



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

SIR WILLIAM STANIER SCHOOL LGB

Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES – Part I



Date: 19th November 2020 at 6.30pm

Present:

Mr A Pearse (Chair)
Mr D Cooper
Mrs J Young
Mr D Jobling
Mr J Burke
Mr S Houlston
Mrs E Johnson

In attendance:

Mr J Fraser – Headteacher
Mr M Cladingbowl – TLA CEO
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance

Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Absent: Mr R Cartwright

Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and quoracy was confirmed. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Cartwright.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2020, were approved. There were no matters arising.
4. Mr Pearse was welcomed as Chair.

Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance

5. **Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB** – It was noted that the primary focus for all TLA LGBs is the schools’ core purpose of education and welfare and agendas have been standardised across the Trust. The governors’ role is to drive and support challenge and to support headteachers. Thanks were made to Governors for the provision of their pre-meeting questions as requested (attached to these Minutes as an appendix). Presenters will endeavour to address those questions during the presentations, but would pick up outstanding queries at the end of each item where needed.
6. **Budget** – The budget was shared with governors. It was noted that budget had been based on estimates and that covid-19 still signifies much uncertainty. The budget has been set at a break-even level. Following the school’s transfer from its previous Trust (pre-KMAT), with a nil balance, reserves will need to be built-up over time to achieve a stable financial position, but this will not be expected in this first year. The first set of management accounts have been complete and are not showing any significant variances to budget and no concerns to be drawn to governors’ attention at this stage.

Improving Education and Opportunities

7. **Covid-19 Update** – The Headteacher presented slides to the meeting, noting that covid-19 within SWS had much the same as across the local area, positive student cases have been relatively low in the school, numbering only three, only one of which impacted on other students, which was reported to Public Health England (PHE). A Year 8 form group (25 students) and one teacher is having to self-isolating for 14days. Two members of staff have tested positive, one of whom has now returned to work and the other is delivering remote lessons, in accordance with medical advice, with the support of their faculty in school.
A governor asked whether the school continues to receive Covid-19 test kits from the DfE? It was confirmed that they were, but since a test centre opened in Crewe, there has been little need for the school tests, so they are being offered to families if they need them. **A governor enquired whether there has been any resistance to students with ‘extremely critically vulnerable’ family members returning to school?** It was reported that those families have wanted their children back in school. Extensive medical

risk assessments have been carried out and the families have expressed that they are happy and assured that their children are safe. There have been a few, minor amendments have been made to procedures around building management since Governors were last able to come into school; improvements and risk assessments are reviewed and discussed with staff as needed and are ongoing.

Governors asked to what purpose the Covid-19 catch-up premium will be put? Years 7 and 11 have an extended school day, from 8.15 am to 3.20pm. **A governor asked what mitigations are in place with regard to staff workload for the extended day?** Staff had been consulted about this and there were currently no issues. Union representatives had come into school and were happy with workload and measures in place to protect staff.

In terms of measuring success, it was reported that the Yr11 mock examinations ended last week, results will be shared in due course. Other impact indicators were attendance figures for Year 11. The figures are currently the highest they have been for a significant amount time at 91.5%. Much work has been done with vulnerable groups to improve this, fixed term exclusions are negligible and 'Attitude to learning' metrics are highest amongst Year 11. It was noted that Year 7 attendance figures are also higher at 95.5%.

A governor asked if the mental health counsellor mentioned in one of the appendices was an additional appointment and if so, had they been funded through the covid catch up fund. The additional mental health counsellor role has been created through redeployment of an existing member of staff. Mental health and emotional issues' referrals are high, but counselling referral figures overall are no higher than usual. The school is working with The Oaks Academy to collaborate use of a family support worker and attendance team which will add capacity and shared services between the two schools.

A governor asked what impact has been seen on staff wellbeing and what measures have been put in place to look after them? There is concern about the sustainability of the model of teachers moving about the school, teaching in many rooms, whilst students stay in one classroom. Rather than the daily debriefs which were being held at the start of the pandemic, the Headteacher now has one-to-one consultations with all members of staff. Communication is good, staff are aware that the Headteacher is open to feedback about what support staff need, more surveys will be carried out and staff absence is at its lowest since 2015. The Headteacher is aware that many social avenues have been cut-off, so online connectivity activities have been provided, which have been well received by staff.

8. Strategic Vision – meeting the challenges of the year ahead. It was reported that the five key areas are as follows:

- Build social and academic confidence in anyone connected to the school
- Build the right staffing group
- Build on the development momentum and take it beyond any perceived limits
- Build a collective concentration and understanding on the singular organisational objective
- Retain situational awareness

8.1 Curriculum, School Performance, Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Priorities – The Headteacher spoke to his Report and provided slides – The curriculum is being developed to reposition values, to support and develop the school. The deliverables centre around the ethos of 'opportunity', 'community' and 'courage'. There is a strong focus around personal development and a plan to build elite performer groups and catch up groups around identified groups and subjects.

In order to strengthen the Year 7 foundation year, the school is looking to improve connections with its partner primaries, develop a unique selling point and connect with Year 7 families in a multi-platform way. Academic data will be collected at the moment of impact. Teaching staff are leading well on curriculum and there are currently two trial Alternative Learning Programmes in Year 9.

