

Minutes of The Oaks Academy (TOA) Local Governing Board (LGB) Meeting



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Date: Monday 20th September 2021 at 4.05pm

Members Present:

Mrs M. Massey – Chair
Mr D. Bull
Mrs L. Hodgkison (From 4.12pm) (LH)
Mr P. Howell
Mrs A. Wilkinson (AW)

In attendance:

Mr D. Twambley – COO
Mr P. Kingdom – Headteacher (PK)
Mr K. Graham – Deputy Headteacher (KG)
Mrs C. Highfield – Assistant Headteacher (CH)
Mrs C. Gritton - Clerk

Apologies:

Mr S. Lockett
Mr A. Middleton

Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Lockett and Mr Middleton and the meeting was quorate. Introductions were made.
2. Terms of Reference – Paper 2.0 LGB Terms of Reference, had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting and were **noted**. Governors were advised that the focus of this LGB will be on the quality of education, safeguarding of students and wellbeing of staff and students.
3. Governors were reminded to complete their Declarations of Interest on GH. There were no Declarations of Interest.
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising – This being the first meeting of the SWS LGB, there were no Minutes for approval and no Matters Arising.
5. Composition of LGB and Governance Matters – **It was reported that** this LGB is comprised of Governors with local knowledge and wide-spread skills and experience and Governors were thanked for joining the LGB.
6. Matters for The Learning Alliance Trust Board (the Trust) to Share with the LGB – **It was reported that** this item is one of the communication methods between the tiers of governance, in particular between the Trust and the LGB.

[LH joined the meeting at 4.12pm]

Finance Update and School Risk Register

7. Finance Update – **It was reported that** at £90K, TOA's current reserves exceed the Trust target of 5% of the school's General Annual Grant (GAG). The Trust Finance team and the Headteacher are currently working together to ensure that adequate resources sit behind the action plans, to enable achievement of positive outcomes. 2020/2021-year end figures are being finalised and a break-even/modest surplus is anticipated.
8. School Risk Register – The Trust has in place a Risk Management Policy and Trust Risk Register. **It was reported that** whilst the re-brokering of TOA into Cmat resulted in the school having no official Ofsted grading, it still 'carries' its Special Measures grading and the school is a key risk for the Trust. For this reason, the Trust put into place an Interim Executive Board (IEB), under which leadership changes were made and priorities reset, with an initial focus on behaviour and safeguarding, which have seen vast improvements. The Trust is now satisfied that an LGB will be the suitable governance method at this tier, to take the school forward.

Strategic Improvement Priorities

- 9.1 School Improvement Priorities - **Paper 9.1 Strategic Improvement Priorities and Paper 9.1.1 TOA Priorities 2021-22** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and were **received**.
- **Governors asked why 2019/2020 Key Performance Indicators had not been provided. It was reported that** this was due to Covid; the 2018/2019 data was the last reported data.
 - **Governors asked what are the mentoring, support and coaching mechanisms with regard to the Key Drivers for Improvement, listed in Paper 9.1?** (Slides 4 and 5). **It was reported that** the Priorities reported in papers 9.1 and 9.1.1 are an overview, behind which sit detailed action plans for each key area. **ACTION A:** The Headteacher will provide copies of those detailed Action Plans to Governors for the next LGB meeting.
 - **Governors asked what was the status of Performance Management at the time of PK's appointment as TOA Headteacher? It was reported that** all Trust schools have adopted Blue Sky Education's appraisal software. At the Oaks, appraisal and the Blue Sky approach had been underdeveloped, and staff were inexperienced in its use. A meaningful appraisal cycle is a priority for development this year, and the performance management targets will reflect whole school ones. Teaching staff appraisals will be launched

first, followed by support staff. Development plans now provide clarity and improvements for use in the performance management process. **ACTION B:** The Headteacher will provide a breakdown to Governors for the next meeting, of the Performance Management action plan.

