

Minutes of the Online Congleton High School (CHS) Local Governing Body (LGB) Meeting



Date: 12th November 2020 at 6pm. Online on Teams

<p>Present: Mr U. Smith (US) Mrs K. Jennings (KJ) Mr R. Benson (Chair) Mr R. Machin Mr J. Barlow (JB) (Headteacher) Mr C. Hepting Miss M. Haran Mr M. Hickton Mrs J. Turner Mr S. Harrop (SH) Mr T. Sadat-Shafai Mrs L. Beardmore</p>	<p>In attendance: Mr D. Twambley – COO Mrs L. Darling – Deputy Headteacher (LD) Mr M. Warren - (Deputy Headteacher) (MW) Mrs C. Gritton – Clerk Mrs N. Phillips - Director, Finance and Governance</p>	<p>Apologies: Mr G. Eardley</p>
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Administration (Meeting started at 6.00pm)

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed. Apologies were received and accepted, as recorded above
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest
3. The Minutes of the CHS LGB Meeting held on 2nd July 2020 were approved. There were no matters arising
4. The Chair confirmed that the TLA Board of Trustees had approved his reappointment as Chair of the CHS LGB for the school year 2020/2021 and had approved the reappointment of Mrs J. Turner as LGB member, for a further term of four years from 14th November 2020 and as Vice Chair for the school year 2020/2021. The terms of office of both Parent Governors, KJ and SH, expire later this week and the Clerk is in discussions with the TLA Executive as to the TLA process for Parent Governor elections, to be held as soon as possible. On behalf of the LGB, the Chair thanked the Parent Governors for their work for the LGB, for their challenge and support
5. Governors had been asked to submit any questions prior to the meeting. Those questions are listed in the attached Appendix to these Minutes. Where possible, answers to the questions were incorporated into the narrative

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

6. **Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB** – The COO thanked the LGB members for their input and feedback on the new TLA Scheme of Delegation (SofD). The focus of the LGB should be on education and welfare of students and staff wellbeing. Training and upskilling will be provided to Governors to support them in their understanding of information provided at LGB meetings, reducing the need for lengthy paper preparation by the Executive and School Leadership Team (SLT). **A Governor expressed concern that Governors will take on more responsibility for education and welfare, yet that responsibility was lessened when focus groups were held?** Education and Welfare has always been an important LGB responsibility; the idea going forward is to ensure clear links between the LGB and Trustees' responsibilities, so there will be clear channels for direct challenge and collaborative understanding, to mitigate risks. Data provided might appear to be reduced in quantity, but will be more pertinent to encourage robust and proper challenge

Governors resolved to receive the Report

7. **Budget** – Governors saw an earlier iteration of the Budget in the summer, to which a few minor updates have been made to consolidate the in-year budget with the actuals. This Budget was ratified by the Trust Finance and Staffing Committee and has been provided to the Board of Trustees. CHS has a robust and reasonable surplus with strong, resilient reserves, achieved by a close management and approval system by the

Headteacher. CHS mitigates additional supply costs which might have arisen due to Covid-19, by having permanent cover staff. **Governors asked whether the Headteacher can use the reserves for additional cover and Covid-19 costs if needed?** The Headteacher can highlight any need to the Trustees, who would consider any legitimate use of reserves for a targeted reason, which would be controlled, managed and sustainable spend. **Governors asked whether such funds would be made available to other schools in the Trust?** There are various profiles of need across the Trust schools, but overall, there is a strong reserves position; £1.5 - £1.8 million across the Trust, together with a central pool, which schools may be able to use if needed. The Trust has budgeted for Covid-19 catch-up costs and all schools are still at a break-even point, with one exception, which has a planned deficit, with reserves to buffer that deficit

