



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB
Blended Meeting
MINUTES – Part I**



Date: 23rd November 2021 at 4pm

Present:

Mrs C Millson (Chair)
Mr D McGarvey (Vice Chair) (DM) (From 5.05pm)
Mr D Baxendale
Mr R Taylor (RT)
Mr P Woodhouse
Mrs V Young (VY)
Mrs J Padget (From 4.22pm) (JP)

Absent:

In attendance:

Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher (JWR)
Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher (KKY)
Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher (CLH)
Mrs J Bradbury – Associate Assistant Headteacher
(for item 8.1) (JBY)
Mrs N Phillips – Director of Operations & Finance
(NPS)
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO (COO)

Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Administration

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting, there were no apologies and quoracy was confirmed. Prior to the meeting, JP and DM had advised that they would join the meeting late.
2. Declarations of Interest - There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting - Subject to an amendment to the meeting being blended, rather than online, the Minutes of the meeting of the KA LGB held on 21st September 2021 were **approved**. **ACTION:** The Clerk will make the amendments to these minutes and place on governor hub for the Chair to sign off. The clerk was additionally asked to make the amendments to the KA LGB 21st June 2021 Minutes (as requested in the 21st September 2021 meeting) and make those available for sign off also.
Matters Arising – COO reported that the Health and Safety training for the Headteacher would be booked as soon as available. The course would be a one day Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) training. COO further reported that Health and Safety contracts have not been standardised across the Trust, but the Trust is looking to consolidate a number of commercial contracts over time.
4. Composition of LGB and Governance Matters – There are two potential new members for the LGB, one of whom has education links and the Chair and Headteacher will follow up and report back to the LGB.
5. Matters for the Trust Board to Share with the LGB – Governors noted that having requested timely monthly finance reporting, and the Chair having spoken with the Trust CEO, the first 2021/2022 Management Accounts had been posted to Governor Hub and Governors were assured that regular monthly reporting will continue. COO had nothing further to report from the Trust Board.

6. Finance Update

- 6.1 **Governors thanked Mr Simpson** for providing the P2 October Management Accounts, which had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and were **received**.
- 6.2 Governors noted that year-to-date was showing a positive variance to budget, but that the full year was currently showing to budget. **A governor asked if this was correct and if the view was that by year-end the schools costs are currently anticipated to be on budget.** COO reported that a detailed outturn end of year forecast exercise will be carried out and reported in the December accounts. There is currently a positive finance picture, partly due to Covid catch-up and recovery funding. There is also some SEND income which was omitted from the budget. The Trust Finance Director met with the Headteacher last week to discuss variables and will begin the year’s reforecast ready for December’s accounts.

- **A Governor asked how TT@K was progressing this year and why the income no longer sat with Knutsford Academy.** It was reported that central services were now providing the personnel to run the TT@K programme and as discussed in the September LGB meeting, the impact of this on KA's finances will continue to be monitored for this year.
- **Governors noted that the school pays £316k into TLA for central services and asked if there was any documentation as to what that money is spent on. Governors wanted to understand what the core shared services offer is and what the school may be asked to pay for as additional costs.**
This item will be referred to the Board at item 13.
- **Governors asked whether the amount TLA schools pay to Central Services would reduce as more schools joined the Trust. It was reported that** the industry norm is for all schools to pay between 4%-6% of GAG to Central Services. TLA's 5% cost to schools covers a wide range of services with an emphasis on school improvement. SEND provisions are a focus which came out of the Trust Headteachers' consultations in September 2021, so, as the Trust grows and more income is received, the Trust is looking to strengthen its expertise in that area.
- **Governors asked if the outturn for 2020/2021 was available and if the previously reported £150K surplus was still approximately on target.** COO reported that the £150k surplus reported in the September minutes has strengthened further and the final position will be reported following the audit completion and Board ratification thereof.
- **Governors asked whether capital expenditure could be added to the monthly finance report.** It was reported that as capital spend differs from school to school based on current live programmes at each school. **ACTION:** the COO to prepare a supplemental capital spend report for the next meeting.
- **Governors asked whether the new Teaching and Learning (T&L) initiatives are budgeted.** It was reported that most of the T&L initiatives are staff-release, or part of the individuals' roles, so are budgeted. The school is expected to reach a break-even position and as reserves are strong, there are available funds to put into any initiatives not budgeted. KA currently holds around 14% of GAG in reserves, which is above the 5% de minimis target. Plans are being initiated for utilisation of the amount above the 5%. Covid catch-up staffing was budgeted, but the reserves allow some flexibility and all TLA schools holding reserves over 5%, are expected to break even.