- **Governors asked whether teaching staff are on the appropriate pay scales regarding levels of responsibility? It was reported that** there are relatively few staff on the Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) scale compared with other secondary schools. The School Leadership Team, SEND Team, Pastoral Team and Safeguarding Team have been recently restructured. **ACTION C:** The Headteacher will provide a staffing structure diagram for the next meeting, and pay-scales.

- **Governors asked whether staff are aware of the responsibilities required for TLRs and whether there is clear guidance as to what is expected at the various levels? It was reported that** Staff have received INSET days' training on Performance Management and senior leaders are carrying out classroom visits, from which standards can be ascertained and challenged and advice and support provided. TLR holders will be held to account by Senior Leaders and appropriate targets agreed as part of the appraisal cycle. The Deputy Head now leads line management meetings with Heads of faculty, so that there is greater clarity about the accountability of their roles in achieving high standards across their faculties. The school is looking to appoint an Office Manager to help progress support staff Performance Management. **ACTION D:** KG will provide an update on line management priorities at the next meeting.

Governors **noted** the Improvement modules, evaluation plans and target dates in Paper 9.1. **ACTION E:** Senior Leaders will provide all action plans sitting behind the areas for improvement, at the next meeting.

9.2 School Performance – **Paper 9.2 School Performance** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received. It was reported that** the CEO recently carried out a school visit to assess priorities and discuss issues such as curriculum, welfare and estates. Supplementary reviews will be carried out regularly, in areas such as safeguarding, (for which Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) will be consulted) and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), (for which relevant, external expertise will be sought).

- **Governors asked how reliable is the assessment system currently in place? It was reported that** there remains work to be done to improve confidence in the systems, but curriculum and schemes of learning were reviewed and rewritten 12 months ago, when expectations were reset. CPD assessment is ongoing and staff are in the process of reviewing tracking and monitoring assessments.
- **Governors noted** that the school is 1 grade below what is expected compared to similar schools and **recommended** a benchmarking of assessments **and asked whether assessment moderation was carried out across the Trust? It was reported that** Yr11 grades were moderated across Trust schools and other external, similar schools.
- **Governors asked whether the moderation process had presented the school with any unexpected results? It was reported that** the process highlighted areas for development, already identified by the school and the Trust is providing support to address those areas by way of subject networking between Trust schools and the recently introduced Trust Assessment Group.
- **Governors asked whether the school has a Literacy Policy Lead. It was reported that** a new Literacy Lead has been recently appointed and an action plan drawn up. A new library and Learning Resource Base is in the process of being established and resourced. **ACTION A:** EA will provide the Literacy Strategy for the next meeting.
- **Governors asked how many teachers at the school are ECTs? It was reported that** c. one quarter of TOA teachers are ECTs. This could present a potential risk, which is mitigated by those ECTs being motivated and skilled teachers, receiving high levels of support from the school and Trust.
- **Governors asked whether there are any capacity issues with regard to the quality of education and impact of interventions? It was reported that** as well as Covid's impact, a 5-year development plan is in place and the school has begun to address the issue that 18 of the 57 current Yr11 do not follow a full curriculum, contributing to the current Progress₈ figure of -3.5 at the start of Year 11. The school is working with the Pledge, MPloy, Higher Horizons and the National Citizenship Service to develop a careers provision and focus on finding destinations for all its school leavers.
- **Governors asked what is being done to ensure the current Yr10 Progress₈ is positive? It was reported that** students no longer follow the alternative course (Engagement Pathway), following instead the regular path options with intensive support as needed.

- **Governors asked whether the GCSE Buckets are sufficient to support that? It was reported that** patterns can be bespoke if needed, balancing vocational and GCSE subjects to meet each student's individual needs.

Governor AW confirmed that she has been consulted about careers advice for the school and;

- **Governors asked whether the school is compliant in terms of the careers advice it provides from Yr7 upwards? It was reported that** audits are being carried out using the auditing tool from the Careers and Enterprise Council and work with AW continues.

