

Date: Wednesday 8th January 2025

Present:

Mr R. Benson (Chair)-(RB)
Mr J. Green (JG)-left at 7:11 pm
Prof T. Sadat-Shafai (TSS)
Mr J. Marsh (JM)
Mr S. Worthington (SW)
Prof P Horrocks (PH)
Mrs J. Turner (JT)

Apologies:

Mrs K. Powell (KP)
Mr P. Turner (PT)

Absent: n/a

In attendance:

Ms H. Thurland – Headteacher (HT)
Mrs L. Darling – Deputy Headteacher (LD)
Mrs L. Salt – Deputy Headteacher (LS)
Miss J. Boulton – Assistant Headteacher, Head of 6th Form (JB)
Mr P. Blaylock (PB) - Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion)
Mr R. McQueen (RM)- Assistant Headteacher
Mr C. Capey (CC)- Assistant Headteacher (Quality of Education)
Mrs N. Trigg (NT)-School Business Manager

(Staff members, apart from the Headteacher, left the meeting at the end of part one).

Clerk: Mrs S. Pomeroy

Administration

1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations

Due to inclement weather, it had been decided to hold the meeting online via MS TEAMS. The Chair reminded everyone of the protocols of an online meeting. He welcomed everyone and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from PT and KP. There were no Declarations of interest declared with the business of the meeting. The clerk confirmed that all governors had completed the annual declarations of interest. Unless stated otherwise, all papers and policies had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- a) The minutes of the CHS LGB Meeting held on 18th September 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.
- b) There were no matters arising.

3. Membership update:

- There had been no changes to the membership of the board.
- There are no vacancies on the LGB
- Terms of office due to expire-TSS-31.08.25

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

4. SIP and SEF

a) School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation (SEF)- to receive an update on progress.

HT informed governors that the KB, DCEO(Education) had introduced a new format for the SEF and SIP, and this had been shared with the papers for today's meeting. The priorities are long-term ones and have not changed. Further documentation sits behind the documents presented to governors. Governors commented that it can be confusing if the format keeps changing but the most important thing is that governors are clear on the school's priorities.

Governors noted the increasing challenge of addressing the needs of pupils with SEND, especially considering that 82% of needs assessments are being declined by Cheshire East. PB responded that the school has robust systems and processes in place and has a high success rate with the approval of EHCPs.

HT explained that SEND is a national focus and there is an ongoing consultation process in place. The school is working hard to address legacy SEND issues and had received valuable support from the Trust. Governors asked whether there was anything further they could do to support the school. HT responded that governors having a good understanding of the issues is key. The topic is discussed regularly at Chairs' Forum and the support of governors is appreciated.

Governors **challenged** on the timescales for achieving the priorities on the SIP and how the LGB could monitor progress. HT informed governors that she would check with the KB regarding what other schools had shared with governors as milestones have been set but they are not included in the version of the SIP presented to governors. **ACTION**

b) Outcome of admissions consultation 2026-27

There had been no objections received to the consultation to reduce the PAN from 230-210. One enquiry had been received but this related to sixth form admissions, rather than to Year 7 entry.

Governors **challenged** whether the school was confident that the falling roll was due to a reduction in the birth rate rather than other factors. HT responded that updated figures had been received from the Local Authority and building forecasts for new housing had been considered. It was anticipated that there would be growth in older age groups in the first instance. Falling rolls at Year 7 are an issue for many of the schools in Cheshire East which have formerly been oversubscribed. The school is taking action to increase its first-choice preferences and is building strong relationships with feeder Primary schools which is having an impact. The school is also receiving an increased number of applications from pupils at middle schools.

Resolved: Governors approved the reduction in the PAN from 230 to 210. The school would now publish the Admissions Policy for 2026-27.

