



Cheshire Studio School
Meeting of the Local Governing Board (LGB)



Part 1 Minutes

Date: Monday 16th October 2023 at 4:00pm

Present:

Mrs C. Millson (Chair) (CM)
Mr N. Jackson (NJ)
Mrs A. Sennett (AS)
Mr D. Walton (DW)

Apologies: None

In attendance:

Mrs K. Key (KKY) - Headteacher
Mr J. Lawes (JLA) - Senior Deputy Headteacher
Mrs A. Thatcher - (ATR) Deputy Headteacher
Mr C Leigh (CLH) - Assistant Headteacher
Mr C. Parr - (CPR) - Assistant Headteacher
Mrs H. Weigh-Williams (HWH) - Assistant Headteacher
Clerk: Mrs C. Gritton

Administration

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies and the meeting was quorate. There were no **Declarations of Interest**. Particular welcome was extended to recently appointed Senior Deputy Headteacher, JLA. The Chair thanked SLT and Governors for their support and assistance to KKY over the summer.

All papers and policies referred to had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, unless otherwise stated.

2. The Minutes of the meeting of the CSS LGB held on 26th June 2023, were approved.

Matters Arising – Paper CSS Matters Arising Report was received.

It was reported that the Cheshire East Association of Headteachers had agreed a document which all schools are encouraged to send out when dealing with challenging parents/carers. CLH is currently considering how best to align that with the school policies. The school does a lot of work to support parents/carers and endeavours to ensure they are kept well-informed and communications are professional. KKY will continue to support staff in reminding them of appropriate ways of communicating and staff are supportive of building positive relationships with parents/carers.

3. Membership and Effectiveness Update It was reported that NJ would be resigning from the CSS LGB as of 17th October 2023. Senior Leaders (SLT) and the LGB thanked NJ for his support and work during his term of office. **It was reported that** Mrs Phillips has left KA/CSS to take up a new role and SLT and the LGB thanked Mrs Phillips for her support and work for the school. **It was reported that** the new Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) will start at the school in January 2024 and is coming into school in the meantime when available, to get to know the school.

4. Annual Tasks It was unanimously agreed that CM would be the CSS LGB Chair for the academic year 2023/2024. Everyone present thanked CM for agreeing to continue in this role.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

Paper – CSS Headteacher’s Report October 2023 was received.

5. Vision and Values It was confirmed that the Vision remains Academic Excellence, Strong Community and World Class Opportunities. The new Values are Ambition, Respect, Kindness.

6. Self-Evaluation (SEF) Paper SEF 2023 Final Version 2 KA-CSS was received. It was reported that there are significant levels of special needs and vulnerabilities in the CSS cohort of 24 students, for all of which the school offers individually tailored support. The Football Academy continues to be successful and 1 student in the 2022-23 cohort has gained a scholarship in the USA.

7. School Improvement Plan (SIP) Paper SDP 2023-2024 was received. It was reported that the school is Good and everybody continues to work towards Outstanding. Staff continue to be upskilled to support students with Special Educational and Disability (SEND) needs. The reading strategy is being further developed and a whole school strategy to promote oracy will be introduced after half term, the phases of which are to develop the teaching and learning strategies, map oracy through the curriculum and then look for opportunities to develop oracy beyond the curriculum, through enrichment and confident building activities, such as debating clubs and public speaking. Uptake for extra curricular activities is not as strong at CSS as it is at KA, so there will be a focus to encourage CSS students to take part in activities across the broad range offered.

Education

Data for the following items was contained in the **Paper Headteacher's Report October 2023.**

