



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**BLACK FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL LGB**

**MINUTES – Part I**



Black Firs Primary School

**Date: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 4.30pm**

**Present:**

Prof. P. Horrocks (PHo) (Chair)  
Mrs S. Mahmood-Shakoor (SMS) (Vice Chair)  
Mrs E. Perriman-Rabone (EPR) (Vice Chair)  
Mrs R. Cam (RC)  
Mr J. Cammiss (JC)  
Mrs K. Fowler (KF)  
Mr P. Hanks (PHa)  
Mr R. Sigley (RS)

**Apologies:** Mrs A. Markin (AM)

**In attendance:**

Mrs A. Jones – Headteacher (AJ)  
Mrs J. Harrison – Assistant Headteacher (JH)  
Mr A. Millington – Teacher (AM)

**Observer**

Mr M Hill (Vice Chair Daven Primary school)

**Clerk:** Dr A Howells

**Administration**

1. Welcome

The meeting was quorate. Mark Hill (Daven Primary School Vice-Chair) was welcomed as an observer at the meeting. No additional declarations were made. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

2a. Matters Arising:

Changes to term Dates: The HT noted that only two responses had been received and these had been noted. The term dates for 23-24 would now be reviewed and adjusted. They would include alignment of some professional development days with Trust agreed dates. Communications with parents would follow in due course. Term dates for 24-25 would also be reviewed to align with Cheshire East.

School Vision Values and Ethos (VVE): These were included in slides 2&3 of the HT report. Governors noted that there was minimal change to the wording used. They welcomed the approach to use a superhero model to convey the VVE as well as an acrostic definition of a Black Firs child. One minor adjustment to simplify text was suggested (the replacement of collegiate) and a **challenge** was made to ensure that the use of colour take account of accessibility issues. Governors endorsed the work done to update the VVE and agreed their adoption.

**Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities**

3. Strategic Direction and Progress against School Improvement Priorities

The HT report (slide 4) provided an update on the SEF. Governors **challenged** whether the SEF represented the current position or that when Ofsted inspection was undertaken. Whilst the four thematic areas remained the same as at inspection, the HT reported that progress was being made in all four areas. This included a £7.5k investment for the purchasing of additional reading resources and assessment tools, the latter of which would support improved tracking of pupil progress and attainment. The update also explained the leadership and management changes that had been introduced. These changes also aligned to the school improvement priorities (SIP) for the current year.

Progress made against the SIP was included in the HT report (Slide 5). The SIP was focused around three priorities: SEND; attainment; safety and safeguarding. Staff were working with other trust schools to enhance the curriculum so that attainment and progress of SEND pupils could be enhanced. In year (RAG-rated)

tracking had been enhanced, new curriculum leads were in place, and a particular focus on year 3-4 writing was being delivered. Governors **challenged** how often the RAG ratings were updated, and it was confirmed as being half-termly. A priority focus on attainment was reading within EFYS and KS2 to ensure performance was at least in line within national for expected and greater depth. The chair reminded the LGB that governors held a separate meeting to scrutinise pupil performance data and be assured of outcomes. The HT also reported that staff had completed refresher training (Little Wandle) and that standardised tests would be used to provide consistent benchmarking. Governors **challenged** how and who would make these tests, and it was confirmed that teaching staff would do this. Fisher Family Trust targets would be used to support target setting. The HT highlighted that the wellbeing team was strong and alongside this, promoting the rights of the child was a school strength. SENDCO support and other specific training was being provided to staff to ensure the more vulnerable pupils (SEND, PP and EAL) could receive appropriate interventions that could accelerate progress towards expected standards. Governors endorsed the third SIP on safety and safeguarding. They were updated on site improvement plans that would ensure pupils remained safe. It was noted that some improvements to boundary fences had been identified and were planned to take place, although governors questioned why some of these had not been addressed during the recent building extension work, and requested that the Trust review this to see what lessons could be learned for future capital projects undertaken elsewhere within the Trust [**Action: Clerk to feedback to Trust senior staff- Dec 23**]. The Head also outlined other planned changes to the internal use of space across the school. Governors **challenged** whether and how these changes would impact on teaching and the wider classroom environment and whether the school had the space available to make these changes. It was confirmed that the space was available, although it would mean some reconfiguration of space usage. However, one benefit from the changes was availability of quieter space for some teaching, particularly in reception and nursery, and this would provide benefit some children in need of this. It was noted that outdoor teaching spaces would need to be refurbished, as many had come to the end of their natural life-span. The approach to upgrading this space would be incremental and likely to be over a period of at least 4 years. This work would be funded in part by the Trust's capital allocations although elements of the sports premium funding might also be used to make a contribution. The school would also explore external funding opportunities.

## Education

### 4. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

Governors received (HT report -slide 6) the latest pupils numbers broken down by year group. The school was operating close to PAN (based on 45 pupil intake) : -1 for Nursery /reception and -5 across Yr4 & Yr5. The school remained popular and did not appear to have recruitment challenges. The LGB debated the merits of expanding the PAN for nursery intake from 45 to 60. The HT confirmed that the space was available to support this growth. Whilst concerns were highlighted by some governors that such an increase would result in some parental disappointment and possible reputational damage if their child could not progress from nursery into reception, there was a broader recognition that a larger nursery provision would help secure future demand for school places. The expansion of the nursery PAN would also mean that more flexible provision could be offered to nursery places. The increase in nursery PAN would also have a positive balance on school income. The changes were cautiously endorsed, noting the need to manage communications, parental expectations, space and staffing carefully.

