



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**CHESHIRE STUDIO SCHOOL LGB  
MINUTES – Part I**



Date: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 4:20pm

**Present:**

Mrs C. Millson (Chair) (CM)  
Mr D. Hermitt (DH)  
Mrs A. Sennett (AS)  
Mr D. Walton (DW)

**Absent:**

Mrs J. Brogan (JB)

**In attendance:**

Mr J. Whittaker – Headteacher (HT)  
Mrs K. Key (KKY) – Deputy Headteacher  
Mr C Leigh (CLH) – Assistant Headteacher [items 1 to 4.1.2 inclusive]  
Mrs A. Thatcher (ATR) – Assistant Headteacher [items 1 to 4 inclusive]  
Mr C. Parr – (CPR) – Assistant Headteacher [items 1 to 4 inclusive]  
Mrs N. Phillips – Director of Operations & Finance  
Dr A. Howells – TLA Director of Quality (AH)  
Mr N. Jackson (NJ) – Former Parent Governor, as observer prior to approval of reappointment as Appointed Governor (Until item 4.6: left at 6pm)

**Clerk:** Mrs C. Gritton

**Administration**

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. No Apologies were received and the meeting was quorate. (JB confirmed her subsequent resignation on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023).
2. Declarations of Interest - There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting of the CSS LGB held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, were **approved**.  
Matters Arising – **It was confirmed that** the school is currently running an election for a new Parent Governor. Former Parent Governor, Mr Jackson, has confirmed that he would like to become an Appointed Governor on the CSS LGB and Governors unanimously supported the recommendation for his appointment. The Chair will complete the necessary form and the Clerk will send it to the Trust Governance Committee for approval. **[ACTION: Chair and Clerk]**. The Chair continues to support the school regarding students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and invited Governors to let the Chair know if they were interested in the role of SEND Link Governor. **The Clerk confirmed that** the Trust does not impose a process on its schools and LGBs with regard to their setting up in-year admissions' panels. Some Trust schools and LGBs have appointed panel members and others take a more ad hoc approach. **It was agreed that** CSS in-year admissions' panels will be convened on an ad hoc basis, as needed.  
Amendments have been made to the Uniform Policy with regard to religious attire, non-discriminatory hairstyles and non-gender uniform and following the meeting, it was confirmed that it had been published on the KA/CSS website.

**4. School Performance and Welfare**

- 4.1 Attendance and Safeguarding Paper 4.0 HT Report CSS LGB 16.01.23 (the Headteacher's Report) uploaded to GH prior to the meeting, was **received**. **CLH reported that**, the school provides 3.75 days' student counselling per week by external agencies. Staff attend a weekly triage meeting to coordinate

student need and services offered. Parental training offered by the school, continues to be well attended. The Chair had attended Trust safeguarding training, aimed at embedding reporting consistency across the Trust schools, and whilst this is a work in progress, feedback has been positive. Safeguarding collaboration across Trust schools is supporting Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and sharing best practice. **It was confirmed that** all CSS staff had read and signed the IT Safe User Policy.

**4.1.1 CLH reported that** Looked After Children (LAC), Child Protection (CP), Children in Need (CiN) and Early Help (EH) numbers remained fairly consistent over time, but the number of students who need additional support with mental health issues, has increased since Covid.

**4.1.2 CLH reported that** the DfE 2022 spring attendance data showed a decline in national attendance levels, as did national Government data. CSS Yr11 attendance is currently 82%, showing an improvement when comparing this group of students to their attendance this time last academic year (79%). Persistent Absence (PA) (attendance less than 90%) is on the rise nationally and before Christmas, national attendance figures were at 88%. However, from the point of entry into CSS, attendance figures are positive overall, suggesting that the students are on the right pathways. **In response to Governor challenge asking whether the PA figures represented a small group of students it was confirmed that** the overall student numbers are such that each individual student represents a high percentage figure, so each student's attendance of the small PA group, has a big impact on the overall figures. **Challenge: Governors asked whether attendance can be tracked and correlated with results at the end of students' journeys. It was reported that** CLH can track that data and **Governors recommended that** the school share that (anonymised) data with Yr9 students to support incentives to attend.

**4.1.3 It was reported that** student reviews are planned for every Yr10 student to discuss attendance, behaviour and additional support where needed.

CLH left the meeting at 4:15pm

**4.2a) The Knutsford Way KKY reported that** every lesson incorporates The Knutsford Way, sharing and embedding best practice across the school. Reading is a particular focus this year. All students are tested for chronological reading age and all staff utilise a common framework and interventions where needed, the result being significant, impactful improvements in reading ages. There is also a focus on making the setting of homework more meaningful as a way to move on students' learning, this work has followed on from student and parent surveys. Revision is also a focus and every year group has been allocated dedicated study skills' days. The Knutsford Way appears to be having the most positive impact for students who are the lower attainers. Further surveys will be carried out for feedback when the strategy is fully embedded. **Challenge: Governors asked whether the use of Satchel One required students' households to have access to computers and the internet. It was reported that** 80% of KA/CSS students' households have access to Satchel One and the schools are working with the other 20% to support their access.

