



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance  
**CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL LGB**  
**MINUTES**



**Date: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.30pm**

**Present:**

Mr T. Pear (TP) (Chair)  
 Mrs J. Trevers (JT) (Vice Chair)  
 Mrs Z. Morris (ZM)  
 Mr P. Griffin (PG)  
 Mrs N. Leese (NL)

**Apologies:**

Mrs N. Nee (NN)

**In attendance:**

Miss J. Mason, Headteacher (the HT)  
 Dr A. Howells, TLA Director of Quality (AH)

**Clerk:** Mrs A. Vining

Administration		Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Quorum</b>	
<b>a</b>	The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.	
<b>b</b>	Apologies were received from Mrs N. Nee (NN). The meeting was quorate. Unless otherwise stated, all papers referred to had been uploaded to GovernorHub (GH) prior to the meeting.	
<b>c</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of prejudicial or personal interest.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	
<b>a</b>	The Minutes of the Castle LGB meeting held on 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved and will be electronically signed on GH by the Chair.	<b>Chair</b>
<b>b</b>	<u>Matters Arising</u> There were no matters arising.	
Strategic Direction and Progress against Priorities		
<b>3</b>	<b>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b> This has been amended to read Term 1, Term 2 and Term 3, i.e. full terms rather than half-terms. Terms 4, 5 and 6 will no longer be needed. <u>Term 1</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths Mastery: KS1 training and delivery with Rekonreks (like abacuses) has been carried out. Children should be able to recognise number very quickly. The Maths Lead has attended a development programme, a meeting with his mentor and has a task to complete for her.</li> <li>• Curriculum – maximising standards in writing. An extra member of staff will work with Y5 and Y6, and children now have Writing in groups of no more than 10 or 12. It is hoped for more GD writers. <b>Challenge:</b> <i>how long has this been in place?</i> She started in the middle of November. <i>Can any positive development be seen yet?</i> Progress can be seen, although there is only one GD writer at the moment; it is hoped this will increase. On the recommendation of Jo Young, Primary Director, a consultant from Entrust (the Lead Moderator for writing in Staffordshire) has looked at all books from Y2 – Y6 and has provided advice for staff. She will visit next week for observations and will produce a report. Hannah has done moderator training and will do a relevant assessment.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two staff (Alec and Charlotte) will attend a Trust moderation tomorrow, led by Sally Dakin. AH commented that the aim is to enhance moderation, share skills and good practice across all schools in the Trust. It is hoped that more opportunities will be found for similar strategies. The HT was noted that staffing capacity means that as staff cannot necessarily be released on all occasions.</li> <li>• <b>Challenge:</b> <i>is this to benefit the school or the Trust?</i> JM feels that it will benefit the Trust more than the school. <i>How is this impacting on the teaching?</i> The HT noted that an extra teacher was employed this year, JM teaches Maths, and there are TAs in classes. However, the extra funding for this may not be available next year so this would need to be kept under review.</li> </ul>	
<b>Education</b>		
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Admissions and Pupil Numbers</b></p> <p>The latest numbers by year group was provided in the Headteachers report. In year movements was also provided. Y4 and Y6 – one child from each year have moved to other schools. <b>Challenge:</b> <i>were they from the same family?</i> No, one was due to which high school they were going to go to. The Y4 child lived in Congleton and moved to be in the same school as family members.</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>did the expected four children join Nursery?</i> They have.</p> <p>A Y1 child will join in three weeks, two more will join after half-term and two more after Easter in Nursery. Because there are more children going into Nursery, there will be more than 30 children in that classroom, so Y1 will join Y2 while Nursery and Reception stay together.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Attendance</b></p> <p>Chickenpox, scarlet fever and mumps have all been circulating. Some children have had holidays; this seems to be an increasing trend since Covid. Approval for holidays is always declined. <b>Challenge:</b> <i>are the holidays because school dates are slightly different in different areas?</i> This is an issue, as there are more differences than usual this year. <i>Are families fined for taking children on holiday?</i> JM felt it was unfair at half-term due to school dates that did not match. <b>Challenge:</b> <i>what is the Trust's view on it?</i> The Trust is trying to work on greater alignment in holidays and PD days. A few schools have adjusted their dates, in consultation with families. A conversation may be needed with the two Staffordshire schools who have joined the trust. JM pointed out that it will affect Castle's attendance every year while this situation continues. There is no easy solution, as there will always be parents with children in different LAs. There is no formal Trust position, but the Trust will try to help. AH has picked up no desire from Trustees to force any strategies. JM reported that there are many fewer differences next academic year.</p> <p>AH noted that the government has asked schools to implement strategies to improve attendance. It was noted that known underlying causes for lower absence figures include illness and holiday misalignment. It was also noted that with smaller numbers of children each child has a bigger impact on percentages. It was noted that governors discussed how to improve attendance and setting a high target at length at the last meeting.</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>there were 27 children with 100% attendance in the autumn term. Is that higher or lower than previously?</i> JM is not sure, although with small pupil numbers caution is needed on year-on-year numbers. <i>Are those children recognised and rewarded?</i> Yes.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>There have been no behaviour issues. Children have worked hard and played well.</p>	