7. School Risk Register

7.1 As previously requested, the Trust Risk Register had been uploaded to GH. **A governor noted that the Trust had rated as 'amber' the lagged funding issue at Knutsford Academy and queried why this was so when KA had taken measures to mitigate this risk.** These measures included building up reserves to fund additional teachers and then limiting admission numbers to PAN. **The COO confirmed that** there are no concerns at Trust level regarding the school's lagged funding. The Board will be asked to review the risk as listed on the Risk Register with a view to downgrading the risk.

7.2 The Chair asked what responsibility there was within each school to produce an individual risk register. COO confirmed that this would be done through the trust using key performance measures.

8. Strategic Vision

8.1 School Improvement Priorities: – Update on curriculum development work Paper 8.1 School Priorities November 2021 LGB had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received.**

KKY reported that Teaching & Learning was a key focus for this academic year. A Teaching and Learning Group had been set up to focus on 'The Knutsford Way'. The group consisted of KKY, x2 Associate Headteachers and x4 other members of the teaching staff.

The roles listed in the report are secondments, created to encourage and support able staff who want to develop their whole-school experience and skills. JBY is the lead in coaching.

JBY explained that the first steps were; to build a coaching culture within the school – this would further improve interaction, to increase the amount of dialogue, and to rebuild the appraisal process to make it more engaging and productive. JBY explained that staff are being given opportunities to enrich their practice through being trained, encouraging new approaches and strategies to further develop the learning of their classes. Coaching has been popular with staff, developing collaboration across all facets of the organisation and that all staff feel supported. Governors thanked JBY for her work in this area.

[JB left the meeting at 4.45pm].

KKY reported that 'The Knutsford Way' is yielding positive results and is being rolled out across KA and to other TLA schools as best practice. The initiative is helping to identify gaps in learning from last year and appears to be particularly successful for lower attainers, who respond well to the structure and there has been positive student feedback. Peer marking is utilised well.

- **Governors asked how often formal testing takes place.** It was reported that formal testing takes place every half term and is reported to parents. Low stakes testing, such as 'Retrieval', utilised at the start of each lesson, is carried out regularly and often in various forms, as appropriate to the subject area. **Sample retrieval questions were shown to governors, and it was noted that these would be useful resources for parents. ACTION:** Explore whether the questions set for the Retrieval section of lessons can be provided to parents to assist them in supporting their children.
- **Governors asked how much allocated reading time students have in school.** It was reported that one form time a week is dedicated to reading and a bulletin will be sent out shortly to parents, sharing recommended reads.
- **Governors noted that the T&L groups each appear to be at different stages of development of their initiatives and asked how SLT ensure that they are working collaboratively.** It was reported that all the staff groups meet regularly to discuss key milestones and SLT are confident that significant progress will be made in all areas by the end of the school year.

[DM joined at 5.05pm]

9. Student Welfare including Covid and Vaccination Update

9.1 Safeguarding – Paper 9 KA Safeguarding and Attendance November 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. CLH reported the following:

- As with all schools nationally, KA are beginning to see a spike in 'Child in Need' cases and the school continues to support its vulnerable students.
- Two members of staff have been accepted onto the Senior Mental Health Lead DfE training and funding has been secured. Mental health is more significant than ever and the school is preparing to meet the requirement that all schools must have a senior mental health leader by 2023.
- Staff have recently received INCEL training
- The Vulnerable Children List that the Academy produces has been shared with the local authority as an example of outstanding practice.

9.2 Attendance – Currently, it remains difficult to assess attendance as, due to covid, detailed year-on-year and national data is not available. In addition to this, Cheshire East covid measures mean that any child living with someone who has covid, must isolate for a period of 5 days. With the data that is available, it was reported that, as seen on the attendance report in Paper 9, KA was ahead of the national average at each data-grab mark.

9.3 Covid Update – It was reported that Covid absences are monitored daily and saw a rise from c.25 to c.40 students a day, testing positive and 45 students isolating due to a family member testing positive, before half term. Half term acted as somewhat of a breaker and last Friday, there had been no reported cases of Covid in the school. However, in the last 2-3 days, there have been 9 cases, a trend which is echoed in local schools in higher numbers.

- **A Governor asked how the school is mitigating against loss in terms of schooling for those who have been absent for Covid reasons.** It was reported that the online, remote learning offer is solid and independent learning is secure, giving immediate access to work to those who are out of school. Catch-up programmes are plentiful and are underway.

