



Local Governing Board to The Learning Partnership

CHESHIRE STUDIO SCHOOL LGB

MINUTES – Part I



Date: Monday 27th January 2024 at 4:00pm

Present:

Dr C. Millson (Chair) (CM)
Mrs D. Baines (DB)
Dr D. Baxendale (DB)
Mrs D. Nicholl-Timmins (DNT)
Mrs A Sennett (AS) (for items 1-6)
Dr R. Taylor (RT)
Mr D. Walton

Apologies: Mr G. Kelly (GK)

In attendance:

Mrs K. Key (KKY) - Headteacher
Mr J. Lawes (JLA) - Senior Deputy 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
Mr J. Barlow (JB)- TLP Trust Director of Secondary

Clerk: Dr A. Howells - (AH) - TLP Director of Quality

Administration

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted. The meeting was quorate. There were no additional Declarations of Interest.

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

2. The Minutes of the previous meeting of the LGB held on 16 October 2023, were approved.

Matters Arising – The Matters Arising report was received. All actions on the report had been completed or were placed on the meeting agenda, with the exception of agreeing a link-SEND governor. The Chair would work with the HT to resolve this action outside the meeting.

2c. The LGB received a confidential written update on the Knutsford Academy/Cheshire Studio School Site Strategy. The summary document highlighted the key areas of need and then identified the current strategy, key capital projects and timescales to meet this need. LGB members then reflected upon the discussions ongoing in the local community regarding the Local Authority's financial challenges and the impact that this might have on the Leisure Centre. KK and AH noted that the Trust was maintaining a keen and positive interest in these developments and would engage key stakeholders at the appropriate time. Governors were encouraged to relay any community insight or intelligence on these developments to the Headteacher. All agreed that it was important to maintain a positive PR profile with the community and Local Authority and other key stakeholders during this time of uncertainty.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

Paper – Headteacher's Report January 2024 was received.

3. School Improvement Plan (SIP) The Headteacher's report provided a summary update on the progress made against School improvement priorities. Six themes were reported against and governors were provided with a set of actions being taken within each theme. Governors noted and **endorsed** the actions being taken to maintain and improve the Quality of Education, which were presented as "The Knutsford Way". Staff training and development activities were being focussed on Learning and Teaching that supported this. Governors noted the actions being taken to close the attainment gap for SEND pupils, which included a staff training focus on ADHD and Autism. The school had also revised its SEND staffing structures and this was expected to support a positive improvement. Governors noted the positive attainment gap (+0.33) for SEND pupils in the Studio School. Governors **endorsed** the ongoing actions that were planned for the remainder of the year.

A beehive strategy, based on a model developed through the Education Endowment Foundation, was in operation to assist on closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils, with a particular emphasis on Pupil Premium (PP) and SEND pupils. The strategy focused on relational practice as well as teaching and learning.

The school continued to place a positive emphasis on extra curricular activities. 62 clubs were offered by the school and uptake remained strong. A whole school survey was being launched in the spring term to capture more data on participation and motivation, and also explore what activities and achievements pupils were doing outside of the school.

The School was keen to ensure that enrichment was available to support more able pupils. This included maintaining an up to-date register which was linked to FFT targets. The Student Parliament would also be involved to discuss how enrichment opportunities could be inclusive and accessible to pupils in the Academy and Studio School. Governors **challenged** whether the school could support pupil participation in individual as well as team based activities and sports. It was acknowledged that with limited resources then support might have to take the form of signposting. However, the school was keen to recognise participation and achievement whether it was inside or outside school.

Education

4. Admissions and Pupil Numbers Governors **received** and **noted** the latest data on pupil numbers. Pupil numbers had remained stable, rising from 127 to 129 during the period October- Feb.

