



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

**CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL LGB**

Online Meeting via Zoom

**MINUTES – Part I**



**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 4.30pm**

**Present:**

Mrs G Cumberlidge (GC)  
Miss J Jardine (JJ)  
Mrs M Lord (ML)  
Mr T Pear (TP) – Chair for this meeting

**Absent:**

Mrs L Bialek, (LB)  
Mrs D Fish,  
Mrs J Lowe (JL)

**In attendance:**

Miss J Mason - Headteacher  
Mr M Cladingbowl – TLA CEO (4-5pm)  
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO  
Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance

**Clerk:** Mrs C Gritton

**Administration**

**1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy** – Due to technical issues for the Chair (GC), it was agreed that the vice chair, TP would take over as Chair for this meeting.

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Bialek and Mrs Fish and the meeting was quorate.

**2. Declarations of Interest** - There were no declarations of a personal or prejudicial nature.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting** - The Minutes of the CPS LGB meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, were approved as a true and correct record.

**Matters Arising** – A governor noted that the minutes stated that the risk register would be provided for this meeting. The COO explained that the risk register had not yet been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee, but that it should be available for the next LGB meeting.

The Chair acknowledged that the CEO would have to leave the meeting at 5pm and asked if he would like to raise any specific matters. The CEO wished to give his thanks to all CPS staff for their great work over the last year and continued efforts, in the difficult Covid-19 circumstances.

**4. Composition of LGB** – Since the last meeting, the Trust Governance and Search Committee had approved the following:

- reappointment of TP (4yr term from 14.03.2021)
- DF appointment of staff governor (4 yr term from 10.02.2020)
- approved the election of JL as parent governor (4yr term from 10.02.2020)

It was noted that LB’s term of office as parent governor, is due to expire 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and therefore a parent governor election would need to take place. NP and the Clerk will assist the school in holding parent governor elections next term. Considering the number of governors on the LGB were low, the LGB wished to recommend that LB be approved as an appointed governor. **ACTION:** NP would take this proposal to the next Governance and Search committee meeting.

Governors were asked to update their confirmations and declarations on Governor Hub.

**Strengthening Leadership, Collaboration and Governance**

**5. Matters for the Trust Board to Share with LGB** – Nothing to report. Governors were reminded to check the Resources section of Governor Hub for updates in between LGB meetings.

**6. Finance** – The following points were noted:

- The current out-turn forecast is showing a deficit of c,£17,000, in line with the set budget. Covid-19 circumstances have made it difficult to reliably forecast outturn, but it appears that the school is on-track for the deficit position as budgeted. Monthly reporting will be placed on governor hub from next month on.
- Governors were reminded the deficit was budgeted with regard to lagged funding.
- The COO intends to have a draft 2021/2022 budget with the Headteacher for refinement, early summer and it is hoped that that budget will be more favourable and break even.
- Reserves are relatively robust at 9% of GAG; CIF bids were successful last year, with a school capital spend of 25% of bid costs. The Headteacher confirmed that this had been well invested in repair and maintenance of the school. Outstanding repair needs are cosmetic and can be done over time.
- Governors were aware that the reserves target of 5% of GAG is a Trust-wide target and a **Governor asked whether CPS should factor in more than 5% of GAG, given the small size of the school.** The COO advised that if possible, it would be prudent to do so. In addition, all schools need to be mindful as to what will be required for children to catch up on lost learning due to Covid-19, and it is with this in mind that the COO would not advocate drawdown on reserves at this point in time. The COO assured Governors that this does not mean that reserves can never be utilised; simply that the school should exercise caution when considering spending and assess upcoming events and intake.
- **Governors asked whether catch-up funding would be an ongoing income next year.** The COO explained that it is a one-off catch-up fund, but that there are no rigid rules as to how and when it can be drawn-down and no rigid reporting rules, as the Government are aware that Covid-19 has impacted on schools for longer than first anticipated, so schools need flexibility as to how best to utilise those funds. There may be additional Government funding, but nothing is certain at this point.

**Governors received the report.**

## **Improving Education and Opportunities**

### **7. Covid-19 Update:**

- 7.1 Review of Risk Assessments** – The required risk assessments have been completed and checked by the Chair, CEO and COO.
- 7.2 Remote Learning Offer and Impact** – The Remote Learning Policy is on the school website. A survey carried out with Trust support, resulted in an increased number of online live lessons. Children had 1 live lesson a day and lower ability children also had an extra English lesson each day. Following Teams’ training for children and staff, everybody became confident in its use and remote learning lesson uptake was good.
- 7.3 Remote learning Self-Evaluation Form** – This TLA document details where the school is with its remote learning offer. **Governors asked whether any children would still be learning remotely.** No, but work can still be accessed remotely for those who have odd days off. For those who may need to isolate there is a more substantial bank of online work.
- 7.4 Catch-up Premium** - The CEO and COO are currently considering a ‘think piece’ around how the Trust might help TLA schools obtain best value for money from catch-up funds. The CEO advised that across the Trust schools, it is generally considered to be a better use of funding to create capacity in school and deploy staff who know the children, their strengths and weaknesses, to support catch-up for greater impact than buying in tutoring schemes. The Headteacher agreed. All class sizes in school have been halved; teachers prepare all work and then half of each class works with a TA. This allows staff time to both teach and support children’s’ wellbeing. It would, however be useful to have an additional staff member to support that structure. The school has purchased programmes for independent learning and support for children who are dyslexic and having the children work in groups according to their ability is enabling quality attention for each child as needed. The CEO advised that across the Trust, good schools have provided work for all children and are teaching in ways that are coherent in so far as they teach well and thoroughly. The Headteacher agreed, advising that the school had followed the curriculum it would have done had schools been open. Maths and English lessons remained very prescriptive as those are the basis of all learning and those lessons were differentiated for the less-able to ensure all children were engaged, stayed on-track and are where they need to be. The Headteacher asked that Governors have a