Governors resolved to receive the Report

Improving Education and Opportunities

- 7.1 **Covid-19 Update** – Preparedness is positive across the Trust and all frameworks follow national Department for Education (DfE) guidance, finessed at local level, using Local Authority (LA) guidance. All schools have blended learning plans, catch-up strategies and can deliver a full curriculum in the event of partial or full closure. The CHS Headteacher sits on the Congleton Education Community Partnership (CECP) and on a local Headteachers' group, which has considered risk management and welfare issues for Congleton. The Covid-19 figures for Congleton are consistently low, as are CHS'. There have been a small number of cases within the school, but the school systems for tracking and tracing are working well and limiting student impact
- 7.2 Attendance has remained between 94% and 97% across the year groups, evidencing parents' confidence in the school's safety plans and parental feedback has been positive
- 7.3 Students who are isolating are able to join live lessons through Teams and Hue cameras have been purchased to facilitate this. Curriculum teams have identified gaps in learning due to lockdown and interventions implemented. A review meeting has been held regarding Yrs11 and 13 and there are no concerns that courses will not be completed. Staff spare periods are being directed towards Yr11 interventions, particularly for core subjects
- 7.4 Governors commended the Headteacher on the best practice approach, especially in the sixth form. **Governors asked whether the school has changed its approach from a teaching point of view with regard to Covid-19 and whether there are increased assessments, so that should examinations not take place, the school has robust evidence of assessment?** There is an increased emphasis on a greater number of low-level assessments. The school await Government advice and guidance as to how to proceed should examinations be cancelled again. In the meantime, the school's priority is delivering the best possible lessons to all students and re-prioritising the School Development Plan (SDP). Timetable planning for Mock Examinations in January has begun, to ensure that there will be enough invigilators and one to one student support. Students are aware of the importance of the Mock Examinations with regard to Covid-19 and Yr11 in particular have had a very positive return to school after lockdown. There have been some individual anxieties, but overall Yr11 are working hard and doing well and taking their assessments seriously. Maths revision classes, after school have attracted over 60 students
- 7.5 Staff absence is generally low, but the Headteacher is aware of the possibility of higher staff absence numbers over the next few weeks
- 7.6 There is a Health and Safety inspection of the school, next Wednesday 18th November, to ascertain how the school is implementing its Covid-19 plans and managing positive cases. The Headteacher is confident that all paperwork is in place. From a Trust perspective, this is a school-led inspection and the Trust is satisfied that the school's risk assessments are robust. The Trust Executive will be on-hand to support the Headteacher if needed. Governors commented that the inspection is an opportunity to showcase the excellent Covid-19 plans and their implementation. It may also be an opportunity for the school to raise awareness of the potential issues all schools may

face, should the uncertainty of examination processes continue, without Government guidance being provided as soon as possible

Governors resolved to receive the Report

8. Strategic Vision

8.1.1 **Curriculum** – The Curriculum Policy and curriculum paperwork were updated during lockdown; thanks to all Curriculum Team Leaders for their work on this, whilst also remote teaching. All curriculum documents are now on the school website and are carefully tailored to each subject. Students both in and out of school, can see what lessons take place and access Sharepoint to see where their learning is on that topic/lesson

8.1.2 Curriculum changes have led to assessment changes and the first set of KS3 data is currently being collated to assess those whose knowledge is 'Secure' and those whose is 'Developing' and 'Emerging'. Where knowledge is not thought to be as secure as possible, intervention plans will be implemented, with the focus of getting as many students to 'Secure' as possible. **Governors enquired what percentage the school anticipate will reach 'Exceeding'?** Exceeding is a 5+ - 6+ and the aim is over 50% of students and 25% of students to get 7+

8.1.3 The school has the widest curriculum in Cheshire East for KS4 and this is evidenced through the students' positive responses to subject choices. Registration time is now tutor-based and tutors are available for students from 8.30am in their classrooms. Additional wellbeing appointments are now in place

