



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

CONGLETON HIGH SCHOOL LGB

Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES – Part I



Date: 4th March 2021 at 6pm. Online on Teams

Present:

Mr R Benson (Chair)
Mrs L Beardmore
Miss M Haran
Mr S Harrop (SH)
Mr C Hepting
Mr M Hickton
Mrs K Jennings (KJ)
Mr R Machin
Mr T Sadat-Shafai
Mr U Smith (US)
Mrs J Turner

Absent: Mr G Eardley

In attendance:

Mr J Barlow (JB) (Headteacher)
Mrs L Darling – Deputy Headteacher (LD)
Mr M Warren - (Deputy Headteacher) (MW)
Mr E Tyrell – Assistant Headteacher
Mrs L Salt – Assistant Headteacher (LS)
Miss J Boulton – Assistant Headteacher and Leader of Sixth Form (JXB)
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
Mrs N Phillips–TLA Director Finance & Governance (NP)

Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Administration (Meeting started at 6.00pm)

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr G Eardley.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest
3. The Minutes of the CHS LGB Meeting held on 12th November 2020 were approved. There were no matters arising.
4. Composition of LGB
 - NP reported that Governor skills’ audits are planned to help direct paperwork for the Parent Governor elections.
 - Governors who had completed their declarations and confirmations were thanked, and those who had not were asked to do so at earliest convenience.
 - The Chair reminded governors that Governor Hub user guides are available of governor hub.

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

5. **Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB** – The Trust Board Governance and Search Committee is currently considering the matter of diversity across the Trust governance layers to ensure more socially inclusive structures and mechanisms around positive actions to address vacancies.
6. **Finance Update** – The latest forecast was showing an out-turn surplus of c.£310,000 against the budget surplus of c.£239,000. Despite lost income in catering and sports’ facilities due to Covid-19, there have been considerable savings in staffing costs which have largely led to this more favourable out-turn forecast. Additional Covid-19 supply costs were slightly higher than anticipated, but were broadly as expected and better overall than the conservative budget estimate.
It is anticipated that the school will be in advance of the 5% of GAG target by the end of the school year. Budget setting conversations have begun for 2021/2022 between the COO and Headteacher, the key drivers being staffing costs and recruitment and discussions also include capital priorities.
The Covid-19 catch-up grant has been incorporated into the projections.

Governors received the Report

Improving Education and Opportunities

7. **Covid-19 Update** – (Appendix 3) – A paper divided in to 9 sections, each section providing Governors with an overview of the school’s response and current position with regard to Covid-19 was available on Governor Hub.

7.1 Remote Learning Offer – (Appendix 3a) – The school offers a 5 hours a day full curriculum, with a balance of live online lessons and individual learning, mindful of students’ screen time. Students provide positive feedback with regard to the interactive nature of lessons and teachers are able to both deliver lessons and support students. Non-engagement is monitored and of 32,000 lessons offered for years 7 to 11, only 1000 non-engagements are posted each week. Yr11 non-engagement figures are low, at around 100 per week. Interventions are having a positive impact on non-engagement.

a. Governors asked how the school defines ‘non-engagers’. Non-engagers are those students not attending live lessons and/or not submitting work. Staff are aware that there are different reasons for non-engagement, such as lack of family resources for remote access and all non-engagers are offered individual support and where relevant, suitable devices on which to access remote learning. Staff are also aware that there are students who attend live remote lessons, but who are not actually engaged in lessons. Blended learning does assist in supporting those students and gap analysis, beginning on their return to the classroom will assess what has actually been learnt.

b. Governors asked whether the remote provision was consistent across all areas. Every subject area has seen growth as teachers’ remote teaching skills are refined, resources shared and teaching techniques tweaked to fit differing scenarios. One in three lessons are live, so feedback is instant and has become more powerful over time.

c. Governors asked what skills will be taken forward, post Covid-19. Increased use of improved ICT skills will continue to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Teams is a very useful tool for collaborative working and resources’ storage and access. Parental feedback on Teams Parent Evenings was very positive in terms of efficiency and information sharing.

d. Governors asked whether the school can quantify the impact of Covid-19 on the students. It will be easier to assess this once the students return to school. Staff are aware of where support is needed and will use the first three weeks of term to begin to assess what has been missed in more detail and refine plans to address gaps, as the students settle back into classroom learning.

e. Governors asked what the student survey had told staff about students’ understanding about their lessons, their learning and their wellbeing. The survey asked how students were feeling about returning to school, what they were worried about, what they were looking forward to and what school could do to support them. Of the 750 students who responded, most provided positive feedback which informed the proactive approach the school is taking to their return; no homework will be set during the first week and staff will not be chasing students for work not done during remote learning, instead focusing on helping them settle back into school and teaching.

f. Governors asked what will the focus be for Yr11 and Yr13 students. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) guidance will be followed; there will be a focus on teaching a full curriculum, with no formal assessment until the summer term. As soon as the school is aware of what will be required with regard to teacher assessed grades, staff will make those requirements clear as to how and when they will be assessed, so students understand what will be needed.

7.2 Remote Learning Self-Evaluation Form – (Appendix 3b) – This is a TLA document, based on a DfE document, much of which was covered in 7.1.

7.3 Catch-up Premium – Curriculum recovery plans are the core business of teaching and learning and are integral to the way staff work. Each curriculum area has its own, tailored recovery plan, reviewed and updated as issues arise and gaps are assessed. Individual and small group tuition will be made available for those who need it, for English and Maths, to move those students who need to, towards at least GCSE Grade 4. Staff timetable flexibility will add further support to Yr11 and Yr13 in lessons or in smaller groups, as needed. Digital support platforms are being rolled-out and the GCSE support pod, a trust initiative, will be launched later in the year, after students have had time to settle back into school life. There is good capacity for wellbeing support in various forms and students will be reminded of how to access that support. Staff will ensure that students are in school and focused on learning, before the matter of possible additional teaching hours is considered.

a. Governors asked how soon will parents be made aware of where their children are up to and how long the catch-up process will take. There is an intention to produce learning records as soon as possible, to report attitude to learning and planned next steps. Attainment will not be reported as there will be no

formal assessments until the summer term. However, staff are particularly keen to assess how reading ages have been impacted, as those affect all subjects, so reading recovery calculations can be processed.

7.4 Covid-19 Testing Programme – The Headteacher expressed thanks and praise for the work done by LS, a sentiment echoed by governors. Large scale testing has begun, some students having been tested alongside staff this week. Students will each be tested three times at school. Students will then begin home testing, which should not place any burden on the school. There will be no disruption to learning for Years 11, 12 and 13. By Thursday 11th March, all students will be back in lessons in school and by 18th March, all Covid-19 tests will have been completed. The Headteacher reported that as a body of staff, they had been excellent in their support of the testing programme, some part-time administration staff volunteering to assist on their day off. The New Life Church has also been most supportive, offering 6 volunteers to assist every day. Only six students have refused to be tested.

a. Governors asked what is the process for those who refuse testing. National guidance states that students have to opt-in to testing and those who refuse must be allowed to return to school with their year group. Support is provided to those students who cannot get into school for testing, but students cannot be forced to be tested. Governors were reassured by the process.

b. Governors asked whether there was any specific risk with regard to school transport. Cheshire East Local Authority has advised that it may recommend that in the event of a positive test result amongst the students on a bus, the whole bus will be advised to isolate.

7.5 Staff Wellbeing – The staff survey yielded positive responses and any concerns raised were individually followed-up and resolved by MW. The Headteacher reported that staff had done very well, in difficult circumstances, some juggling teaching and care of their own, young children. The Headteacher kept in contact with particular groups thought to need additional support and line managers were in regular contact with all staff. Governors thanked SLT and all staff for their continued support.

7.6 Numbers of Children Attending School – Places were offered to all students who were prescribed as requiring a place by Government guidelines. The work of the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher, ET created further capacity for those who fell just under the threshold. On average 55 to 60 students attended each day, with a maximum of 65 in attendance. Thanks were offered to the TAs, who provided additional support for some students in complicated circumstances and without whom the school may have struggled. The Headteacher reported that TAs' level of care was excellent, both in school and in maintaining a watchful eye over and engaging of, the 252 most vulnerable students.

7.7 Pupil Premium (PP) – PP student attendance and engagement has improved dramatically since the first half of this lockdown and those that have made improvement have been praised for their efforts. The guidance team continue to assess how to support and engage non-engagers and they have been invited into school this week, to help smooth their way back into school life, before the official return next week. Governors were reassured by this considered approach.

7.8 Sixth Form – The student survey showed that during remote learning, half of all students felt more engaged or similarly engaged as with classroom learning and half felt less engaged. The reasons for those who felt less engaged were explored and were addressed with various strategies such as the provision of more live lessons. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the sixth form felt that they are making progress and staff are focusing on those who need extra help. 92% of students attended registration and contact was made with vulnerable students as required based on individuals' needs. There was good engagement of PP sixth form students in Yrs. 12 and 13. Gaps in learning will be explored more fully on students' return to school, interventions will be tailored to suit need and assessment approach is now key for those year groups. Recruitment figures are strong, with 168 applications for 2021 sixth form. 154 out of 204 current Yr11 CHS students have applied for places, meaning that the sixth form is attracting 75% of its Yr11 students, well above the national average of 60% experienced by other schools. A governor who is a parent, thanked JXB for the excellent UCAS application support, apprenticeship assessment and careers work provided during lockdown. 95 students are applying for university.

7.9 Review of Risk Assessments and Arrangements for March 8th – All required Risk Assessments have been completed and the school is ready to welcome students back to the classroom next week.

