



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB
Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams
MINUTES – Part I



Date: 21st June 2021 at 4pm

Present:

- Mrs C Millson (Chair)
- Mr D McGarvey (Vice Chair)
- Mr D Baxendale
- Mr R Taylor (RT)
- Mr P Woodhouse
- Mrs V Young (VY)

Absent:

In attendance:

- Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher
- Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher
- Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher (item 16)
- Mr C Parr – Assistant Headteacher (item 12) (CP)
- Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
- Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance (NP)
- Clerk:** Mrs C Gritton

Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting, particularly Mrs Padget, new to the KA LGB and quoracy was confirmed.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. Subject to an amendment to paragraph 6.3, to amend 17% General Annual Grant (GAG) to 11% GAG, the **Minutes** of the meeting held on **1st March 2021** were **approved**.
4. **LGB Composition**
 - 4.1 It was **reported** that the TLA Governance and Search Committee had approved the following appointments to the KA LGB:
 - The reappointment as Appointed Governor, of Mr R Taylor for a term of four years, immediately following the expiry of his current term on 7th July 2021.
 - The reappointment as Appointed Governor, of Mrs V Young for a term of four years, immediately on the expiry of her current term on 31st August 2021.
 - The appointment as Appointed Governor, of Mrs J Padget as of 9th June 2021, who has moved from the CSS LGB.

It was **reported** that Mr T de Jong has not contacted the Chair, Clerk nor NP and his term as Appointed Governor expired on 20th June 2021 and will not be renewed. Mr M Stride’s term of office as Appointed Governor has also expired and will not be renewed at his request. The Chair has thanked Mr Stride for his work with the LGB and the Chair will contact Mr de Yong to thank him for his work. Any suggestions to fill the two Governor vacancies on the KA LGB are to be put to the Chair, the Clerk or NP. Following the outcome of the Skills’ Audit discussed at item 7, NP suggested that it may be beneficial to appoint a new Governor from the education sector.

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

5. **Matters for the Trust Board to Share with LGB** – The Trust Board’s vote of thanks to staff and Governors for their work during Covid, was shared.
6. **Monthly Report and Finance Update – Paper 6.0 Knutsford Finance Report** had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and was **received**.
 - 6.1 The COO apologised that the monthly reporting had not begun due to finance integration delays. The COO screen-shared the April 2021 Report which, it was **reported** showed a positive financial position. The deficit budget set at the beginning of the school year was based on the lagged funding position. Due in part to Covid, a small surplus is now anticipated. Key drivers are the lower than anticipated SEND allocation and staffing changes in the Senior Leadership team (SLT). Governors noted that receipt on monthly reporting would be useful for the LGB but critical for the Headteacher to receive to enable him to run the school.