- 8. Admissions and Pupil Numbers** **It was reported that** there is further work to do to encourage more applicants for Yr10 at CSS, but entries to CSS Yr12, at 35, have resulted in one of the largest cohorts the school has ever seen. **In response to Governor Challenge as to whether the Football Academy is the attraction for students to join CSS, it was reported that** Criminology appears to be the popular course attracting students to CSS. Governors were assured that the school is aware that historically, CSS has been perceived to be a less attractive offer to students, than KA, but the school is working hard to move away from any negative perceptions of CSS being the route for less academic students and its reputation is improving significantly. Staff know the students well and, mindful that *every student* has to be in the school *which is right for them*, begin to support students in considering their KA/CSS options, in Yr8. **It was reported that** the in-year variance in student numbers has a net zero effect and is stable. CSS Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 70 per year group and there are no plans to change PAN.
- 9. Attendance** **It was reported that** due to the size of the cohort, attendance figures are significantly affected if even 1 student is off. Fischer Family Trust data enables the school to drill-down into the figures in more detail and the actual picture shows many students have 100% attendance and overall attendance is strong compared to national figures, especially when considering the vulnerability demographic of the cohort. **Governors noted that** a new Attendance Officer has been appointed, to support all attendance initiatives and it is anticipated that the correlation between their role and impact will be evident in the coming weeks. Attendance and behaviour logs are calendared across the academic year and case studies are considered at the end of each year, to assess the impact of initiatives. Persistent absence numbers are being addressed and Yr10 has particularly strong attendance.
- 10. Behaviour** **It was reported that** behaviour is addressed in the same way across KA and CSS and there are various, supportive ways of addressing it. The schools and in particular HWH, have done a lot of work on behaviour and have seen significant improvements as a result. KA and CSS have looked to reduce external suspensions and permanent exclusions and the combined effects of the use of the RESET room, open 5 days a week, improved communications, support of the skilled behaviour team, who are experienced at de-escalation and managing processes, the use of restorative conversations and the use of the rewards and detentions systems, have succeeded in meeting that aim, which is opposite to the national picture, where external exclusions have increased. Detention times are structured and student standards are high. Where needed, external suspensions have to be put in place, but they are fairly and consistently applied. The schools are confident that they are a safe, calm environment and internal suspensions will continue to decline in number.
- 11. Student Outcomes** **It was reported that** outcomes are modest; trends and minor blips have been identified and are being addressed. **In response to Governor challenge as to whether staff are responsive to results and ways of addressing them, it was reported that** staff are responsive to the informative data and are focusing on areas for development. Staff were not surprised by the results as they had carried out their own analysis to understand where they are compared to other subjects and nationally and are on-board with and supportive of the planned initiatives for development and progress. Individual student results are viewed in the context of their vulnerabilities and there are a number of students who are on or above target and everyone is pleased with their success stories.
- 12. Student Destinations** **It was reported that** there is only 1 confirmed Not In Education or Employment (NEET) and there are many students going on to positive destinations. A Governor expressed surprise that there was such a high number of CSS students going to University. Governors were assured that the school knows its students and they should not be discouraged from applying to university because they attend CSS

and may be doing more vocational than traditional academic courses; to do so would not support the positive reputation everyone is trying to build around CSS being an alternative to KA, and a positive place to be. The school endeavours to ensure that CSS students are just as ambitious and aspirational as KA students and that their destinations are the right destinations for them and those students going to university have earned their places, which shows that the school is right to encourage that aspiration and ambition.

Welfare

13. Safeguarding It was reported that whilst all schools are having to work harder to get what they need for their Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students, the Trust is aware of the nationwide issues and is supporting the school. The school is aware of the challenges the Local Authority faces and works with all external agencies to ensure the best support for the students. The Trust Director of the Learning Institute recently provided safeguarding training for all Trust Safeguarding Link Governors, in which helpful information was very well presented and the slides from that training have been shared with Governors.

14. Welfare and Wellbeing – Students In response to Governor challenge, it was reported that the school can monitor which parents/carers have downloaded StachelOne and engagement is encouraged and supported. **It was reported that** the student and parent/carer voice process was so successful regarding uniform, the same process will be used next term with regard to the reward system and a parent/carer voice sampling schedule is to be mapped out. A larger scale uniform exchange is being planned. Some rewards are generously sponsored by local businesses and ideas were shared, including the possibility of local businesses also supporting the uniform exchange.

15. Welfare and Wellbeing – Staff It was reported that staff feel supported in their application of the behaviour policies, systems and processes and a number of Trust wellbeing and welfare initiatives are ongoing. KKY has held a significant number of individual coffee meetings with staff.

Challenge: Governors asked whether there is a system to monitor which members of staff are presenting students for detention. It was confirmed that there is a system to monitor that and one to monitor who is rewarding behaviour points and it is believed that they are being processed in a fair and consistent way overall. Student Voice will be used to gather further qualitative data on the use and impact of the systems and processes. **In response to Governor challenge, it was reported that** parents/carers are supportive of the behaviour initiatives and SatchelOne has elevated the way in which the school can communicate with parents/carers, so the school has traction and support and is seeing positive interactions.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

16. Local Policy Approval The Clerk will have sent the Policy schedule list to KKY.

17. Stakeholder Engagement (Parents/Carers) As reported throughout the meeting.

18. Stakeholder Engagement (Wider Community) As reported throughout the meeting.

19. Matters to Share with the Trust Executive, Education, Standards and Performance Committee (ESP) or Trust Board

Governor Challenge: Governors were unsure about what to expect from the Trust. AH reported that the Trust Chairs' Forum is a good forum for discussion with Trustees. The Trust is mindful about the need for good communications with its LGBs and is looking to develop effective systems and processes, which ensure each LGB receives consistent Trust information at around the same time (sometimes dependant on LGB meeting dates).

20. Matters to Share from the Trust Executive, Education, Standards and Performance Committee (ESP) or Trust Board Nothing to report.

21. AOB - Proposed change to KA and CSS LGB structure Following discussion as to the practicalities, during which the LGB was assured that every care would be taken to ensure that the individual matters important to each of the LGBs respectively, would not be diluted and the resulting LGB would be more cohesive and support the wellbeing of the SLT, **the LGB agreed** the new structure of 1 LGB for both KA and CSS. Governors AS, CM and DW confirmed they would like to remain as members of that LGB. **It was then reported that** the same proposal had been put to the KA LGB at their meeting of 9th October which had also approved the initiative.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Monday 29th January 2024 at 4pm (To be confirmed)

Meeting Closed 5:50pm

Minutes approved:

Date: