



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

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



Date: 24th November 2020 at 6.30pm

Present:

- Mrs C. Milson (Chair)
- Mr D McGarvey (Vice Chair)
- Mr D. Baxendale
- Mr M. Stride
- Mr R. Taylor
- Mr P. Woodhouse
- Mrs V. Young

Absent: Mr T de Jong

In attendance:

- Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher
- Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher
- Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher
- Mr M Cladingbowl – TLA CEO
- Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
- Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance

Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr de Jong.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting held jointly with Cheshire Studio School on 20th July 2020 were approved.
4. LGB Composition - For continuity of governance following the merger, the Trustees have requested that the position of Chair be in place for the next two years. Mrs Milson accepted the position of Chair.

Prior to the meeting 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.

Improving Education and Opportunities

5. Strategic Vision

5.1 Curriculum - Appendices 2a and 2b– There have been a few minor amendments to the curriculum.

- Languages – Yr 7 students now study one language (previously 2) for 6 periods a fortnight.
- Yr 9 students are now encouraged to take one of two pathways for languages; those with a natural aptitude for languages take pathway one, which automatically leads to taking a language GCSE. Pathway two students are given the option of taking a language GCSE. This pathway model should increase the current 33% of students taking a language for GCSE to 75%. The aim is to increase the number to 75%. **A governor asked how the 75% figure had been calculated; had staff made assumptions as to how many students would follow pathway two?** The number of students taking pathway one is a known figure and the pathway two figure is an estimate.
- KS3 and 4 additions to the curriculum offer are similar to the previous year.

Recovery Curriculum – Mrs Key reported that she had worked with all the faculty heads to draw up a plan to help students catch up, to ‘recover’ any parts of the curriculum that they may have fallen behind on due to covid-19. Governors had received the recovery plan for the Science department with the agenda. Across all faculties, key learning areas taught during lockdown have been assessed and intervention has been put in place where required. Rather than re-teach whole blocks of work, learning gaps will be interleaved into relevant topics currently being taught.

There are some gaps in the lower sets, but staff are confident that these gaps can be recovered. Intervention such as one-to-one is in place, particularly for the disadvantaged students.

Governors were impressed by these recovery plans and acknowledged that a lot of time had been put into them, and hoped they would be successful. A governor suggested that it might be helpful to share some of this information with parents.

5.2 School Performance - Governors were reminded that the results were based on the Centre Assessed Grades (CAG). **A governor asked how this year's GCSE and A Level grades compare locally and nationally.** As schools' results were not published publically, there were no local or national comparisons available. However, a collaborative piece of software (SISRA) has calculated the progress 8 score at 0.32. Approximately 1200 schools entered their data into SISRA, therefore it is considered a valid comparison and shows an upward trend. The school is pleased with the upward trend in progress and attainment.

A governor asked why the results were higher than usual. Results submitted were those which the school believed the students were most likely to have achieved had they sat the exams. Overall, the grades are fair and honest and the Headteacher is pleased and satisfied that students got their deserved outcomes. There are concerns around next year's examinations, as schools have experienced very different isolation/illness figures nationally and the Government will need to address that to ensure fairness for students taking exams.

A governor asked whether the 0.32 Progress score was within the range the school expected The Headteacher was cautious about the expected range but anticipated a score between 0.25 and 0.3, so the actual figure is reassuring in showing that anticipated range was correct. Projections for 2021/2022 Progress figures are currently 0.27, but there are many factors which can affect this in these unusual times. **Governors took confidence from the fact that the Progress 8 score aligned with predictions.**

A governor referred to the paper provided and asked to what the references 'On-track' and 'at risk', referred. Students are benchmarked in terms of prior attainment starting points at the end of KS2 and as a minimum their attainment throughout the school is compared to national averages and some are well beyond that. Nothing in the data suggests that the KA students are anything other than on-track or above where they are expected to be, based on prior attainment. **A governor asked what the aspiration 'on-track' refers to and suggested that the school should be aiming for values that make the school 'outstanding'.** It was explained that the government's aim is that each child achieves a progress 8 score of at least 0 – this is a and good progress score. A top performing school would achieve a progress 8 score of 0.4 or above. It was noted however, that Ofsted judgements using the new framework, are not based primarily on results, so progress 8 scores may or not not affect any summative ofsted grade.

5.3 Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) & 5.4 School Development Plan (SDP)- Personal development is key and how well students are being prepared for life after school. The whole curriculum develops students personally and academically. **Governors asked whether the curriculum works well for disadvantaged students.** The school attends to those students more closely from an earlier age and from the KS4 and KS5 results, it is believed that the school is doing well by those students and will continue to do so.

A governor commented that the SDP appeared to be more a marketing plan than a SDP and asked what the governors' role is in monitoring that SDP and what KPIs should they be looking for. The SDP is a slim-line overview; many documents sit behind it and triangulation of data, such as attendance, results, disadvantaged student data and other routine metrics allows governors to challenge data which they feel is not on target. Governors have in the recent past, requested this format.

6. Student Welfare (including Safeguarding) – Appendix 6 - Mr Leigh reported that the school has three members of staff who are Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) trained and another member of staff is showing an interest. KK and CL will be providing staff training on how lockdown may have impacted on students in terms of safeguarding. Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) links with the school are invaluable and the 6th form's collaboration with the main school and Deputy DSLs ensure good oversight of

safeguarding. Against expected increases (due to covid) there has been a slight drop in safeguarding headline figures overall, but it would not be unusual for those figures to increase over the coming weeks and months.

7. **School Risk Register** – The Risk Register will be a Trust format, which will be discussed at the Trust Audit and Risk Committee meeting in December. It will then be brought to the spring term LGB to discuss the mechanisms for the school and LGB to raise issues with the Trust.

Fostering Identity and Ethos

8. **LGB Roles** – Link Governors will provide routine links between the school and LGB, so LGB sub-committees will not be required. The Chair is the Safeguarding Governor (a position required by statute), the school has a SEND Governor (Val Young) and the Trust recommends the appointment of a Health and Safety Governor. **Anyone interested in this role is to contact the Chair.**

Training will be bespoke to the Trust and tailored towards the LGB's primary focus to support and challenge the school in its provision of education and welfare.

9. **Local Matters** – The academy had been successful in obtaining £1m from its application to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid, to repair the roof.

The following Items 10 – 15 inclusive, were taken following Cheshire Studio School (CSS) LGB joining the meeting, at 5.14pm. The items are recorded in these Minutes under the Agenda order, for ease of reference.

10. **LGB Policy Review** – Appendix 7 – Work is being carried out now on collating Trust Policies to ascertain those which are Trust Policies and those which are individual schools' policies. Governors will be provided with guidance on the process of when policies should be reviewed. **The Safeguarding Policy and Addendum and Behaviour Policy at Appendices 7 were approved.**

11. **Admissions' Arrangements** - Appendix 8 – Whilst the decision was for KA Governors, KA admissions' numbers affect CSS numbers, so discussion feedback was welcomed from all KA and CSS Governors. Demand for places at KA is increasing year-on-year. 248 were admitted into Yr7 last year and the tables in Appendix 8 illustrate how the school will look should it continue to admit at those numbers. From 2024, there would be capacity issues and costly, new buildings would be needed. The Headteacher would therefore recommend admitting to the current PAN of 220, in September 2021, which would still represent growth in both KA 6th form and CSS. There followed a discussion about the details and merits of admissions' numbers and **it was agreed that KA will admit to PAN in September 2021. The admissions policy was agreed.**

12. **Matters to Share with the Trust Board** – Governors requested that Trust Board Minutes be made available to LGBs. Part 1 Minutes will be on the Trust website, but will also be uploaded to Governor Hub.

