Many students were missing morning classes more than afternoon ones. A discussion ensued as to the reason why attendance was a continuous problem with areas such as mobile phone usage and parental engagement being the clearest issues.

Persistent absenteeism had dropped by approximately 10% across the school.

Governor challenge:

How had this been achieved?

Headteacher response:

There had been an increased effort in communication with parents and a concentration on the cause and effect of absenteeism in relation to an individual pupil's future. Phone calls and letters occasionally leading to home visits also elicited an often positive response.

It was also noted that the school tended to follow the national trends which enabled the school to predict those same trends and act accordingly.

Governor challenge:

Where a pupil was attending only half a day was there evidence of targeted subjects being missed?

Headteacher response:

There was no evidence of specific subjects being missed.

7. **Behaviour**

The introduction in Week 16 of the movement bell had tightened up punctuality to lessons for the significant majority and highlighted those outliers who claimed to be late rather than truanting. Now, if students were on the corridor after 15 minutes then they were immediately in the Internal Exclusion Room (IER). It was hoped that once this strategy was fully embedded data would improve once again.

A discussion took place regarding Year 8 where those students who were persistently causing concern had been identified and the submission of a plan to the Trust outlining the need for a nurture group and a behaviour group. Once ratified, appointments and provision for the two groups were to be made. The Trust was currently seeking a secondment for the nurture provision from one of its primary schools and it was anticipated that the behaviour role would be advertised externally.

It was noted that the school had secured support from the Trust behaviour lead, Cathy Lord, who was working one-to-one with five selected Year 7s and 8s, their parents and their school staff champion each Monday and Friday on a six-week programme of self-regulation. Another cohort will be selected at the end of each six-week programme.

Governor challenge:

What was the timeline for filling the two positions?

Headteacher response:

The behaviour role was less of a challenge to fill and implementation was aimed at after half-term. The nurture role would take a while longer depending on internal Trust staffing arrangements.

The Trust was thanked for continuing to look at a solution.

Governor challenge:

What is a School Staff Champion and what impact have they had?

Headteacher response:

This was an initiative launched in January 2024 whereby every student had a staff champion who they had chosen themselves. The day-to-day impact of this had been very good primarily due to pupil's opportunity to communicate with staff without boundaries such as form filling and similar. Relationships had improved and individuals' issues had been identified and resolved.

Governor challenge:

Are staff being thanked for this additional task?

Response:

After some discussion it was agreed that pupils write a “thank you” to their individual staff champion using specially issued postcards whilst at the same time being sensitive around those staff who had not been chosen as champions.

8. Curriculum

a) Progress and Attainment

This was outlined in the Progress Report Mar 22 – Feb 24.

b) PP spend impact report.

The Headteacher confirmed that she had met with Mark Bailey, secondary school consultant at Cheshire East and mapped out the school's strategy with regards to pupil premium attendance, literacy, SEND, the low reading age and English as an additional language (EAL). It was felt that this all came down to two significant areas of concern: attendance and literacy, both of which required strategies and in due course staff were to attend training supplied by Cheshire East.

She and the deputy Headteacher were to meet once Mark Bailey had QA'd the strategy to evolve a plan which would be ready for presentation at the end of the summer term.

Governor challenge:

Who is leading the literacy strategy?

Headteacher response:

The EAL lead and the Curriculum Leader in English. . In addition, the school would shortly employ a literacy co-ordinator.

SY offered to provide a space to hold any discussions or events around the Pupil Premium strategy which was gratefully received.

c) SEND (additional to the agenda)

The Headteacher reported that Cheshire East is finding it increasingly challenging to provide Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and had written to all parents informing them of the reduction of EHCP's available.

TLP confirmed they had queried this with the local authority and had received a trust-wide response recommending the deployment of an adaptive teaching lead.

Governor challenge:

How is the SENCo, who is still being trained and developed, progressing?

Headteacher response:

She is growing in confidence and positivity and being ably assisted by the Assistant SENDCo. Additional support is also being provided by the Trust SEND lead.

Governors confirmed that the recruitment of teaching assistants (TA's) was now more essential than ever but that salaries were poor across the sector, so it was difficult to attract suitable candidates.