Quality of Education

5. Update on progress and attainment including groups (pupil premium, SEND, disadvantaged, gender)

Mock results-Year 11 and Year 13

Year 11- LS referred to the paper, "Mock 1 Nov 2024 Data Set "and highlighted the following points:

- The overall Attainment 8 is 4.1.
- 5x Grade 4+ is 45.4% (with English and Maths)
- 5x Grade 5+ is 29.1% (with English and Maths)
- The school is behind its targets, but this is to be expected at this point in the year.
- 55% of subjects are exceeding the 2024 outcomes in Mock 1-4+ standard.
- The focus is on disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- EHCP students are outperforming K students.
- Slide 5 shows mock 1 outcomes which are in line with or higher than FFT20 targets.
- Slide 7 shows the area of focus identified from 2024 outcomes and the progress made since then.
 - Significant improvements have been made in PE.
 - MFL is still a challenge, and parents often request that their child drops languages.
 - A new leadership structure is in place in DT and progress is being made.
 - English is RAG rated red. There is long term staff absence and English Literature is the main area of concern.
 - Computing and Enterprise-RAG rated amber. Business studies 4+ is stronger than in 2024.
- Slide 8 details the next steps in terms of Academic Progress, Pastoral Priorities and 6th form recruitment, including Pupil Progress Meetings and English/Maths Matching Strategy Meetings.

Governors commented that they can see evidence of progress and that they have confidence that assessments are more accurate than in the past. **They asked** whether the school has any concerns about

building on from this position and what are the potential barriers. LS highlighted the limitations of the FFT20 targets as they are based on CAT testing and there were issues with the students' engagement with these tests. The school is confident that targets have been reviewed and are appropriate. Students have worked well on interventions in the autumn term 2024. Punctuality limits success and the timing of interventions would be reviewed if this is a barrier to student engagement.

Governors requested information regarding the position with MFL. This would be discussed further under part two of the meeting, but HT confirmed that some adjustments had already been made for Year 11 entries and that some students had been moved from Spanish and would be receiving additional curriculum time on core subjects.

Governors also asked how the school compares its performance against other school, both nationally and against other schools in the Trust. HT informed them that the Trust is still in the early changes of data sharing across the schools and is introducing a new standardised MIS across the schools which will help to facilitate this. The school also uses national performance benchmarks. **Governors stressed** the importance of schools sharing good practice and examples of successful intervention strategies.

Year 13-JB spoke to the "Year 13 Outcomes Summary" paper and highlighted the following points:

- 96% of students were retained from Year 12 into Year 13. This is positive and is above national.
- The average A level Grade is C- which is the same as last year.
- Applied General is Merit + as is Tech Levels.
- APLS data from Mock 1 shows that girls are performing better than boys. This is a concern as there are more boys taking A Levels than girls and the school is working to address the underachievement of the boys.
- Slide 14 shows A Level ALPS data by subject. Ones highlighted in red are doing well. The school anticipates that some of the subjects at 8 and 9 will be able to improve their position.
- Slide 15 details how the potential improvements to the ALPS data can be achieved. Interventions are in place; a review of the Humanities department has taken place and CC is line managing the department. Also, additional time for exam preparation has been factored in.
- Slide 16 demonstrates that vocational subjects are performing well.
- Next Steps for HT3 are outlined on Slide 17. A focus group of boys had been identified and meetings arranged with the student and their parents. The parents have engaged with the meetings and some progress has been seen but there is more for the students to do.

Governors requested clarification on whether the school is ranked bottom for A Level outcomes in Cheshire East. HT confirmed that this information is contained in the SEF and that the school is aware that improvements need to be made to both GCSE and A Level outcomes and has made adaptations from last year. The curriculum offer has been streamlined and managed more effectively. CC added that professional reviews of different departments have taken place, and all lessons are aimed at maximising pupil progress. The school is aware of the challenges and CPD is in place to drive improvements.

Governors also requested further information on how the school planned to achieve the improvements to the ALPS scores (the "what ifs"). JB explained that the school can analyse the APLS data by student and by subject and identify underachievement and ensure that strategies are in place to enable all students to achieve their targets.

Governors challenged whether the school had concerns over A Level Politics and Geography and whether the students had met the entry requirements. JB confirmed that the cohorts are weaker in terms of academic and pastoral terms and that changes had been made to ensure that course work was completed earlier to allow more time to be spent on exam preparation. Some of the students have low

English skills and this is a challenge in a written exam situation. The numbers are low in these cohorts, so the students receive more focus.

6. KS4 Curriculum Rationale Update-part 2 item

7. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

The Headteacher provided an update:

- There had been 14 leavers and 14 starters, and the reasons are included in the Headteacher's report. There are no issues of concern regarding the leavers.
- The school has supported five refugee/asylum seekers with school places and has had requests for places from three pupils who had been home educated.
- The school has worked with local schools on managed moves to avoid permanent exclusion.
- One student with SEND had been supported into specialist provision and a decision is pending on two further specialist placements.