	<p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>how can governors be sure that behaviour issues are being recorded well?</i> Issues are recorded on CPOMS but there have been no reports. <i>How can governors and HT be assured that people are recording everything they need to?</i> Because JM is with staff and children all day; children are good at reporting when someone has been in trouble. JM always deals with football incidents but there have been none. Children enjoy their learning, enjoy going out to play and know the boundaries.</p> <p>AH commented that across the Trust there has been work around the manner in which reporting consistency and quality of the data has been defined to increase consistency. This will allow comparison of data across schools. <b>Challenge:</b> <i>is training happening around this?</i> Yes, the HT confirmed this is occurring across the Trust.</p>	
7	<p><b>Curriculum – Progress</b></p> <p>The new data sheets have been completed at the request of the Trust.</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>how are you finding these?</i> They are time-consuming, but JM would like to reserve judgement. <i>Is that because they might be useful in the future?</i> No, they are easy to complete, but laborious. JM is not sure about the reason behind doing them that way, however, she is having conversations with the Trust leadership on this issue in the next few weeks. To be carried forward to the next meeting.</p>	TP
8	<p><b>Curriculum – Attainment</b></p> <p>Not discussed.</p>	
9	<p><b>Curriculum – Link Governor Monitoring</b></p> <p>JT commented that a schedule should be produced to ensure that more governor monitoring visits are made. TP commented that the group has changed so a revised schedule should be produced.</p> <p>JM noted that a Grade 4 was achieved for the monitoring visits for H&amp;S and Compliance. This was a good result and JM thanked those governors involved.</p>	TP / JT
<b>Welfare</b>		
10	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>There have been no safeguarding incidents.</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>has Michael taken on the role of Safeguarding Lead?</i> No, JM and he are doing it together until he is confident and ready. He is Deputy DSL. All DSL training has been updated. Michael attended the last Trust safeguarding meeting. If an incident were to happen Michael and JM would discuss it and deal with it together.</p>	
11	<p><b>Welfare and Wellbeing – Students</b></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	
12	<p><b>Welfare and Wellbeing – Staff</b></p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>it was noted that staff morale was quite low in the past; are they happier now?</i> The cloud is lifting a bit, following the death of the member of staff in 2022/23 which had a profound impact on various members of staff. Some staff were still very emotional last May. JM had a conversation with the CEO about how she and other staff would react when Ofsted came because of the emotional impact on staff and children. JM has to manage this quite carefully as with a small staff impacts are high. Staff are very supportive of each other. Governors thanked JM for all she has done to support the staff, leading them through a difficult time.</p>	

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement		
13	<p><b>Local Policy Approval</b></p> <p>JM used the list from the previous clerk. AH reported that he will review the list when a new clerk is in place.</p> <p>First Aid, Health &amp; Safety, Behaviour &amp; Exclusion and Early Career Teacher Policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no substantive changes.</p> <p><b>All policies were approved.</b></p>	
14	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement – Parents/Carers</b></p> <p>Following the last governors’ meeting, TP has tried to draft a contribution for the newsletter but is keen to strike the right note. He will share a draft with other governors for comment. It was suggested that this could reflect on governors’ view of the school – perhaps referencing Ofsted and the good attendance – TP could speak to JM about what she thinks is a highlight governors can reflect on.</p>	
15 a	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community</b></p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>does PG have any ideas on how to engage the local community?</i> This is being considered a lot at church. There will be a gathering of potentially lonely senior members of the community on the second Tuesday of the month. PG wondered if some of the children might come and perform something or give ideas of what they are doing.</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> <i>what does JM think about this?</i> She will consider this and report back to the next meeting. A number of pupils and their parents attend the monthly worship at St Thomas’.</p> <p>The church is looking to engage with governors on any ideas they might have.</p> <p>It was noted that engagement with the local community has been difficult. This sounds very positive; perhaps the church community could support the school with hearing reading and similar matters. PG agreed that the church will look forward to working with the school.</p>	JM
b	<p><u>ID Cards on lanyards</u></p> <p>These have been produced for governors. It was agreed that it is important to wear these so that governors are easily identifiable.</p>	
16	<p><b>Communication – To Trust Executive, Trust Board, Education, Standards and Performance (ESP) Committee</b></p> <p>To be carried forward to the next meeting if JM wishes to take anything to the Trust Board.</p>	
17	<p><b>Communication – From Trust Executive, Trust Board, Education, Standards and Performance (ESP) Committee</b></p> <p>AH confirmed that another school, Dove Bank, joined the Trust from 1 January 2024. AH met the governors who were engaged. It may be that governors from the two schools could work together.</p>	
18 a	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>JM and TP will discuss an alternative date to 21 February, avoiding Wednesdays until after Easter. Thursday 29 February was one possible date; AH will identify some support for the meeting. Governors and JM agreed that 5pm is the preferred start time although Wednesdays are difficult for some.</p>	JM / TP
b	<p><u>Jessica Travers</u></p> <p>JT was wished all the best with the forthcoming birth of her baby.</p>	

<b>c</b>	<u>Natalie Nee</u> It was noted that NN has resigned from the governing body. She was thanked for everything she has done for the governors and the school.	
	<b>The meeting closed at 1930.</b> <b>Date of next Meeting: to be arranged.</b>	

**Table of Actions – LGB – 16.01.24**

Agenda No.	Action	Who?	When?
2a	Chair to sign minutes on GHub.	Chair	asap
7	New data sheets to be discussed at the next meeting.	TP	next mtg
9	TP and JT to produce a new schedule for governor monitoring visits	TP JT	asap
15	JM will report on ideas for children to visit church group	JM	next mtg
18a	TP and JM to consult governors about the date of the next meeting	TP JM	asap