Governor challenge:

How does the school compare to others in retaining TA's?

Headteacher response:

Very well, but there are not enough of them. Fortunately, many are enthusiastic enough to accept taking on additional hours.

9. Quality of Education

It was requested that in future the Headteacher's Report be numbered in line with the agenda for ease of access.

Governor challenge:

Are the results outlined within the data dashboard based on the most recent mocks?

Headteacher response:

Yes they are and the gap between the GCSE results of 2023 and the Year 11 current grades suggests the areas (and pupils) requiring intensified focus.

a) Teaching and learning

The following observations were made:

- Pupils were being individually targeted by subject leads who were making focused learning plans where required. This was identifying pupils with gaps in their learning either from missed lessons or missed comprehension.
- The Raising Attainment Plan targets (RAP) are based on a flightpath of where staff estimate they can move students to with additional interventions and there are calendared fortnightly RAP meetings taking place with leaders of Maths (new), English (new), Science and Pastoral Year 11 to review the progress and attainment.
- JB confirmed that additional support was being supplied by relevant Trust school curriculum leaders.
- Mock papers were being externally modulated.
- The practice of logging phone calls and messages between parents and staff was being reintroduced.
- Parental engagement was being encouraged with information evenings being held throughout the year with subject leads on hand to discuss how parents could assist in boosting their children's learning. It was acknowledged however, that some parents are far more prepared to engage than others.

Governor challenge:

What is being done to engage difficult-to-reach parents?

Deputy Headteacher response:

Staff keep trying! The level of interaction should lessen as standards improve.

Governor challenge:

There appeared to be no mention of reading in the Headteachers report?

Chair response:

She confirmed she had received an email from the Headteacher explaining why Reading and Pupil Premium were not covered in the report. These would be included in the next Headteacher report after half term.

Governor challenge:

How was the school measuring the positive impact Continuous Personal Development (CPD) was making?

Chair response:

Feedback and reflection from the staffing body and utilisation of the Blue Sky platform.

A discussion ensued focused around management and leadership training as part of CPD. It was important that training was targeted effectively and was undertaken by staff at different times when their workload permitted. Governors explained that modularised programmes were the best way to go where a "pick and mix" of topics could be worked through which encouraged collaboration and engagement.

ACTION: The Headteacher and SY to meet to discuss staff CPD further.

Governor challenge:

Is the Staff Coaching Group still happening?

Headteacher response:

There had been a recent hiatus as the member of staff managing this was currently not in school. The Headteacher and Deputy would revisit this once they had capacity.

b) Literacy and SEND

Nothing to report.

c) Yr8 support

The noticeable spike for week 18 came from the Step Out and Year 8 (Main Building) students. For Year 8, the school had identified those students who were persistently causing concern and submitted a plan to the Trust outlining the need for a nurture group and a behavior group.

Welfare

10. Safeguarding

The Chair confirmed she was happy with the analysis.

Governor challenge:

With regards to the assemblies delivered about Keeping Safe Online and linking in with Online Safety Day, how was the impact of this being measured?

Headteacher response:

Using student voice and weekly analysis on CPOMS.

Governor challenge:

How had student behaviour altered since the advent of the assemblies?

Headteacher response:

The PHSE lead was monitoring student behaviour and would report back in due course.

Governor challenge:

How was the PHSE education being interwoven into the rest of the curriculum.

Headteacher response:

With the use of curriculum mapping. Staff responded to spikes in behaviour by tweaking the curriculum where required.

Governor challenge:

Were all teaching staff covering PHSE education?

Headteacher response:

No, only the form teachers. Other staff were aware of the progress of PHSE education due to the five-year plan.

A discussion took place around the need for feedback from pupils on the assemblies and other similar communications with regards to impact and response.

Governor challenge:

Could the Headteacher expand on the spike in sexual harassment referrals?

Headteacher response:

All incidents were within the school and involved the lower year groups. They were seen as isolated incidents with no repeat offenses and had been dealt with by the pastoral group.

Governor challenge:

Was it worth the school considering introducing role models for the Year 11 boys?