8.2 School Improvement Priorities – There are three key priorities:

- to provide continuity and be able to readily respond to unpredictable social circumstances
- to develop outreach capacity helping students to access school
- to extend the professional skill-set of the teachers

The school is developing a good hybrid teaching and learning programme using Show My Homework and live learning on Teams. The current Year 8, who are out isolating, have a full online timetable, with predominately live, online lessons. Safeguarding calls are made to vulnerable students. The Headteacher is confident that this model can be rolled-out successfully, should more year groups need to isolate. There is a strong intent around the alternative learning programmes and their design is proving good for students and are modified to assist those who are finding the school setting, challenging. Teaching and Learning aims to get every student where they need to be.

9. The first half term of this school year was spent reopening and assessing where the students were up to with evidence gathering. There has been a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions and attendance is slightly below this point last year, but is generally above national figures. Other emerging performance indicators include student assessment (mocks have just finished) and staff absence. Year on year there have been fewer days lost to staff absence year on year.

A governors asked whether the improved behaviour and exclusions' figures can be attributed to the Covid-19 bubbles and other Covid-19 measures put in place and if so, are there any of those measures the school may consider retaining in any way, when things return to 'normal'? The staggered year groups' starting and social times are working well and the Headteacher is aware that currently, social groups outside of school are also limited. The school is considering the measures carefully though and thinking about what may be useful to retain in terms of impact on learning and behaviour. Teaching staff are concerned that Covid-19 measures are currently impacting on the teaching and learning effectiveness of the first ten minutes of a lesson and the Headteacher is looking at how best to address this.

Additional information:

School website – With support from the Trust, the new school website is running and its snagging list being addressed, but it is looking to be a promising marketing tool.

Forest School Curriculum – there is a partnership with Wistaston Academy and building has commenced for a forest school on SWS premises. This is a government funded initiative and it is hoped to be utilised by Year 7 and students on the alternative learning programme in the second half of the spring term.

UTC partner work - is to take place on Wednesday afternoons. Talented vocational students, who require variants in the usual academic offers, can attend UTC for six-week blocks. ***A governor queried whether the partnership with UTC might have a negative impact on student numbers as they might leave to attend UTC.*** Impact will be carefully monitored and risk assessments have been carried out; UTC want to connect with the school to provide students with a strong curriculum offer; everybody is aware that some students may leave SWS for UTC, but the Headteacher is happy to explore where each school can add value to the other, as mutual support and engage with UTC to build a partnership.

A request was made for an update on intake tours and next year's intake? Due to Covid-19, the usual marketing was not possible, but the Headteacher was able to go into partner primaries to talk to Years 5 and 6, followed by socially distanced evening tour sessions. There was a good uptake and from the indicative numbers, it is thought that the school can achieve PAN this year: PAN is 150 and there are currently 141, compared to the previous figure of 120.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for this thorough report.

10. Risk Register – The Risk Register will be administered at Trust level and will have individual school sub-sections. It will be presented to the Trust Audit and Risk Committee in December and will come to this LGB in its spring term meeting, following consultation between the COO, Headteacher and Chair.

Fostering Identity and Ethos

11. LGB Roles – LGBs will utilise the roles of Link Governors and can hold Working Parties where required, for project specific matters. The school must have a Safeguarding Governor and are recommended to have a Health and Safety Governor and a SEND Governor. The Headteacher and Chair will discuss this further. The Governor training plans overview are contained in the paper provided to the LGB on Governor Hub and feedback will be welcomed.

12. Local Matters – this is to be a school-specific item, to discuss unique school circumstances. There were no issues to discuss this meeting.

13. LGB Policy Review – The TLA Scheme of Delegation is complete and there is now a focus in the governance team, on policies. A schedule will be drawn up to enable schools to identify which policies need to be reviewed and when. The SWS Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies are being considered by the Headteacher and will be sent out after this meeting, along with the Teaching and Learning (Remote Learning) Policy.

14. Admission Arrangements - With the exception of administrative changes, there have been no core changes to the Admissions Policy and this will also be circulated for review after this meeting.

Governors approved the Admissions Policy in principle.

15. Matters to share with the Trust Board -Reporting – This item is an opportunity for Governors as the governing group, to raise concerns or signpost good work, to Trustees. There were no matters of exception to report to the Board from this meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the CEO offered thanks from himself and Trustees to all the LGB members, for their voluntary work and commitment to making the school as good as it can be through challenge and support to the Headteacher. The CEO also offered thanks to the Headteacher for the use of the office space at SWS, which enables the CEO and his team to be close to and support the school, without interruption or interference to its day-to-day running.

CEO thanked the Headteacher and SWS staff for their continued support and work, particularly during this extraordinary and difficult period. Governors noted that the students are doing well and endorsed the thanks to the Headteacher. The Chair was thanked for a smoothly-run, effective and efficient, (first as his tenure as Chair) LGB meeting.

Date and Time of Next Meeting:

**Next Meeting TBC Location/Online TBC
Meeting Closed 7.57pm**

Minutes approved:

Date:.....