



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

CHESHIRE STUDIO SCHOOL LGB

Blended Meeting  
MINUTES – Part I



Date: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 4pm

**Present:**

Mrs C. Millson (Chair)  
Mrs A Sennet (Vice Chair) (AS)  
Mr D Hermitt (DH)  
Mr N Jackson (NJ)

**Absent:** Mr J Whittaker - Headteacher

**In attendance:**

Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher (KKY)  
Mrs A Thatcher – AHT (ATR) (until 5.35pm)  
Mrs H Weigh-Williams – AHT (HWH) (to 5.35pm)  
Mr C Leigh – Assistant HT (CLH) (5.35pm to 5.43pm)  
Mrs N Phillips –Director of Operations & Finance (NPS)  
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO  
**Clerk:** Mrs C Gritton

**Administration**

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Whittaker and the meeting was **quorate**.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were **approved**. Mr Hermitt and Mr Jackson confirmed receipt of the email regarding the Minutes of the CSS meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and those Minutes were **also approved**.  
Matters Arising – The Chair thanked the COO and finance team for the provision of the P1 and P2 finance reports. **The Chair noted that the COO had said at the last meeting that no finance reports were produced over the summer and asked for clarity.** COO reported that whilst financial monthly accounts (P11) are produced, they do not need to be shared with Headteachers/governors as scope for spending decisions is limited over the summer holidays.
4. Composition of LGB and Governance Matters – Parent Governor elections will be carried out shortly and with regard to the opportunity for additional collaboration at Governor level across the Trust, members of other TLA schools will be considered as potential Appointed Governor.
5. Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB – it was reported that the Trust Board will be considering the Trust Strategic Plan, which was amended to incorporate TLA Headteachers’ feedback and the strategic objectives will be shared with LGBs after the next Board meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December. The Trust is looking to move towards the formalisation of the shared services offer which is looking to help schools develop their SEND, equality and expansion of network subject groups’ provisions.

**6. Finance Update**

- 6.1 **P2 Management Accounts** had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and were **received**. It was reported that whilst GAG income is individual to the two schools, CSS is heavily embedded with Knutsford Academy (KA) in financial terms for shared staffing and resources and costs are apportioned appropriately. CSS finances are secure for the year and the first outturn review, currently underway, has not highlighted any concerns so far. Governors and the school will receive the first detailed forecast position for the end of the year as well as the key variances and processes used to make assumptions, in the December accounts.
  - **Governors asked why there were no figures in the leadership column of the accounts. Governors were concerned that as these accounts are in the public domain, it could appear that the Studio is leaderless.** It was reported that this is captured in the notional recharge element of the KA and CSS

accounts, as Mr Whittaker and Mrs Key lead both schools. Governors agreed that it was important to show leadership and other staffing as appropriate against CSS. **ACTION:** The COO will include separate apportionments for leadership and staffing costs in the accounts moving forwards.

- **Governors noted that despite CSS having separate incomes and grants, the relevant column in the accounts does not reflect that.** It was reported that all revenue has been included in one line under 'GAG income'. **ACTION:** Governors requested that this is separated out accordingly.  
**Governors noted that the accounts do not detail the CSS Pupil Premium (PP) funding and requested that this information is made available to allow for understanding on how much is received and how it is spent.**

## 7. School Risk Register

**Governors asked the COO for clarity as to responsibilities they have at school level regarding the Risk Register.** It was reported that the Trust Register is available on GH. For risks at school level, the Trust examines the Self Evaluation (SEF) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) alongside the Trust strategic priorities. As part of that review, TLA LGBs are asked to refer any further identified risks to the Trust Board via the Matters to Share Agenda items. Those risks would be reviewed by the Trust Audit and Risk Committee, which would decide whether that risk needs to go onto the Trust Risk Register.

**A governor recommended that the Trust consider all schools' Health and Safety audits to inform the Trust Risk Register.**

## 8. Strategic Vision

8.1 School Improvement Priorities – Update of Curriculum Development Work – Paper 8.1 School Improvement Priorities had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received. The following points were made and discussed:

Behaviour and Rewards – A report by HWH.

- There is a whole school approach across Knutsford Academy (KA) and CSS to ensure consistency of expected behaviours and standards. A focus on areas of behaviour including punctuality are being addressed.
- The rewards programme has now been introduced and a calendar of rewards events arranged with local community partners' sponsorship, which has been shared on social media to promote and celebrate the school's successes.
- A communications plan is being developed to further the school's social media profile. CSS' profile should be enhanced as a strong pathway of choice for students with suitable skills, strengths and capabilities. Individual narratives will be created to support those students on their journeys, including the encouragement of extra-curricular activities, which will enhance and support students' choices and skills.

Consideration of the studio curriculum being flexible to accommodate students' needs, skills and potential career choices was discussed. **Governors would like to explore the opportunities to work on a Trust wide basis to support students for whom a more practical curriculum is appropriate.** Work on students' skills and ambitions begins at Yr7, so KA and CSS are able to understand individual and cohort needs as they move through the school.