Headteacher response:

Yes, this was a good idea worth considering. It could be expanded to include head students, deputy head boys, buddy systems and a mentoring system. The Headteacher agreed to investigate this.

A further discussion took place around the current funding for the virtual school. It was explained that all pupils accessing the virtual school were looked-after children (LAC) and the Headteacher outlined to governors how the system worked with regards to pupils accessing benefits.

ACTION: Trust to provide clarification for the governors on exactly how the virtual school funding works.

Governor challenge:

Could the Headteacher provide more information on the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) table and comments on page 4 of her report?

Headteacher response:

The Headteacher agreed to clarify this for the next LGB meeting.

ACTION: The Headteacher to expand on the LADO referrals.

11. Wellbeing and Welfare – Student

A regular schedule for Elevate workshops on life exam skills had been implemented. These sessions included topics such as 'Ace Your Exams,' with the first session scheduled for Thursday 15th February, covering 'Time Management' and 'The Finishing Line.' The impact would be reflected in post-half-term mock exams.

There was to be an increase in the frequency of career meetings responding to the need for students to understand the relevance of their education to future job markets and the integration of the use of student champions into students' everyday school life, acknowledging the rising awareness of mental health's critical role in academic success. This would include a focus on enhancing student morale and engagement to improve academic outcomes.

12. Wellbeing and Welfare – Staff

The Headteacher confirmed that the staff well-being survey was now complete. The general feedback had been for more social events, lessened workload and the management of email traffic. In response the School Management Team (SLT) intended to run sessions with staff addressing their concerns and to consult with the union.

It was observed that staff resilience levels had dipped particularly with the Early Career Teachers (ECT) due in part to the increased pressure from parents and students. However, the SLT also felt that many staff had lost sight of how rewarding teaching could be whilst at the same time being difficult. It was felt that staff were articulate about what additional inputs they would like to see but less articulate about what had already been achieved. A discussion took place as to how best to improve this situation.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

13. Local policy Approval

- a) Accessibility Plans
- b) Admission 24/25
- c) First Aid in Schools
- d) Relationship & Sex Education

Governors agreed to ratify these policies with no objections.

14. Governor Training Update

Governors were requested to carry out Prevent and Online safety training and update GovernorHub once completed.

ACTION: The Trust to ensure all Governors were receiving updates on training through GovernorHub.

15. Stakeholder Engagement – Parents/Carers

Engagement with the parents evening was still around the 60% mark and it was hoped that after consultation with school union representatives moving parents' evenings online might increase the willingness to engage.

16. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

A discussion took place around stakeholder engagement within industry. It was acknowledged that there were skills gaps particularly digitally which industry would require filling. However, it was also pointed out that prospective employers sought to recruit resilient employees with positive attitudes and behaviour which needed to be interwoven within the curriculum.

Governors suggested that it would benefit the school if staff from Crewe UTC addressed the school body on the qualities employers and further learning institutions looked for in successful employees.

ACTION: The Trust to investigate further education and employer presentations and the possibility of holding a recruitment and retention day (Trust-wide).

17. Communication - to Trust

Nothing further to report.

18. Communication - from Trust

Governors were reminded to look out for information regarding the upcoming TLP Governors conference which was expected to be held in July.

Governors were thanked for attending the meeting and their continued support.

19. AOB

Nothing to report.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 6th June at 4:00pm

Meeting Closed at 6:31pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....

ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 15.02.2024

Minute Ref	Action	By whom	By when
Page 5 Item 9a)	Headteacher and SY to meet to discuss staff CPD further.	NG/SY	After meeting
Page 6 Item 10	The Trust to provide clarification for the governors on exactly how the virtual school funding works.	Clerk	09.05.2024
Page 6 Item 10	Headteacher to expand on the LADO referrals.	NG	09.05.2024
Page 7 Item 14	The Trust to ensure all Governors are receiving updates on training through GovernorHub.	Clerk	After meeting
Page 7 Item 16	The Trust to investigate further education and employer presentations and the possibility of holding a recruitment and retention day (Trust-wide).	AH	After meeting