Governors **asked** for details on the challenges faced when admitting students who had been electively home educated (EHE). HT explained that EHE students often have complex needs. They may have been EHE'd to avoid permanent exclusion or due to pressure from schools regarding poor attendance and can affect the balance of the year group into which they are admitted. The school would always have a discussion with parents who were considering EHE.

Governors requested clarification on the number of pupils on roll as the figures presented in the HT's report show a drop from 1231 in September 2024 to 1213 in December 2024, but the narrative provided indicated a net movement of pupils. HT would investigate and report back to governors. **ACTION**

8. Link Governor Monitoring

Two link monitoring reports had been uploaded:

- SEND 20.11.24 JM
- Safeguarding 24.06.24 KP

Safeguarding-Governors **asked** for an update on the SCR. LD confirmed that the school now has control of the SCR. It had been imported into the "Staff Safe" system and NT had taken responsibility for its maintenance. NT informed governors that all staff and governor information is up to date and that there a small number of areas still to be updated which she is working on. Governors **also queried** whether the school had the capacity to deal with the extra work involved with recording pupil absence on CPOMS. LD confirmed that this was in hand and that a new DDSL had been appointed.

SEND-JM noted that the Trust had carried out a one-day review of SEND on 14.11.24 and that he had requested a copy of the report. HT had responded that key actions would be shared with governors as part of her report for the LGB in January 2025. JM asked for clarification on whether it was appropriate for him to see the full report and how he could add value in his role as link SEND governor if he was not involved in the Trust review process. The clerk would feed this back to the Trust. **ACTION**

HT commented that it is important to develop the link governor roles and that they are valued by the school.

JM had attended the Cheshire East Governor Conference in October 2024 which had highlighted the need for all governors to be focussed on SEND. He had served as a governor on permanent exclusion panels and noted that many of the pupils facing permanent exclusion had SEND.

9. Pupil Premium

LS explained that the PP strategy is a three-year strategy which is reviewed annually. There are no significant changes to the published strategy as the barriers and intentions remain unchanged.

Personal Development

10. Summary Report on Attendance

LD provided an update:

- Attendance continues to be a concern for leaders to address. Persistent absence remains high.

- Attendance is broadly in line with national but had dipped below national in the second half of the autumn term 2024.
- The school has engaged with the Trust wide attendance support through TCAT Academy Trust to share good practice.
- The school is now issuing attendance letters following 4 sessions of absence on advice from TCAT.
- The school is not authorising holiday requests in term time, but families continue to take their children on holiday in school time.
- 8 holiday fine requests had been made and 6 were declined by Cheshire East.
- The school would not buy back attendance support from Cheshire East next year as the Trust has developed resources to support the school and is seeking to align processes across all its schools.

Governors **challenged** how the school can address poor attendance if the deterrent of fines is not available to the school. LD responded that fines are just one element, and the school stresses the importance of children being in school and aims to make the pupils want to attend. It is important that the school has a range of strategies in place.

11. Rewards and Behaviour

- Student behaviour continues to be good at the school and there is a positive learning culture.
- Suspension incidents decreased by 40% between HT1 and HT2.
- The use of the RESET room is having an impact and more children are remaining in school.
- A mentoring programme is in place for a key group of 16 students in Year 9 with high PA and behaviour concerns. This has resulted in an increase in attendance in for 14/16 of these students.
- The school is also involved in the Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) programme which is designed to target PP students who are not engaging with school.
- RM and PB are working closely on analysing achievement and behaviour points. (Refer to the paper "RBLF Benchmarks-Year to 06.12.24"). The school is considering if there is equity in the awarding of achievement points. There is a perception amongst staff that older pupils do not want them, but students do not reflect this view.

Governors **asked** on what basis achievement points are awarded. LD responded that they are awarded for behaviours which match the school values. Leaders are considering whether poor behaviour from a small number of pupils in a form means that teachers do not award achievement points to the rest of the pupils in that form.

Governors also **challenged** whether there is a discrepancy with the school's view of behaviour as good and that expressed in the parents' survey where one third stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that behaviour in school was good. HT responded that it is important to understand the perceptions of parents who responded to the survey. HT would follow up on aspects of the questionnaire with the parents' forum.