- 6.2 Reserves, which have been developed over time as insulation for lagged funding, are robust, have increased and are now 12% of GAG. The COO and Headteacher are discussing possible reinvestment options for the 7% of GAG reserves held over the Trust target of 5%.
- 6.3 The School Condition Allocation (SCA) was paid to the Trust only recently and has therefore been allocated to the Trust schools on a pro-rata basis based on pupil numbers and the KA allocation is £182k. A Trust-wide estates' survey will be carried out to assess and prioritise risk and need and prepare a 10-year plan for the allocation and utilisation of future SCA funding to the Trust. **Governors asked when the estates' survey will be fed into schools' 2021/2022 budgets.** It was reported that it is anticipated that it will be over the summer/autumn term, but in any event well in advance of the spring/summer terms in which the Trust can move forward with the works.
- 6.4 The COO and Headteacher met to discuss the 2021/2022 budget. The staffing budget (85% of costs) has been agreed and non-pay elements are to be finalised. Staffing costs may increase to support SEND need. **Governors asked to what extent Cheshire Studio School's (CSS) and KA's budget overlap.** It was reported that the figures provided are for KA. There is however, a financial crossover between CSS and KA, captured by an element of costs allocated to CSS, representative of the integrated staffing. **Governors noted the co-dependant nature of CSS and KA and their shared leadership and asked whether there remained a logic to keep their finances separate.** It was reported that the two schools' curriculums are delivered in very different ways, and they each have an independent ethos and vision, making them unique entities. Retaining their individuality allows greater flexibility to run differing offers to students with greater potential for achievement. Their having separate Unique Reference Numbers (URNs) also provides increased financial advantages.
- 6.5 **Governors asked whether there is an upper limit on reserves.** It was reported that there is no upper limit for academies, but the Trust target is 5% of GAG. It is currently higher because previous auditors used a higher figure. **Governors asked whether any of the reserves over 5% of GAG, could be used by other Trust schools.** It was reported that those funds would not go to other TLA schools and that KA leadership are encouraged by the Trust to reinvest reserves in the school. Governors agreed that the reserves of the 5% target should be invested into the education of the students in the school rather than held in a bank account.
- 6.6 **Governors asked what their role is regarding finance and to what degree Governors have been involved in the budget setting for next year.** It was reported that finance figures are provided to Governors for information only, to assure them that the school has the funds to support the delivery of education, which is the focus of the LGB.
- 6.6 **Governors asked where parent-raised funding shows in the figures and of what does the 'Income Pot' comprise.** It was reported that the income pot has a range of sources. Core funding is GAG and parent-raised funds sit in reserves (if not spent to date).
7. **Governors' Skills' Audit – Paper 7.0 KA Skills' Audit Matrix June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received. NP thanked Governors for completing the Skills' Audit. Whilst KA's Governors have a varied and balanced skillset, across the Trust there is a need for training in exclusions' appeals and SEND for which the Trust will arrange training which all TLA Governors will be invited to attend. There may also be an opportunity to undertake procurement and facilities training. NP thanked Governors for completing their GH Declarations and Confirmations and asked that those Governors who received a reminder email today, please complete them as soon as possible.
8. **LGB Self-Assessment** – A self-assessment health-check is available on GH for all Governors to consider and the Chair and NP will discuss a suitable date for a Governor meeting to complete the self-assessment in the 2021 Autumn term.
9. **School Risk Register (Standing Item)** – The Trust Risk Policy has been enacted, the Trust Risk Register has been completed and will be uploaded to GH. Work has commenced on individual schools' level Risk Registers and they will be shared with LGBs in the Autumn 2021 term. Governors agreed that they need to consider and understand the risks identified to the school.
10. **Health and Safety (H&S) Report – Paper 10.0 KA H&S Audit June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received. Governors were invited to let the Chair know if they were interested in the role of H&S Governor. It was reported that the Chair and the CSS H&S Governor, Mr Hermitt had been in to school

to carry out a review with the Headteacher and the TLA Director of Marketing and Operations, Mr Routs (JR). Overall, the review results were very positive and staff were praised for the strong H&S ethos and only 5, minor Actions were recommended. H&S training was usually offered by Cheshire East Local Authority and all TLA Headteachers could be enrolled when the programme resumes. **Governors noted** that CSS and KA were buying in H&S support at a cost of £8k and it was **reported** that this matter and other cost efficiencies are being considered by JR and the finance team. **Governors asked what their role is regarding accidents.** It was **reported** that accidents would be reported for information so that Governors can be aware of repeat incidents. The LGB is there to challenge the school about the welfare of staff and students and Governors should assure themselves that they are confident that the school is doing enough regarding accidents. The Trust as employer, has the ultimate responsibility for everyone on the school site. Standardised, consistent reporting will be introduced across the Trust alongside dashboards showing roles and responsibilities in more detail and best practice will be shared across TLA schools. Governors praised the work of everybody involved.

Improving Education and Opportunities

The following items were taken out of order, so that CL and CP could attend for their presentations only.