### 5. Attendance

The latest attendance and absence data was provided in slides 7&8 of the HT report. The attendance target of 96% had been agreed. However, the number of persistent absentees had spiked recently (22.5%), due to a chickenpox outbreak. Excluding this spike, the residual was as a result of Covid and some unauthorised holidays. Governors did not wish to actively pursue a regime of fines for poor attendance, although noted that where this was required, then it would be a Cheshire East (CE-LA) decision and for their team to follow up. The HT reported that a positive relationship was in place with CE-LA and that following a meeting with their attendance team officer, a focus on late arrivals and persistent absenteeism would follow. Governors

**challenged** whether PP and SEND pupils had poorer attendance rates, but it was confirmed that this was not the case.

#### 6. Behaviour

The HT confirmed that the behaviour policy had been reviewed. There had been no exclusions this term. Two incidents of racist language had been identified and had been addressed. Following a governor **challenge**, the HT confirmed that the issues had been discussed with the pupils involved in an appropriate setting which also promoted positive behaviours, and that the PSHE would be reviewed to ensure that it remained effective.

**[Action HT- review PSHE policy to ensure effectiveness for addressing use of racist language]**

#### 7. Curriculum- Progress

Slide 10 of the HT report provide the latest targets by year group for Yr3 through to Yr6. The school and Trust were now using Fisher Family Trust (FFT) benchmarking to support target setting. The Governors **endorsed** the targets, noting that detailed scrutiny had taken place with the leadership team and governors outside the LGB meeting.

#### 8. Curriculum -Attainment

An update would be provided at the next LGB. This would be informed by the forthcoming data drop scheduled for 11 December. **[Action HT: HT report to include attainment update- Feb 24 (agenda)]**

#### 9. Curriculum- Link Governor Monitoring

Governors debated the approach that they would take to arrange link governor monitoring visits. There was broad agreement that it would be inappropriate to seek to visit each curriculum area on an annual basis. Whilst SEND and Safeguarding should be monitored regularly, the latter at least termly, other areas should be prioritised to align with the school improvement priorities. It was also noted that a mixture of mature and developing curriculum areas should be built into the programme of visits, and that the HT would be best placed to advise on which areas these were. It was agreed that the Vice Chair would work the HT to put in place a visit programme for the current year, and then governors could be invited to deliver the programme in pairs. The Clerk highlighted the resources available on governor hub to support such visit. **[Action Vice Chair to work with HT to develop a governor visit programme for 23-24 -Feb 24]**

### Welfare

#### 10. Safeguarding

A safeguarding update was included in the HT report. It highlighted the new staffing leadership structure that will lead on safeguarding; the actions that will underpin the work identified as part of the SIP, and also the number of cases being managed.

#### 11. Welfare and Wellbeing- Students [confidential part 2 item]

It was reported that two pupils had been admitted into reception since October with EHCPs. There had been some redeployment of staffing to support these needs. The school was also aware that EHCP plans were being drawn up for two KS1 pupils. Currently one-to-one support was being provided to one of these pupils. The HT reported that there was a focus on early intervention, speech and language support, and play therapy, alongside family support and the assistance from an ELSA practitioner. Governors noted that the process for securing additional support via a EHCP was intensive and time consuming. A governor (with professional skills) offered to support the school where appropriate.

Governors expressed their thanks to all staff that were supporting pupils with these additional needs.

#### 12. Welfare and Wellbeing- Staff

The HT noted that this term staff have been impacted by a range of seasonal illnesses, to a degree that external cover (agency staff) has been sought. The KS1 staff had been adversely affected more than others.

Support staff and teaching assistants had also been affected, and maternity cover for two TAs has been sought.  
It was noted that the benefits of being part of a larger Trust were being realised. Specialist Central Service staff are able to advise and assist, for example in the areas of safeguarding and SEND. An example was provided by the SENCO Governors were advised that the theme of staff wellbeing was one of the TLP Trust priorities.

### Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

#### 13. Local Policy Approval

It was agreed that governors would review the policies listed in the agenda and feedback via governor hub by Friday 8 Dec. [Action Governors 8 Dec 23]. It was agreed that going forward a cover sheet should be used that highlights any changes, and that the frequency of the policy review should be considered to ensure that governor workload is manageable, and that policies are not reviewed too frequently.

#### 14. Governor Training Update

It was agreed that the Clerk should provide a training workshop on governor role and responsibilities. **[Action Clerk To provide training workshop on Governors' role and responsibilities - March 24].**

It was noted that the recent skills audit did not highlight any significant training needs. However, the vice chair and clerk would also discuss wider training requirements for governors including pupil performance data.

#### 15 Stakeholder Engagement – parents

The report included in the HT report (slide 15) was noted. This also identified forthcoming school events

#### 16. Stakeholder Engagement – community

A report was included in the HT report (slide 16) was noted

#### 17. Communication to Trust Board.

None

#### 18. Communication from Trust:

The clerk fed back on the topics covered in the recent Chairs Forum. These included an update on trust development following the merger; the introduction of common styles of LGB governor reports underpinned by common pupil performance data sets; and the challenges around governor recruitment.

#### 19 AOB

None

**Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 4:30pm.**

**Meeting Closed at 6:58pm**

Minutes approved: .....

Date:.....

### Summary of Actions

<b>3. Clerk to feedback to Trust senior staff concerns about lessons learned from capital projects-</b>	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>Dec 23</b>
<b>6. HT to review PSHE policy to ensure effectiveness for addressing use of racist language</b>	<b>HT</b>	<b>Dec 23</b>
<b>8. HT report to include attainment update</b>	<b>HT</b>	<b>Feb 24 (agenda)</b>
<b>9. Vice Chair to work with HT to develop a governor visit programme for 23-24</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>
<b>14. Clerk To provide training workshop on Governors' role and responsibilities</b>	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>March 24</b>