9.4 Vaccination – It was reported that the Covid vaccination programme at the school saw approximately 500 students vaccinated. The NHS will independently organise mop-up programmes. Nasal-spray flu vaccinations will be offered to KA students on 15th December.

10. Local Matters

<p>10.1 Leisure Centre - Governors were reminded that the current joint use deal with the Leisure 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. There are some challenges around how much time the school would have to book to guarantee slots to match its ever-changing timetable. 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.</p> <p>10.2 Parent Pay – for information, governors were advised that there had recently been software issues with parent pay and the canteen till provider. As a result, many accounts have been inaccessible or incorrect. The school has ensured that every student who ought to, has received lunch and issues are being dealt with on a case-by-case basis as quickly as possible, until the long-term solution of new tills can be put in place.</p>
<p>11. Policies</p> <p>11.1 Admissions' Policy - Subject to two minor typographical amendments, deleting reference to KMAT, the Policy was approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors asked the COO whether the trust had made decisions the about the Admissions' Appeal panels. COO reported that the TLA Board had agreed that each school's LGB will form an Appeals' Panel. ACTION: NP will send out a note to Governors to ascertain interest in joining the Panel.
<p>12. LGB Roles</p> <p>12.1 Link Governors – Safeguarding and SEND Update - It was reported that there is a Trust Safeguarding meeting next week, following which, feedback will be brought to the LGB.</p> <p>12.2 Training Update – including NGA training module update - It was reported that the Trust has signed up to the National Governance Association (NGA) online training website and core modules. Governors will receive log-in details from NGA shortly and the Trust will be providing guidance on particularly relevant modules, but Governors are invited to look around the site when log-ins are received and complete any modules they think will be of use. The module on Permanent Exclusions is particularly robust for any Governors interested on sitting on Exclusions Panels. The Clerk can access a list of completed training and Governors are invited to provide comment on the modules to the Clerk.</p>
<p>13. Matters for the LGB to Share with the Trust Board</p> <p>The Board are asked to consider:</p> <p>13.1 A review of the Trust risk register with regard to the amber risk of KA and lagged funding.</p> <p>13.2 A review of the shared services structure and the provision of a breakdown of core and additional costs.</p> <p>13.3 Consolidated Trust contracts for matters such as Health and Safety.</p>
<p>14. AOB</p> <p>14.1 Website - It was reported that the new website is live. It is compliant, but further refinement is still planned, particularly in the governors' section.</p> <p>14.2 Meeting Times - A governor asked if consideration had been given to holding the meetings later in the evening, as this might allow better access for some of the governors. The Chair noted that times had deliberately been brought earlier with staff welfare in mind. The Headteacher reiterated that staff welfare was paramount and asked that consideration of staff attending both KA and Cheshire Studio meetings be taken into account. NPS confirmed that quoracy had never been an issue with 4pm starts and that since covid there was now availability to dial in to meetings. The possibility of 9am meetings was also discussed. It was agreed that the 4pm start would be retained, but other times would remain a consideration.</p> <p>14.3 Workplacement/career development videos – A governor reported that she had access to useful resources regarding work placement and career development. ACTION: The Headteacher will meet with this governor with a view to online sharing of these resources with the wider parent community.</p>
<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 7th March 2022 at 4pm Meeting Closed 5.50pm</p>

Minutes approved:

Date:.....

Action Log – Post November 2021 Meeting		
Action and Item Number	By Whom	By When/Complete
3. The Clerk will make the amendments to the KA LGB 21 st June 2021 Minutes as requested in the 21 st September 2021 Minutes and make available on governor hub for the Chair to sign off. Amendments to 21 st September minutes also to be made and made available for Chair to sign off.	Clerk Clerk	Complete 25/11/2021
6. The COO to prepare a supplemental capital spend report.	COO	For next meeting
8.1 Exploration into whether the questions set for the Retrieval section of lessons can be provided to parents to assist them in supporting their children.	SLT	As soon as appropriate
11.1 NP will send out a note to Governors to ascertain interests in joining the Admissions' Appeals' Panel.	NPS	As soon as appropriate
14.3 Work placement and career development videos will be shared online with parents and JP will provide ICT information to the school.	SLT/JP	As soon as appropriate
From Part 2 – Work will be undertaken with parents and the school community to raise awareness of the schools' success and achievements	SLT/LGB	As soon as appropriate