Welfare

12. Safeguarding

LD referred to the paper "Safeguarding Report to LGB December 2024" and highlighted the following points:

- Safeguarding supervision by the Trust continues to be very effective.
- Pupil absence would be linked to safeguarding.
- There has been an increase in the number of girls referred to CAMHS.
- There has been a slight increase in harmful sexual behaviours / inappropriate touching in younger children (boys on boys and girl on girl).

13. Welfare and Wellbeing – Students

HT spoke to her Headteacher's report and highlighted the following:

- The school planned to introduce the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

- The personal development curriculum had been updated. It is delivered through form time and timetabled each fortnight.
- A Trust survey had been administered on wellbeing and safeguarding. A small number of pupils had said that they would not approach an adult in school if they had a concern. The school is following up on this.
- Staff and Sixth Form students were involved in the White Ribbon promotional film taking a stand against misogyny / toxic culture and the school will be seeking accreditation as a White Ribbon School.

Governors **asked** how the charities which the school supports are chosen; student or staff led? HT explained that the student parliament plays a key role in this, and students have their say through the House system. Staff help to ensure that there is a balance between the charities chosen.

14. Welfare and Wellbeing – Staff

HT spoke to her Headteacher's report and highlighted the following:

- Staff absence has been much improved in the autumn term 2024-25 and supply costs are significantly reduced. This also helps with student behaviour.
- There is a culture of working collaboratively to manage diaries and support personal leave.
- ECT's and new staff receive effective support and induction.
- There are some specific, individual staffing issues which are being addressed in conjunction with the Trust.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

15.

a) Local Policy Approval

- Admissions 2026-27
- Anti Bullying
- Transgender
- SEMH
- Drugs
- Supporting Children with medical Conditions in School
- RFBL
- School Uniform

Governors approved the above policies.

b) Approval of term dates 2025-26

- HT outlined the justification for the planned 5 INSET Days in 2025-26.
- There would be an additional Trust INSET Day, but the date had not yet been determined.
- **Governors challenged** whether there should be an additional INSET Day as this would take teaching time from the students.
- HT explained that academies could determine the number of INSET Days taken and that 5 days was common. It would be a Trust decision, rather than a school decision, if an additional day was set.
- **Governors approved** that term dates for 2025-26 which would now be published on the school website.

16. Governor Training Update

The clerk requested that governors ensure that they have updated their training record on Governor Hub. Most governors had completed the required Safeguarding and Prevent training. The clerk would contact individual governors directly who still needed to do so. **ACTION**

17. Stakeholder Engagement – Parents/Carers

Ofsted Survey/SG Survey

- The Ofsted Parent view questions were circulated to families at the end of the autumn term 2024.
- In the summer term the school will engage families with the Ofsted link to ensure that parent views are reflected in the Ofsted portal.

- The school has not formally collected responses in this portal since 2022-2023. The results from both were provided for comparison. Largely stakeholders hold the same views as previously with families responding that their child feels happy and safe and does well at the school- 77%, 83% & 76% respectively (77%, 85% & 79% previously).
- The following areas were identified to follow up on with families:
 - SEND provision –to address the legacy of SEND issues at the school.
 - Communication with families about their child’s progress.
 - Communication with families when they have a query or concern.

Governors commented that it is important that a parental survey is carried out on an annual basis and that any trends/concerns are identified and addressed.

18. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

- A range of activities was included in the Headteacher’s report (page 15).

19. Communication to Trust

The clerk would feedback the following points to the Trust:

- The role of link governors-how to fulfil the role effectively? Should they be provided with reports/actions from Trust reviews?
- Further information requested for LGBs on the financial challenges facing the schools in the Trust and the potential impact on teaching and learning.
- Clarification required on the date of the Trust INSET Day for 2025-26.

20. Communication from Trust

The clerk thanked governors for the good response rate in completing the EDI survey. The deadline had been extended to allow remaining governors to submit their responses. AH would produce a Trust wide report on the outcomes to be shared with the LGB.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 30th April 2025 at 5:00 pm at Congleton High School

Staff members left the meeting.

The meeting moved to the part two agenda.

Summary of actions

Minute	Action	Action/Date
4	HT to contact KB regarding which version of SIP to share with governors (no milestones on version shared).	Jan-25
7	HT to provide updated pupil numbers to governors and reasons for decrease in numbers as stated in the HT’s report from 1231 to 1213.	Jan-25
16	Clerk to contact governors who had not completed the Trust training from the Autumn term 2024.	Jan-25
19	Clerk to feedback items to the Trust.	Jan-25