**4.2.1 Challenge: Governors asked about the quality of students' handwriting, concerned about legibility of written examinations. It was reported that** all staff have responsibility for assessing handwriting, but it can be difficult due to increased laptop usage. Primary schools provide secondary schools with examples of each student's handwriting on entry at Yr7, so the school knows of what each student is capable and can ensure they meet the school's high levels of expectation and intervene when necessary.

**4.2.b) Behaviour and Attitudes The HT, on behalf of HWH, reported that** the school has undertaken a review of its expectations, ethos and Behaviour Policy, to ensure clarity. Uniform expectations have been reset and assemblies delivered across the whole school, leading to improvements.

**4.2b).1** The Reset Room, used for internal suspensions, is part of KA and CSS' behaviour policy. Students who attend the Reset Room are expected to do the work they would have done had they remained in their timetabled class and this work is marked by their timetabled teachers. Restorative conversations are part of the reset room process so that the room is not simply used as a punishment. Data shows that the number of internal suspensions has increased, but this was anticipated, because the purpose of this intervention is to reduce the need for external suspensions and early data is promising. **Governors noted that girls' behaviour appears to be improving whilst boys' behaviour had resulted in increased number of**

sanctions **although it was reported that** the figures may simply be representative of there being more boys than girls in KS4 and KS5.

**Challenge: Governors asked whether students are accepting of the ethos of the Reset Room. It was confirmed that** the room is truly used as a reset room; it is a calm environment where staff support students with restorative conversations. The majority of students who attend accept that their behaviour fell below that expected and apologise. Attendance is monitored and repeat attendance is extremely rare (Only 1 repeat incident recorded to date).

**Challenge: Governors asked whether the school could afford the continued resource costs to run the Reset Room. It was reported that** the cost is shared across KA and CSS and is having a positive impact on behaviour.

**Challenge: Governors noted that** it appears that a higher percentage of CSS students per head are using the Reset Room compared to KA student numbers and **Governors asked whether CSS students are actually a small proportion of students who attend.** HWH will analyse the Reset Room attendance data for KA and CSS to ascertain each school's usage and consider any actions thereon. **[ACTION: HWH]**

**Challenge: Governors asked how the critical stage of reintegration into mainstream classes compares between internal suspension and external suspension. It was reported that** restorative meetings have always been held for external suspension and the Reset Room has introduced restorative conversations for internal suspensions.

**Challenge: Governors asked how the school knows the Reset Room has the anticipated positive impact on behaviour. It was reported that** there has been one incident of repeat behaviour. There has been a positive change in students' behaviour and less persistent, disruptive behaviour overall. KA and CSS have very few permanent exclusions.

**4.2.c) Personal Development** **It was reported that** ATR is prioritising delivery on those elements currently contained in the planning document, namely curriculum enrichment and careers and then monitoring these for impact. Personal development overviews have been introduced into schemes of work. CSS has begun to use the online platform VotesforSchools, encouraging verbal discussion and voting on a range of current affairs' topic. The topic resources are of excellent quality and very current. Students can suggest topics for debate and the vote distribution between genders can be compared at school, local and national level.

**4.2.c).1** A Governor joined staff for deep dives in Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), and reported positive feedback.

**4.2.c).2** **ATR reported that** enrichment engagement is an area for improvement amongst CSS students. The school is researching ways to target students' interests and Sports' Leadership and Citizenship are amongst the ideas being considered. The school is also identifying and removing barriers to students taking part in enrichment opportunities. The Positive Masculinity programme has positive benefits for boys and girls, as the boys who attend have gone on to show improved positive social interaction with girls. The school will continue to monitor any correlation between those boys who attend and use of the Reset Room.

**4.3 Staff Wellbeing** **ATR reported that** surveys had been carried out at both school and Trust level and results shared with staff. Results from the school survey (which was completed by 72 members of staff) indicate that the 3 areas for focus are emails, cover and workload. In response, the email protocol has been reviewed and a cover work review is underway. The school is looking to the DfE workload toolkit to address workload concerns and the survey will be repeated next year for comparison. Trust led initiatives and internal awards and support are also in place.

**4.4 Pupil Performance – Careers and Destinations** **ATR reported that** all Yr11 students received careers advice from a careers advisor. Redrow are coming into the school to speak to construction students about apprenticeships. Governors are welcome to attend tomorrow's Careers Fair, which will be attended by over 35 organisations and all students in KA and CSS. **Challenge: Governors asked whether the subjects offered provide the skills students need in the workplace. It was confirmed that** when students are choosing their Yr9 options, the school emphasises the importance of transferrable skills. All CSS students

study the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualification, which supports the learning of skills. The promotion of Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Communication (LORIC) has also increased and is delivered through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) and planned for in personal development overviews.

**In response to a Governor challenge query about the apprenticeship figures, it was reported that** CSS is building on advising students about the importance of apprenticeships with initiatives such as meeting former students who are or have been apprentices and carrying out mock interviews. As previously mentioned, organisations such as Redrow are also building student interest in apprenticeships.