11. **Covid-19 Recovery Strategy** – Learning gaps have been assessed via low-stakes testing and more data will be available after the examination period. Heads of Faculties are formulating their subject-specific strategies to fill those gaps. Three additional, temporary staff beginning in September 2021 will support the strategies in English, Maths and Science, focusing on different areas of intervention. An additional period a fortnight has been built into to the Y12 timetable to accelerate A 'Level course progress.
12. **Curriculum Planning 2021/2022 – Slides 12.0 KA Curriculum Structures Slides** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and were **received**. It was **reported** that 90% of students can take their chosen courses, due to the flexibility of the structure and that financial efficiencies have been made. **Governors asked how the 90% figure was deduced.** It was **reported** that the SIMS online package allows staff to see the choices students make, although external applicants do not have access to that system before joining the school. CP also maintains a spreadsheet to manually match choices. Managed courses ensure that the right course is available for the right learner. STEM courses are particularly strong. Fifty external applications have been made for September 2021 Yr12, making it potentially the biggest cohort for many years and there are some resulting associated rooming issues anticipated. The breadth of subjects has been maintained across KS3 and the school is working towards the Government target of 75% of students taking a language GCSE by 2025. KA students also have a breadth of subject availability through CSS too. **Governors asked whether further Maths is available at GCSE.** It was **reported** that there is flexibility to add students into further Maths as the cohort progresses.
13. **Staffing Update – Paper 13a KA Academy and Studio leadership team responsibilities June 2021 and 13b KA Staffing Update June 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and were **received**. **Governors asked how communication is handled within the structure.** It was **reported** that Heads of Faculties meet regularly with SLT and discussions are two-way, followed by individual Heads of Faculty/SLT meetings then Heads of Faculties meet with their teams. Friday messages began in lockdown and continue due to popularity, to share reminders, good news and thanks. **Governors asked whether applications for teaching posts are substantial in number and provide strong candidates.** It was **reported** that there were around 100 applications for the Assistant Headteacher post and typically around 30 – 50 for other posts, with many, good quality applicants, so it is believed that the school's reputation is growing. **Governors asked how many new staff are on the teacher training programme.** It was **reported** that there is one. Governors and the Headteacher were pleased to **note** that a small number of staff have been able to take up promotion opportunities within the Trust.
14. **Teacher Assessed Grades 15. Strategic Vision:** All TAGs have been submitted and staff are confident in the process by which the grades were decided. It was reported that 418 spreadsheets had been created, 1850 TAGs have been awarded, most of these have been manually input to the exam boards with over 7400 pieces of supporting evidence compiled and scanned – and all grades have been internally quality assured.
- 14.1 **Governors asked whether evidence would be maintained in the even that next year's examinations cannot take place.** It was **reported** that if the grades' system is the same next year, the school will be in a

strong position and staff are approaching the September term with an open mind-set as to what might happen and doing their best to prepare.

14.2 ***Governors asked whether staff are confident about cross-school grades' consistency, asking whether there is a national consistency framework.*** It was **reported** that whilst there is no national framework, every KA grade was sense checked and moderation took place between Trust schools so that the grades are believed to be representative of results similar to those which would have been achieved had the students sat examinations Evidence has been gathered so that the school is prepared for the DfE evidence request. Teachers and staff in the examinations' office were praised for their hard work in this matter.

15. Strategic Vision

15.1 School Review – Paper 15.1 KA Curriculum Review May 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. The review by the CEO and COO was very positive. Everybody involved was keen to make constructive suggestions for further improvement and the Action Plan has been circulated.

15.1a ***Governors asked whether the exercise will be repeated.*** It was **reported** that reviews in some form will be carried out, with a changing emphasis depending on need, to enable the reviews to be incorporated into Trust wide quality assurance and the School Improvement Plan. The review also enhanced staff experience of deep dives in readiness for Ofsted. This has been another advantage of being part of TLA Trust, as it allows for supportive, general and targeted reviews and sharing of skill sets and best practice.