5. Attendance The headteacher's report provided governors with a detailed breakdown of attendance across the period October 23- Feb 24. Governors **recognised** that attendance remained challenging across the Studio School, and this was affected in part by higher levels of PP and SEND pupils. Governors also **noted** that the attendance data was more susceptible to large percentage point swings due to the much smaller numbers in the cohorts. The overall attendance rate was 84.2% which contrasted against a DFE national figure of 91.6% and a FFT comparison of 91.4%. The Persistent Absentee rate was 47.5% against a DFE comparison of 27.4%. Governors **challenged** why these numbers were below sector averages. The Yr11 cohort included some entrenched patterns of non attendance, and some of this was associated with pupil poor mental health. Governors were provided with four case examples to illustrate the challenges faced by the pupils and how this impacted their attendance.

The school was continuing to promote the campaign "Moments matter, attendance counts", and had written letters to parents, undertaken assemblies for pupils and published posters and digital messages to support the campaign. Governors **challenged** what impact the additional investment in staffing to support attendance was having. The new member of staff continued to focus on an individual pupil case load, had undertaken home visits and was providing support to class teachers.

6. Behaviour The headteacher's report included a detailed breakdown by year group and pupil characteristics on behaviour. No exclusions had taken place. The number of incidents across the school was relatively low. Where behaviour was falling short of the required standards, staff were working closely with pupils.

Governors asked about the impact of the RESET room. The internal RESET system was functioning well, with the RESET room available 5-days per week, and it appeared to have prevented or reduced the need to apply individual fixed-term suspensions. Governors were advised that a support plan was put in place for a student upon their return from a suspension and it appeared that this approach was delivering a positive improvement in behaviour.

7. Curriculum Progress The Headteacher's report provided a detailed breakdown by subject on progress for Yr12 and Yr13 . The report also provided a summary of six core actions that were ongoing to support and enhance progress. After half term there would be a focus on flipped learning, revision sessions and workshops. Monitoring was regular and progress at the subject-level continued to be measured against national benchmarks using an ALP Thermometer. Governors **challenged** why some subjects were classified at a lower level (i.e. bottom 25% of national benchmark). A range of reasons were provided that included curriculum sequencing and small cohort numbers in some subjects. Governors **challenged** whether there was sufficient time and resources to make improvements. The SLT were confident that the final outcome data would be higher than position presented. Governors **queried** how frequently the data was updated. The SLT confirmed that there were 3 data updates plus trial (mock) examination data, and that this frequency enabled targeted intervention to be made on individual subjects and pupils. Governors **requested** that subject leaders attend the next meeting to provide a presentation on progress performance. **[Action SLT 7 May 24]** Governors **asked** what was "flipped learning". This is where pupils are invited to undertake learning (e.g. pre-reading) in advance of a classroom session. This was seen as an important skill for 6th form pupils in advance of advancing onto Higher Education.

A detailed breakdown of progress data for Yr10 and Yr11 was provided within the Head teacher report. FFT50 targets were used in the CSS to promote challenge and support aspiration raising, however, due to the small cohort sizes, governors were reminded that the data was susceptible to large percentage-point swings. Action Plans were in place. Yr11 focus during the second half term and over Easter would be towards revision workshops, examination techniques and subject specific focus on curriculum areas where pupil performance was less strong. The revision workshop attendance would be a mixture of open invitation and directed. The Deputy Head was working with Faculty and Subject leaders using 3 years of historical data to identify and deploy suitable interventions to enhance student progress.

8. Curriculum Attainment: (included in minute 7 above).
9. Curriculum Destinations: The Head teachers report provided a summary table which identified four key themes on why pupils did not choose KA/CSS for sixth form studies. The results were acquired from pupil surveys and each theme included a mixture of partial and personal factors. Themes included travel, sibling locations, curriculum offer and the opportunity to experience learning in a different location. The SLT had reviewed this data, along with feedback from pupils that had made positive choices. One change that had resulted was a shift in the entry requirements taken where it is now "advisable" rather than a "must" for pupils to secure a GCSE grade 6 students in order to study the subject at KS5. It was reported that application to study at the 6th form in 24/25 were still being received, although current numbers were projecting an intake greater than in 23/24. A governor **challenged** whether there was any bias being applied to encourage pupils to study academic qualifications to progress into Higher Education. The SLT confirmed that vocational pathways were supported and promoted, and that the Cheshire Studio School was an integral element supporting this.
10. Curriculum – Link Governor Monitoring: The Chair confirmed that link governors had been allocated, and that a number of visits and reports had been undertaken with others already planned to take place during the term. Governors would consider activity with the Academy as well as the Studio School. The Chair reported that she had participated in two Student Parliament meetings, where that had been a focus on