Governors **noted** the reported gap between target and projected grades and:

- **Governors asked from where the projected figures had arisen and what was being done to close the gap? It was reported that** CH does not have full confidence in the current figures, due to Covid absences and lockdowns. CH and the Data Manager have been analysing the figures, which originated from Yr10 data and are a determination of where students will be at the end of the course, rather than where they are now. **ACTION B:** The projected figures will continue to be assessed and CH will provide updated data for the next meeting, to help assess target/projected figures' gaps.
- **Governors asked what is being done to address persistent absence, particularly regarding the attendance of SEND students, a number of whom appear to have less than 90% attendance? It was reported that** where it was in their best interests, some of the SEND students in the figures provided have gone on to specialist provisions, or were awaiting placement. The Attendance Action Plan has been enacted with a focus on working to change habits and the culture of attendance, making it the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that students understand the importance and significance of attending. Reasonable adjustments are made within school parameters to support attendance, which has begun to improve more recently. **ACTION C:** KG will provide the Attendance Action Plan to Governors for the next meeting.
- **Governors asked whether staff are supportive of and participating in the attendance initiatives and how that participation is being monitored? It was reported that** the oversight of attendance sits with KG and whilst there remains work to be done, in KG's short time at the school, staff have increasingly accepted the shared team responsibility for attendance.

9.3 Pupil Premium (PP) Strategy Update 2021-22 - A high percentage of students are PP and the school has adopted a whole school responsibility strategy to help close gaps, which is being embraced by staff and consideration is being given to how to weave PP ambitions into Performance Management targets. **ACTION A:** CH will provide the PP Strategy for the next meeting.

9.4 Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) – Paper 9.4 Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

Safeguarding and Student Welfare including Covid Update

10.1 TOA LGB Covid Update – Paper 10.1 TOA LGB Covid Safeguarding had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. Strategies for students' Covid testing at home have been considered and TOA has good consent levels for testing in school. There were no TOA positive test results upon the return to school in September, but Crewe incidences are rising. The school liaises with the Local Authority (LA) and parents and is ready to return to increased Covid secure measures should they become necessary. Some Covid secure measures have been retained around the school, such as a one-way system and extended form time, which allows students to await test results and is utilised for pastoral care time.

10.2 Safeguarding Children in Education Settings Audit Action Plan – Paper 10.2 SCiES Audit Action Plan Jan 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. Governors **noted** that many of the Actions listed were marked in green, rag-rated as 'Progressed' and:

- **Governors asked how the Headteacher had created a culture of safeguarding where there previously did not appear to have been such a culture and whether staff are aware of their responsibilities and are reporting incidences? It was reported that** through regular training and monitoring, safeguarding has become a common routine for staff. **Governors recommended** that the school ensure that all staff read the relevant safeguarding documents and sign to say that they have done so. **It was reported that** all safeguarding staff declarations are up to date. The school is now using CPOMS, the online safeguarding software for schools and all staff are aware that its correct use. Staff are aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and actions and follow-ups are monitored and challenged where appropriate. The school's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSL) expertise in safeguarding is being shared across the Trust and is being utilised in Local Authority (LA) training.

10.3 SCiES Actions - September 2021 – Paper 10.3 SCiES Actions – September 2021 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. **Governors noted** that there remained a number of critical Actions marked red. **ACTION A:** The DSL will provide Governors with a safeguarding action plan update at the next meeting, including an account of staff and student attitudes to safeguarding, how they think it has progressed and whether they have experienced any change in culture over the last year.

Governors recommended that the school make its safeguarding information more accessible to parents by putting its Safeguarding Policy onto the front page of the school website and including a simple summary of the Policy, the school's safeguarding initiatives and a link for easy reporting of concerns. **It was reported that** all staff now meet and greet the students in the morning and weekly safeguarding meetings for staff have been introduced. **ACTION B:** The DSL will provide Governors with the CPOMS raw data on safeguarding for the next meeting.