15.2 Review Improvement Priorities 2020/2021 and 15.3 Draft 2021-2022 action plan - Paper 15.2/3 KA Development Plan 2021/2022 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

The BlueSky electronic performance management package allows development plan documents to be at heart of appraisal structures. Covid has resulted in this being a difficult year to progress and assess with regard to the 2020/2021 development plan, so the 2021/2022 plan is an evolution of last year's plan, with up-to-the-moment focus.

15.3a ***Governors asked whether there is an action plan to deliver the development plan.*** The Ofsted focus now puts the curriculum at the heart of everything schools do, focusing on Intent, Implementation and Impact. KA has worked on Intent for some time and the CEO review clarified the next steps to achieve an effective learning iterative process to be rolled into the development plan priorities for next year.

15.3b ***Governors asked what the role of Governors is, in monitoring progress on delivery and where the detail lies as to when it will be achieved.*** It was **reported** that the plan provided is the first iteration, headline document only. A personal development curriculum is being prepared along with a swim lanes document, detailing timelines and responsibilities, which will be presented for Governors in the Autumn term.

15.4 School Performance – Paper 15.4 KA School Performance June 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. Pupil Premium (PP) data is positive compared with previous years' data but the gap at CGSE has widened a little, reflecting the engagement issues some PP students have had. 6th form data is similar. Overall, the three-year results' rolling average is improving. 1600 schools uploaded results to a collaborative exercise website recently, from which the school could see that its results were strong. However, the DfE has not permitted that exercise to continue.

16. Safeguarding Audit – Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) – Paper 16.0 KA SCiES Safeguarding Audit had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

16.1 Three SCiES inspections have now been carried out at CSS and KA and the recent report is one of overwhelming praise, positive feedback and improvement. The small number of previous Recommendations have all been completed or are being worked on and the final report will be available to Governors at the next meeting. Governors thanked all staff involved for their hard work and great results. The chair asked that the Governors' thanks be passed to all involved.

17. Student Welfare (including Safeguarding)- Paper 17.0 KA Safeguarding June 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. A Student Resilience Survey will be carried out at the end of the term, to assist with early intervention work. Feedback will be provided to the LGB in the Autumn term. Surveys carried out so far have resulted in additional support being put in place for any disengaged students.

18. LGB Roles:

18.1 Training Update – Thanks were proffered to those Governors who attended the recent online Safeguarding training. Governors’ GH training records have been updated. A link to alternative training will be made available to those who were not able to attend. ***Governors asked when the training provider-promised summary of the training undertaken, will be available.*** It was reported that NP will follow-up with the training provider.

19. Local Matters – Reserves will be utilised alongside SCA funds to benefit KA and CSS. It is hoped that improvements can be made to toilets and the common room. 1325 students are expected to be at the school at the start of the 2021 Autumn term, so plans are underway to deal with the increasing demand on the school’s facilities.

19.1 Site Update – As item 19 above.

19.2 Bus Service - It was reported that an increasing number of students coming to the school from the Wincham area had led to consideration of an additional bus service for that area. **Governors were informed** that, whilst there would be a small shortfall in cost, putting on a bus service for students in the Wincham area could be beneficial in the long-term, as it may help attract potential future students to the school. The service will be contracted for one year and reviewed as to future costs’ risks.

20. LGB Policy Review - Most KA Policies are now compliant. Development of centralised TLA Policies will continue next year for roll-out across the Trust as soon as possible. **The TLA Complaints Policy has been approved by the Trust** and has been implemented across the TLA schools.

21. Matters to Share with the Trust Board (exception reporting) – Governors asked that the following suggestions be shared with the Trust Board:

- To have all TLA Headteachers receive H&S training.
- To collaborate across the Trust, the buying back of H&S support.
- Request for regular financial information and sight of school’s risk register

Date and Time of Next Meeting: TBC Autumn 2021 Term.

Meeting Closed 6.15pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....