**Governors noted** the 'Other' column in the report and **challenge: asked whether the school knows the destination of that student. It was reported that** the school is aware of their destination and continues to support that student. The HT reported that the school is also considering ways in which it might look into students' resilience in continuing in their chosen destinations and whether we could/should continue to be in touch with some leavers over their first year of employment to continue to support them if necessary.

**4.5 Admission and Pupil Number Update** **It was reported that** KA and CSS have received 206 applications to the 6<sup>th</sup> form, for September 2023 entry; 67 are external applicants who will be interviewed as part of their welcome to the school. The demographic of the applicants reflects the wide ranging offer of the CSS/KA provision.

NJ left at 6pm

**4.6 Yr10 and Yr12 Options** **It was reported that** Yr9 is currently the biggest year group with 249 students so the school is going to need more classes and therefore may lead to an expanded curriculum offer for Yr10, which it is hoped, can be offered in part at CSS. CSS students attend blended classes with KA in core subjects English, Maths, Science, PE and PSHE and their options offer support in employability skills and work experience. Option trends are being identified across the schools and pools amended to suit those choices. Creative Media is now a fully-fledged Media Studies A' Level and is now offered at CSS. The Football Academy continues to attract students who show talent in their PE lessons, as well as external applicants. All CSS and KA students access the same work experience, careers advice, the 6<sup>th</sup> form common room, pastoral programmes and UCAS guidance. All students are offered 1-to-1 support whilst making their decision about whether to attend 6<sup>th</sup> form. CSS is seen as an attractive proposition of equal value to the KA 6<sup>th</sup> form.

**4.7 Pupil Progress and Attainment** **It was reported that** some of the more vulnerable students attend CSS and proportionally, Pupil Premium (PP) numbers are higher than KA. Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are on the increase nationally, as reflected at the school. Trial 1 results are not where they need to be, but are usually lower at this point than at Trial 2 and SLT are confident that Yr11 results will be where they need to be by the summer term. There are no major concerns and intervention initiatives are in place to support Yr11. The Yr10 data is more positive and is already surpassing the current Yr11's data at this point last year. Last year's average was a C- at A' Level and is showing improvement this year, as Yr12 are already at an average C grade.

## 5. Policies

**5.1.1** Charging and Remissions Policy – The school was exploring whether a Trust-wide policy was available. An update will be provided to Governors when available. **[Action NP]**

The following policies had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting:

**5.1.2** Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy – **Approved**, subject to minor typographical amendments already notified to SLT.

**5.1.3** Early Careers' Teachers Policy – **Approved**.

**5.1.4** Relationships and Sex Education Policy – **Approved**.

**5.1.5** Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions – **Approved**.

**5.1.6** Health & Safety Policy – **Approved**. **Governors asked whether the school is receiving the support it needs from the Trust with regard to Health and Safety. It was reported that** the Trust had arranged for the Headteacher to complete Health and Safety training. There had been no reported accidents. The school is

finding it challenging to recruit a site manager, cleaners and TAs. This is a problem currently experienced by many schools, nationally and the Headteacher is discussing this with the Trust Executive.

**5.2 Policy Register** **AH reported that** the Trust is currently devising a Policy Register to provide consistency in review dates across the Trust and, where possible, to align polices throughout Trust schools. KKY offered assistance to AH.

**5.3 Link Governor Monitoring** **The Chair reported that** safeguarding is working well at the school and SEND monitoring will recommence shortly, following the return to school of the SENDCo.

**6. Governor Training Update** **The Clerk reported that** there had been no concerns raised by the last Governors' skills' audit and the clerk invited volunteers to complete the online permanent exclusion training to support all Trust schools.

## 7. Other Matters

**7.1 Finance Update [ACTION: AH]** **AH will ask the Director of Finance whether it is possible to provide a short, high level narrative on the monthly management accounts for Governors.** Nationally, all schools are facing financial challenges, but the Trust is monitoring the situation and the Government has indicated that there will be further financial support forthcoming and there are no financial performance concerns around the Trust as whole. **Challenge: Governors asked whether the Trust retains a healthy balance for the school. It was reported that** CSS has a balanced budget and has not needed to use its reserves. It is anticipated that there will be in-year opportunities to take financial decisions to maintain a balanced position, but it can be managed through normal activities and no changes are currently anticipated.

**7.2 Risk Register** Current priority risks are support staff recruitment difficulties for TAs, site staff, technicians and cleaners and the Trust is supporting the Headteacher with those recruitment issues. The boilers may need replacing and the Trust has carried out a condition survey across its sites to ascertain priority works with the aim of ensuring equality and energy efficiencies across the Trust.

**7.3 Local Matters** Reported under Part 2.

**7.4 Matters to Share with the Trust Board** As 7.1 herein and 7.3 and 8.3 under Part 2.

**7.5 Matters from the Trust Board to Share with the LGB** Nothing in addition to that already discussed herein.

**7.6 AOB** Nothing to report.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 4:00pm**

**Meeting Closed 6:50pm**

Minutes approved: .....

Date: .....