behaviour and rewards. The behaviour and rewards system was viewed positively by pupils. However, there was an understanding within the SLT and staff base that more work was needed to ensure that the award of praise points was consistent across the different subjects within the school.

Welfare

11. Safeguarding: A summary report had been provided to Governors. **It was reported** that four key areas of activity were being undertaken. These included the preparation of an action plan following a successful and secure SCIES audit; staff training being updated; basic awareness and prevent training made available to governors; and increasing the awareness within the student body on how to raise a concern. Governors were updated on the outcomes of an EDI review commissioned by the SLT and undertaken by a former governor following a parental complaint in the autumn term. The Review included a mixture of document and desk-based activities supplemented with observations of behaviour and conduct. The school was now preparing a response and action plan that would seek to develop a more inclusive culture within the school, built around a social, moral and cultural education theme. Embedding the approach would include greater staff awareness of cultural events and festivals, along with a programme of work for all students that focused on the use and impact of specific language.
12. Welfare and Wellbeing- Students: Four key areas of work were being undertaken. These included resilience surveys with Yr7 and Yr12; ongoing and increased access to counselling support; enhanced mental health support, working with MHST; and a review of the office space at Bexton Road site to assess the impact on services provided. Governors **queried** whether demand or awareness around mental health issues was increasing, and the answer provided indicated that it was a combination of both.
13. Welfare and Wellbeing- Staff: A staff wellbeing audit had been undertaken. A summary of points raised was included in the Headteachers Report. The school leadership was focusing on three areas of activity this term that related to workload, individual accountability, and supporting staff to take individual responsibility for their own and colleagues wellbeing.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

14. Local Policy Approval
 - Charging and Remissions -- Approved.
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding -- Noted and endorsed.
 - Relationship & Sex Education -- Noted and endorsed.
 - Supporting Children with Additional Health needs-- Noted and endorsed.
- 15 Governor Training Update: The Chair reminded all governors to undertake (and then log on Governor Hub) training on Prevent and Safeguarding. **[Action Governors- 7 May 24]**
- 16 & 17 Stakeholder Engagement The headteacher has introduced a parent forum, comprising of around 85 parents from across all year groups. The aim was to increase parental feedback on specific topics to supplement feedback from existing parent surveys. The recent performance of "Chicago" had received positive parental feedback. The Chair of the Trust also attended and had indicated that he would like to spend a day in school with performing arts pupils. It was noted that the community engagement from Barclays (Bank) had curtailed recently. Governors suggested that the SLT should consider issuing a communication to parents to see whether other local businesses could support and contribute to the school.
18. Matters to Share with the Trust: Governors expressed concerned by the increasing frequency of inappropriate parental behaviour exhibited towards staff and toward members SLT. It was **agreed** to discuss the issue at the next Chairs' Forum. **[Action Clerk- 14 March]**

19. Matters to Share from the Trust: Dove Bank Primary school has joined the Trust on 1 January 2024.

20. AOB – The Chair wish to record her personal and the Board’s congratulations to Mike Cladingbowl who had been recognised and awarded the MBE in the 2024 New Years Honours list.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 4pm

Meeting Closed 18:24pm

Minutes approved:

Date:

Summary of actions

Minute	Action	Action/Date
7	7. Heads of Core subjects, Maths, English and Science to attend the next meeting to provide a presentation on progress performance	SLT 7 May 24
15.	15. All governors to undertaken and then log into Governor Hub training on prevent and safeguarding.	Governors 7 May 24
18	18. Concern about an increase in inappropriate parental behavior exhibited towards SLT to be discussed at Chair Forum.	Clerk 14 March 24