look on the school website, at the work children have done which displays the children's initiative and hard work, even whilst learning remotely. Governors remarked that the school's consideration to abilities and continuance of good teaching, to increase the children's experience, is a testament to the Headteacher and the school.

**7.5 Covid-19 Testing Programme** – Staff are now tested twice weekly and the children are tested at home, but at primary level, parents have to arrange that.

**7.6 Staff Wellbeing** – Staff are very supportive of each other and the school has purchased 4 wellbeing training sessions, the first of which has been completed with positive feedback. A conscious decision was made to remove 2 members of staff from the classroom, to focus on remote learning to ensure a good work balance.

**7.7 Numbers of Children Attending School** – During the last month of lockdown, 42 out of 102 children were in school. All children have returned to the school today. ***Governors asked whether there had been any parents who were wary of their children returning to school.*** Whilst there had been email contact from some parents, anxious about the return, email and correspondence by letter detailing the return plans, allayed those concerns and all children returned to school today.

## **8. Strategic Vision**

**8.1 School Performance** – The data provided shows a big improvement between September and Christmas. Juniors in particular made good progress and younger children are showing steady progress. Standardised reading assessments were carried out, so staff knew exactly where children were up to and what was needed. It is hoped that there is not as great a loss of learning from this lockdown, so that children will once again make good progress on their return to school. ***Governors asked how the school will maintain the progress trajectory.*** The halved class sizes will help, but it may take some time to see the successes. There are no assessments planned before May, to allow the children time to settle back into school life; time for reassurance and consolidation of learning and happiness, so they can achieve their best.

**8.2 School Development Plan** – This has not changed and is being worked through.

**9. Student Welfare and Safeguarding** – Children are doing many outdoor activities on their return to school this week, to support their mental health and the halved class sizes support wellbeing as discussed at item 7.4. Children with social workers have been in school during lockdown and there have been no safeguarding issues. A member of staff reported that there is a nice 'buzz' about the school; the children are currently upbeat, happy and delighted to be back. They are a little quieter than usual whilst they get used to the new routines, but there is no doubt they will soon be back to their usual selves.

**Governors received the report**

## **Fostering Identity and Ethos**

### **10. LGB Roles & Training Update**

**10.1** Governor Hub training videos have been uploaded and Talking heads training will shortly be uploaded to Governor Hub. The Trust is organising Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) safeguarding training for all TLA Governors after Easter and attendance will be required. Ofsted framework training will also be offered by the Trust, in readiness for the Ofsted visit (which was due this March). The Headteacher reminded the governance team that governors need to update their Safeguarding level 1 training. The Trust HR are organising Safer Recruitment training for each TLA LGB. The Trust is also updating all DBS checks, for staff and volunteers, which are over 3 years' old, at no cost to the school.

**10.2** TP agreed to be the LGB health and Safety governor and will liaise with the Headteacher. ML is the SENCO and JJ agreed to be the SEND governor and will liaise with ML to ensure that those children are making the desired level of progress.

**11. LGB Policy Review** – The list provided to Governors is the list of statutory policies required to be published on the school's website and a programme of review will begin next year. The Trust aim is for all TLA schools to be compliant by the end of the school year. NP will assist schools with the production of standardised policies such as the Newly Qualified Teachers Policy. The Headteacher advised that the First Aid Policy is complete. All other policies listed and not already on the website will be brought to the summer LGB for ratification. The COO assured governors that some of the policies listed were new this

year and it was not the case that the school had failed to have all required policies in place. The Headteacher advised that the Admissions Policy had been sent to the Local Authority (before the deadline).

**12. Matters to Share with the Trust Board** – Governors asked that the hard work of the Headteacher and all staff, for which they are very grateful, be noted.

**AOB**

13.1 In response to a query from the Headteacher, the COO explained the trust had not yet been notified of the amount of the School Condition Allocation (SCA). He noted that there was a draft proposal distribute some of the SCA on a pro-rata basis and there would be a bidding process for the remainder of the funds.

13.2 LB can attend the next meeting on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June but cannot attend on a Monday at 4pm. Meeting times will continue to be considered with regard to governor availability.

13.3 The next meeting has been arranged as an online Teams meeting, but this will be reviewed regarding Covid-19 safety rules.

13.4 In the absence of any Part 2 items, the Part 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, were approved.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 at 4pm**

**Meeting closed at 5.30pm**

Minutes approved: .....

Date:.....