8.1.4 KS5 also has a wide curriculum choice and new classes filled immediately and are being enjoyed by all. Wednesday sport afternoon is currently on-hold, but will be reinstated as soon as Covid-19 rules allow. **Governors asked how the 9 hours teaching time compares with Outstanding schools' 10 hours?** Teaching time for each subject is 9 hours a week, which is favourably comparable to other, local schools whilst allowing for ample study time

8.2.1 **Performance Data** – The vast majority of KS4 students were satisfied with their grades and overall, the balance, even when accounting for external algorithms was good. Students have maintained good progress overall, but many disadvantaged students were not in school, so it was exceptionally difficult to award higher grades; staff maintained the school's integrity and awarded all grades as deserved

8.2.2 EBacc modelling changes have had a positive impact on CHS students and boys' progress, previously negative, is now positive. **Governors asked whether this progress is continuing this year?** There has been no Government advice on how to measure this, but an in-school progress model, built to compare cohorts, shows good progress so far. Covid-19 has had a bigger impact on disadvantaged students. The new measures to strengthen boys' performance did not have time to embed before lockdown, but is now implemented fully and a positive impact is anticipated

8.2.3 KS5 are a strong academic year group and Oxbridge and Russell Group University applications have increased. High vocational scores have been maintained and average English and Maths grades are up to a B/B-. Good mock examination results for high ability students were reflected in overall grades and girls performed exceptionally well. Assessment 3 results were overall in line, as expected

8.2.4 Governors and the Headteacher thanked MW and the team for their hard work in ensuring the attaining of fair and accurate, properly moderated results

8.3.1 **SEF** – There has been a three-year sustained track record of results' performance in the main framework areas. EBacc has been a development point for the school and EBacc grades have improved by half a grade during that development period. 75% of students have a language qualification and the good results in languages is due to the teaching and assessment process. Responding to Learning Walks' finds and monitoring of low-stakes assessments continues and behaviour is good. There is a whole school focus on literacy and reading and an aim to further improve parental engagement. Exclusions' figures are comparatively low against national and local figures and attitude to learning is good

8.3.2 It is anticipated that the 6th form will have over 300 students next year

8.3.3 **Governors asked whether there are specific metrics regarding attendance improvements, in particular Pupil Premium (PP) attendance?** The aim is to achieve

96% attendance, a figure which currently sits at 93%, but there is less than a 3% difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student attendance numbers. Attendance is not a big concern currently; Yr9 has seen huge improvements, but attendance does remain a focus. Individual support for attendance is ongoing, with home visits being carried out where needed

8.4 **School Improvement Plan** - The quality of teaching and learning is a priority and the 6th form track record is to be maintained. Staff wellbeing remains an important factor and the 6th form is building its careers profile to apply for the careers quality mark, CEIAG

9.1.1 **Student Welfare** – The learning mentor team continue to do great work and the level of support offered for different family needs is good. The attendance tracking tool created by CHS monitors attendance day-to-day and the team find it particularly helpful. The CHS Covid-19 alert, track and trace system is also working well to ensure isolation numbers are managed

9.1.2 **Safeguarding** – Although there has been an increase in number of reported issues, it is thought in part to be due to the process now being more embedded, and staff training resulting in their being more confident in their use of the systems in place. Governors encouraged the Headteacher to consider how to further support and encourage parents to protect their childrens' wellbeing. The school wellbeing web-page contains useful information for parents to support children who are not coping and the list of additional support resources will be re-sent to parents, but there is a cost to parents for some of those resources, which not all can afford. A Governor offered to share their experience of supporting their child through difficult times and the Headteacher will consider how best to utilise this offer to support other parents in similar situations