- **Governors asked the Headteacher whether students would report feeling safe around school and whether the actions taken so far have made an impact on that? It was reported that** there is a calm sense of order and positivity around the school and whilst there are individual incidences of poor behaviour, overall, there has been a vast improvement in behaviour. Visiting primary Headteachers have reported positively on the calm school environment. Classroom doors are open, senior leaders are actively engaging in supporting staff to challenge, sanction and reward behaviour, which has led to positive changes in staff attitudes to behaviour, to create a positive behaviour culture.

10.4 Safeguarding Training – Paper 10.4 TOA Safeguarding Training Record had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

Local Matters

11. Promotion of the school Open Evening, next Wednesday 29th September has been successful and all Governors are welcome. The school is beginning to have a positive, community feel. A Head Girl and Head Boy were appointed today, Prefects are being appointed and Student Committees will be commencing shortly. Careers are being actively developed and strong relationships are being built with local primary schools. The Yr7 intake for September 2021 was 133 and then 60 students left the school.

Policies

12.1 Admissions' Policy – Paper 12.1 Admissions Policy 2023-2024 had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting. Minor administrative amendments had been made and Governors **noted** the Published Admission Number (PAN) reduction from 156 to 130. **It was reported that** this is in consideration of class sizes and to assist with planning and staffing. **Governors approved the Admissions Policy 2023-2024 and agreed it can go out for consultation.**

Website Compliance

13. Governors **noted** that the school website is largely compliant, although there are governance gaps. Governors stressed the importance of the website being up to date, compliant, accessible and easy to navigate for all stakeholders. **Governors recommended** a school review of the website with regard to the language used for SEND information, which is compliant but not expressed in a parent-friendly style. **It was reported that** the Trust has some oversight of its schools' websites and will support TOA in reviewing its website.

LGB Roles

- 14.1 Link Governors – Volunteers were requested and offered for the following link Governor Roles:
Safeguarding Governor (Statutory required role) – MM
SEND – LH
AW – Careers
2 Governors were not present at the meeting and **ACTION A:** Health and Safety/Wellbeing role will be revisited at the next meeting and roles confirmed.
- 14.2 Training Updates – The Trust will be signing up for National Governance Association (NGA) online training for Governors, modules of which will be recommended to Governors. **ACTION A:** The Clerk and Chair will liaise to carry out a full LGB Skills' Audit to inform training need, prior to the next meeting.

Matters to Share with the Trust Board

15. **It was reported that** this item covers any matters the LGB wish to raise with the Trust Board. The Trust Board also have access to all schools' LGB Minutes.

There were no Matters Arising.

Meeting Closed at 6pm

Next Meeting: Monday 22nd November 2021 at 4pm at TOA

ACTIONS			
AGENDA ITEM AND ACTION	By When	By Whom	Date Completed
9. Governors will be provided with the following Action Plans for the next meeting:	22.11.21	Headteacher	
9.1A. Key Area Action Plans which will include:			
9.1B. Performance Management Action Plan			
9.1E All Action Plans sitting behind the module headings on paper 9.1, including Safeguarding.			
9.2C. Attendance Action Plan			
9.1C. The Headteacher will provide a staffing structure diagram to Governors for the next meeting, with pay-scale breakdowns	21.11.21	Headteacher	
9.1D. An update will be provided at the next meeting regarding the recruitment of an office Manager.	21.11.21	Headteacher	
9.2A. Governors will be provided with the Literacy Strategy for the next meeting.	21.11.21	EA	
9.2B. Governors will be provided with updated projected grade figures to assess target/projected figures' gaps.	21.11.21	CH	
9.3A. The PP strategy will be provided to Governors for the next meeting.	21.11.21	CH	
10.3A. The Headteacher will provide Governors with a safeguarding action plan update at the next meeting , including an account of staff and student attitudes to safeguarding, how they think it has progressed and whether they have experienced any change in culture over the last year.	21.11.21	DSL	
10.3B. The Headteacher will provide Governors with the CPOMS raw data on safeguarding.	21.11.21	CH	
14.1A. Link Governor roles will be confirmed	21.11.21	Governors	
14.2 A full LGB Skills' Audit will be carried out.	21.11.21	Clerk/Governors	