**A Governor recommended that** the school consider utilising previous year's positive student outcomes on social media and staff will look into that and the Governor will share professional life-skills videos which the school may consider using.

**Governors asked whether the school has any links with spiritual development organisations.** It was reported that rather than being a prescriptive programme, spiritual development is considered to be the students being encouraged and given the time to self-reflect on and develop their own beliefs and spirituality. Teachers assess their subject areas, as to whether they provide that opportunity and discuss

that with the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development lead to develop the curriculum where changes would be beneficial.

**Governors asked whether staff have received training in this approach.** It was reported that there had been a training day (INSET) day on SMSC and a curriculum template provided to support teachers. In addition, students are encouraged to complete relevant sections in their planners.

**A Governor asked, with regard to the Baker Clause, to what extent the school provides the opportunity for other organisations to speak to the students.** It was reported that local colleges and organisations have been into school to discuss alternative pathways and further visits are planned.

Governors thanked ATR and HWH for their hard work and input and congratulated them on their positive impact so far.

[ATR and HWH left the meeting at 5.35pm]

## 9. Student Welfare and Safeguarding Including Covid

A report by CLH. Paper 9 Studio Safeguarding and Attendance November 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received. It was reported that the vulnerable children's list has been maintained and shared with Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCIES). The process KA and CSS uses to track the list is being rolled out across TLA schools and Cheshire East Local Authority as an example of good practice. CLH was pleased to report that funding has been obtained for two members of staff to attend mental health leads training.

Attendance – It was reported that whilst analysing attendance data is challenging due to Covid, CSS attendance has seen a slight improvement over the last few days and absence is generally below the national average covid level for secondary schools.

[CLH left the meeting at 5.43pm]

## 10. Local Matters

**Leisure Centre:** It was reported that the current joint use agreement with the Leisure Centre had come to an end. A year's extension had been requested but only 6 months had been granted. Therefore, in March 2022 a flexible access agreement (FAA) will be in place and the school will be charged on a new structure of costs based on usage. The school is negotiating with the Local Authority about how to best proceed and a collaborative move forward is anticipated. However, the school's healthy financial position will allow alternative plans to be developed if needed.

**Issues with Parent Pay :** caused by provider issues, have been resolved.

**School website:** the new website is up and running and is compliant, improvement work is ongoing.

## 11. Policies

CSS 2023/2024 Admissions Policy v2 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

**ACTION:** A minor addition to be added to detail the process following a child being placed on the waiting list, following which the Policy will be provided to Governors for final approval. COO reported that the Trust Board had decided that in-year admissions' decisions would be taken by LGBs via panels set up at each school. **The Chair recommended that** one panel be established to deal with both KA and CSS in-year admissions and **ACTION:** Governors will contact the Chair with expressions of interest to join the panel.

## 12. LGB Roles

**12.1 Link Governors** It was reported that the Chair (as Safeguarding link for KA) and AS will attend a safeguarding meeting on Friday with CLH.

**12.2 Training Updates** COO reported that the Trust has signed up to the National Governance Association (NGA) online training platform. The variable quality of training was acknowledged, but the Trust will recommend specific modules to governors as appropriate. Governors were asked to feed back to the Clerk any comments or recommendations they may have after using the NGA website and training platform. The training on permanent exclusions' panels was highly recommended by COO.

Supplementary face-to-face training, to bring together Trustees and Governors from all Trust schools will also be offered, for training in data dashboard analysis and SEFs.

**13. Matters to Share with the Trust Board**

13.1 The Chair has discussed with the CEO, the Trust carrying out an audit of vocational courses offered across the trust. This could enable collaboration across schools - with the outcome of broadening the offer for individual students. Exploration of accessing some courses remotely, whilst engaging in work experience in local communities could benefit all TLA students.

13.2 Governors request clarity of the shared services provisions including what are the core services and details of the costs of and how and when schools will access additional resources.

13.3 Governors would like the Trust Board to note their thanks to the finance team for provision of the management accounts.

13.4 Governors requested that the Audit and Risk Committee consider whether Health and Safety audits ought to be placed on the Trust Risk Register, with a view to forming a consolidated approach if more than one school experiences similar health and safety risks.

**14. AOB**

Nothing to report.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 4pm

**Meeting Closed 6pm**

<b>CSS ACTIONS – Post November 2021 Meeting</b>			
<b>AGENDA ITEM AND ACTION</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Confirmed Completed</b>
4. Parent Governor election to be held	Before next meeting	NPS/HT	
6. The COO will include separate apportionments for leadership & Staffing costs, and include appropriate income lines in the management accounts.	Future meetings	COO	
11. Admissions policy to be finalised. Governors will contact the Chair if they wish to join the In-Year Admissions' Panel	ASAP	NPS/Governors	
12. Trust to recommend learning link modules on NGA	ASAP	Clerk to co-ordinate	
13. Matters to share with the Trust Board – to be shared with Board	Next Board Meeting	Clerk	
<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 4pm</b>			

Minutes approved: .....

Date:.....