13. **Covid-19 Update** – Appendices 7 and 9 – All Governors confirmed their satisfaction with the contents of Appendix 9 and there were no questions. The infection rate in secondary schools continues to rise and nationally, as a result, attendance is poor. All TLA schools have acted in accordance with Government and Local Authority (LA) guidelines and are protecting the education and safety of their students. KA and CSS have middling Covid-19 numbers when compared nationally, and lessons and work continuity is very good. KA and CSS are confident that they are doing all they can during such a dynamic and ever-changing picture. Another TLA secondary school, Congleton High School (CHS) recently underwent a Health and Safety check regarding its Covid-19 measures. The visit looked at national guidance compliance and the school's own, internal measures. The inspectors were impressed by the school's overall practices and no issues arose. KA and CSS have very similar practices to CHS in terms of Covid-19 measures, so by analogy, it is thought that the Trust measures overall, are good.

Students were not expected to do as many hours' work at home, as when in school and three to four hours' work a day, was considered good. Those students who did less than one hour a day were contacted and supported. 96% of students received teacher feedback and the SEND department were in regular contact

with SEND students and TAs joined the live, online lessons where SEND students were present. SEND students were discussed in weekly Heads of Faculty meetings so that dissemination of all information ensures ongoing additional support can be provided where needed. **A governor asked how well Yr12 students settled back into CSS after lockdown.** Very well; early signs are very positive and tutors are currently assessing early assessment outcomes.

Parental surveys were carried out to assess how students were managing with working at home.

80% of the current Yr11 students (Yr10 at the time) attended the summer school, two hour catch-up sessions in English, Maths, Science and Options' subjects.

Governors commented on the strong team that worked tirelessly throughout lockdown, acknowledging the hard and relentless work, always doing their best for the students and thanked the team. Also noted for thanks were those who identified need for individual students in terms of IT equipment and worked so hard to deliver laptops where required.

A governor asked whether the school had asked those students to whom they delivered laptops about where they were able to work? It was noted that in some circumstances, an exam desk had been delivered if there was no available working space. Also noted, that laptops were also provided to all teaching staff those members of admin/support staff who needed them.

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

14. Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB – The Scheme of Delegation (SofD) is now complete and has defined and refined LGB roles, highlighting education and welfare as the key, primary LGB focus. The LGB agenda is a semi-standard one across the Trust schools, incorporating the Trust priorities and vision and values, utilised as agenda section headings. The agenda has items for back-to-back Trust/LGB reporting by exception and this first term of its use is by way of beta-testing the process.

LGB Meetings – **Governors asked what Governor training will be provided;** training will be bespoke to the Trust and tailored towards the LGB's primary focus to support and challenge the school in its provision of education and welfare with possible external support for matters such as safeguarding. Governors recently completed a skills' audit and review of these will inform training. **A governor noted that individual school's vision and values don't necessarily match those of the Trust and asked how the two work together.** These marry up through local identity and ethos, as they will encapsulate ambitions around education for all.

15. Receive Budget – Appendix 11. The budget was shared with governors. It was noted that given the covid disruptions and also that fact that staff have now moved to central services line of the budget, this year, a year-on-year comparison would not be informative. Monthly management accounts will be made available on Governor Hub, budget had been based on estimates and covid-19 still signifies much uncertainty. The academy's budget is in an in-year deficit position, but this was planned and is due to lagged pupil numbers; there are robust reserves to cover this.

A governor asked if year on year comparisons would be shown in future years – this was confirmed.

A governor asked how the academy's school development plan is fed into the budget – this is through work with the headteacher and trust executive, which is then scrutinised by the Trust's finance and Staffing committee. **A governor asked if he would be involved in financial decisions** – The LGB has no responsibility for financial decisions, but if resources are thought to be hindering the provision of good education in terms of staffing for instance, that strategic need can be highlighted to the executive, who will look at how to address that.

Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Next Meeting: Monday 1 March 2020 Location/Online TBC

Meeting Closed 6pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....