9.1.3 **Governors asked whether staff wellbeing is being monitored and supported? Are they able to speak out if they need support?** The Safeguarding team have weekly supervision to assist with dealing with a variety and severity of cases. Cases are reviewed so that no one works in isolation. **Governors asked whether outside support is available to staff?** Yes, staff can access outside support, such as Occupational Health and as a new member of staff to the school, LD commented that there is a good level of care that can be felt about the school; staff care for each other and the leadership team provide good support, encouraging staff to speak-out if they feel they need additional support. A Staff Governor commented that staff adapt well to the many current changes and challenges due to Covid-19 and would feel comfortable confiding in the Headteacher if additional support were needed. Governors thanked LD for the report and all the team for their work. **Governors commented that they have confidence in the team but noted that despite the assurances, safeguarding figures are a little concerning and asked whether staff need any additional support from Governors to help?** Staff have identified areas which may require an input of resources and are implementing interventions where possible. **It was agreed that the Headteacher can explore the possibility of obtaining further counselling services, using Covid-19 funding. The COO confirmed that this is also being considered at Trust level, as a possible TLA shared schools' resource.** Governors discussed the various possible avenues to build on the information gathered from staff wellbeing surveys. Governors with experience of such surveys offered assistance and the Headteacher and those Governors will discuss this in further detail outside of this meeting

10. **Risk Register (RR)** – The new format RR is being fed into the wider Trust Risk Management at the Audit and Risk Committee level and will be available to LGBs in the Spring term

Governors resolved to receive the Reports

Fostering Identity and Ethos

11.1 **LGB Roles** – It was agreed that RB will remain as Safeguarding Governor, US will become the SEND Governor and the appointment of a new Health and Safety (H&S) Governor will be taken offline, following the expiry of the current H&S Governor, SH's term of office. Link Governor roles will be reprised when their required actions will be permitted under Covid-19 regulations

11.2 Governor training will become a Trust wide strategy, but Governors can use NGA in the meantime. The Trust is keen to work with other schools in training, particularly feeder schools

- 11.3 Working Groups can be set up on an ad hoc need basis. None are currently needed, but Governors can consider what may be useful in the future
- 12.1 **Local Matters** – 104 staff responded to the staff survey and the Headteacher is delighted with the outcome. Staff were asked how they thought Covid-19 has been managed. Free-text was permitted and comments were constructive and positive. Matters taken on-board from the survey include increased support staff training opportunities. It was a useful tool to compare feedback over the last two years, but the Headteacher is happy to discuss further surveys as agreed at 9.1.3 above
- 12.2 The building of the new toilet block is on-track for completion early December and the contractors are doing a good job of not interrupting school life. The toilets are closed during the works, so there is a shortage, but students are managing. **Governors enquired whether the works are on-budget?** Water-leakage issues have resulted in additional costs, but this remains within contingency budgeting
13. **Policy Review - The Safeguarding (Remote Learning) Policy and Behaviour Policy were approved and the Headteacher will arrange for their upload to the school website**
14. **Admissions' Arrangements** – Due to the town-wide expansion of housing numbers, CHS has begun a joint town-wide consultation process with Eton Bank (EB) to increase the PAN of both schools; CHS to 230 and EB to 210. This will go out for consultation on 20th November, for four weeks. A spike in numbers is already expected in 2022. CHS is its own admissions' authority and can increase its PAN if it so wishes, but if additional places are *needed*, the Local Authority should pay for them. **The 2022 Admissions' Policy was approved**
15. **Matters to share with the Trust Board**
- There will be a Health and Safety inspection next Wednesday (18th November)
 - Governors recommended a future agenda have an item to discuss diversity in the workplace and on LGBs. There is a Trust Equality and Diversity Policy in place and monitoring and reporting have been incorporated into the TLA strategic plan. The Board will consider this over the coming weeks and report back to the LGB. Gender pay-gap reporting is now required as the Trust has reached a critical-mass size