8. Strategic Vision

- 8.1 **School Performance and Teacher Assessed Grades Update** – (Appendix 4). MW assured Governors that there should be no surprises in grades. Yrs11 and 13 have been consistently strong cohorts throughout their school journeys. Staff await full details of what will be required to produce teachers assessed grades and once this is known, it will be shared with all staff and students in clear, transparent format. Curriculum Team Leaders have been able to make some initial preparations based on Ofqual guidance, but the examination boards' guidance will be the crucial information. The school philosophy is for students to demonstrate the grade they are able to achieve, with no undue pressure or anxiety, to earn and deserve their final grades and staff will ensure a rigorous, fair and transparent process is maintained.
- 8.2 **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** – The school has had 3 good, strong years and with SLT setting the positive tone of the school and taking staff on the journey, it is anticipated that there are the necessary staff and skills to take the school forward. The Headteacher is pleased with the new appointments made this week to build on the powerhouse of middle leaders. The SIP is last year's plan, based on what was anticipated to be a 'normal' year. This will be rewritten into an updated, streamlined version and the Appendix 5, School Improvement Priorities details where the school is and its priorities for the next two years.
9. **Student Welfare** – The Headteacher thanked the welfare team, Family Support Worker, Learning Mentors, support staff, TAs and in particular the SEND team and Mrs Lang for their robust and rigorous processes for recording and support. Students not able or keen to return to school next week will continue to be supported via calls and visits as appropriate. The social welfare page on the school website has been updated and receives a lot of traffic. It is envisaged that social care meetings will continue to be held online, to save travel.
- Governors asked whether there is any need for additional resources going forward.** Following last term's LGB meeting, the Learning Mentors' hours have been increased and their work pattern altered to address concerns at the start of the day, so that issues do not make it into the classroom. Communication remains good and staff are aware that if additional resources are needed, they can ask. The Family Support Worker is yielding positive results on attendance and the Police Liaison Officer is providing great additional support. As requested by Governors at the last meeting, the Newsletter regarding welfare support has been sent out to students.

Fostering Identity and Ethos

10. **Training** – All TLA Governors will be offered compulsory Cheshire East Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) online training after Easter. Mop up sessions will be offered for those unable to attend initial sessions. Talking Heads training videos will shortly be uploaded to Governor Hub.
11. **Local Matters** – First choice September Yr6 to Y7 admissions' requests for September 2021 number over 200 with additional enquires about waiting lists. There are no amendments to the Admissions Policy, which must be with the LA by 15th March 2021. The school may admit above PAN (200), if needed to progress the expansion project: Appendix 7 – Consultation on Admissions and Consultation Comments and Responses, detail the school's collaborative plans with Eton Bank for both schools' expansions by 1-form entry.
- Governors asked what percentage of students come to the school from Staffordshire.** Castle Primary School (CPS) is a feeder school and part of TLA and is situated in Staffordshire, so figures include children from CPS and number roughly 25 out of a cohort of 200. The Trust is seeking an LGB recommendation to the Trust Board that the LGB is in agreement to consultation and is willing to proceed to the next stage. The LGB understood that at this stage, their recommendation would not tie the school to the project, as expansion remains subject to LA funding. The Chair advised that TLA would hopefully lobby for whatever means could be brought to bear for safe access to an expanded site. **The LGB unanimously agreed to recommend to the Trust Board that the project be progressed to the next stage.**
12. **Policy Review** – Appendix 8 is the list of statutory policies that the school must have on its website to ensure compliance. Governors were invited to contact NP with any comments on the policies.

13. Matters to Share with the Trust Board – As discussed above, governors recommended that the expansion project be moved to the next stage.

Governors are aware that the Headteacher is spending increasing amounts of time, incurring costs, defending admissions' appeals to oversubscribed year groups. Governors were agreed that it would be more cost and time effective for TLA to manage those appeals, with centrally organised staff. The CEO agreed that this was an interesting initiative, which has been mooted elsewhere within the Trust. No promises can be made, but it is an idea which Trustees may consider.

Governors received the Appendices and Reports

AOB

14.1 The school underwent a Health and Safety Audit in November 2020. There will be no written report, but it was verbally confirmed that the school passed and there were no points to which the school had to respond.

14.2 The Headteacher thanked SLT, governors and all staff for their support and for keeping the school running, during his absence with Covid-19.

14.3 The school has a roadmap to Ofsted inspection and despite lockdown, is still on track. More details will be shared with governors at the summer meeting, including details of governor training in Ofsted visits.

14.4 ***Governors asked whether there is any anticipation of there being a White Paper on curriculum review?***

This is difficult to judge at this point in time. Ofsted have changed their inspection format and there appears to be a drive for schools to offer more formal grammar school style curriculum. There may be an increased focus on vocational skills' education and the Headteacher and Trust will follow the progress of any changes.

14.5 Governors thanked all staff for all they do.

Next Meeting Thursday 1st July 2021 at 6pm.

Meeting Closed 8.07pm

Signed.....Date.....