AOB

- The Chair thanked staff and Governors for a productive meeting and all agreed how proud they are of the school staff; thank you. The Headteacher's Performance Management Review took place last month and the Chair was on the panel
- The Cmat retiring CEO leaves the organisation in December. Governors are aware that unfortunately, there can be no formal leaving presentation due to Covid-19 rules. A professional video conference has been set up so that everybody can send their personal messages to the retiring CEO and those who wish to do so can contact the Chair. The Chair will consider what gift from Governors will be appropriate
- Governors confirmed that their questions raised prior to the meeting, as contained in the attached Appendix, were answered during the meeting
- Governors and staff thanked the Chair for the efficient running of the meeting

Next Meeting Spring Term Thursday 4th March at 6pm. Location/Online TBC
Meeting Closed 8.22pm

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

Queries Raised by CHS Governors on 12th November 2020 Papers

1. Regarding the budget for 2020/21, Covid obviously poses a major risk in terms of its uncertain trajectory. If the Headteacher determines that additional investment is needed to bolster or improve student outcomes or safety, what is the process for sanctioning that spend?
2. Safeguarding: Do you have sufficient resources to deal with the additional (and possibly growing) problems associated with Covid? If not, what do you need?
3. Remote Learning:
 - 3a What is our experience of remote learning so far?
 - 3b What can you say about our preparedness going forward?
 - 3c Have we got the right skills and resources?
4. Can you quantify the loss of students' learning? Can they catch up?
5. Appendix 1- Matters arising: Year 11 and Year 13 parents have received academic progress reports this term for their children but what updates have been given to parents of students' progress in Y8 and Y9 as parents evenings were cancelled and have any academic progress reports have been issued in 2020?
6. Mental Health of students: is being addressed and students have been introduced to KOOTH but:
 - 6a How is CHS addressing the mental health and COVID-related anxiety of staff?
 - 6b How are SLT and Line Managers assessing Staff stress?
7. How is staff Well-Being being monitored for staff covering other team member absences due to illness or COVID related absences?
8. Appendix 5: Do all staff PCs facilitate teaching via TEAMS, (with Hue cameras) and what support will be given to teachers/support staff working from home if required to self-isolate and deliver lessons remotely?
9. Appendix 10B - Behaviour and RDFL Policy: Will the out of date references to school planners and parental signatures will be updated to using Satchel:one and google forms when the policy is next reviewed?
10. Suggestion to reword " follow one-way system" to "current school movement plan" as we are now on version 3 and this will facilitate further adjustments as required
11. Student Welfare - Item 9:
 - 11a Can we expand on the question of students' mental health?
 - 11b What is the situation?
 - 11c Is it steady or getting worse/better? How do we know?
12. Pupil Premium:
 - 12a how are we tracking the performance of Pupil Premium children since March?
 - 12b Are we reaching out to the Parents / Carers & indeed the Pupil's in a discreet way to offer any specific support?
13. Appendix 5 - Curriculum Paper :KS3
 - 13a What percentage of pupils are currently emerging & developing?
 - 13b What plans do we have to move them to secure?

14. What plans & percentage of pupils do we realistically feel we can move from secure to exceeding & excelling?
15. KS4 - What is the downside of removing guidance [life skills], given the increase in Mental Health issues currently being experienced as a result of Covid-19?
16. KS5 - Reducing hours for each option block to 9. How does this compare with Outstanding schools nationally?
17. Appendix 6 - School Performance - Given the world turned upside down, the performance was very good. That said, the Boys & Girls gap is reducing. Do you see this continuing and what have we learned that works well in this area?
18. Given that Scotland & Wales have already announced the use of School assessments rather than examinations for 2021, how prepared are we if England follows suit?
19. Appendix 7 - Executive Summary - Improving attendance, what is the target, percentage, number of pupils we need to focus support on?
20. Appendix 9 – Safeguarding - Clearly Covid-19 has had a big impact, but these figures suggest something other than the Coronavirus is influencing things:
 - 20a - What are the plans to reduce these numbers?
 - 20b - Would additional resource, funding & outside support help?
 - 20c - How safe do pupils & staff feel, is it worth conducting a specific student & staff confidential survey on this?