



Local Governing Board to The Learning Alliance

CHESHIRE STUDIO SCHOOL LGB

MINUTES – Part I



Date: 28th September 2021 at 4pm

Present:

Mrs C. Millson (Chair)
Mrs A Sennet (Vice Chair) (AS)

Absent: - Mr D Hermitt (DH)
Mr N Jackson (NJ)

In attendance:

Mr J Whittaker – Headteacher
Mrs K Key – Deputy Headteacher (KKY)
Mr C Leigh – Assistant Headteacher (CLH)
Mr D Twambley – TLA COO
Mrs N Phillips– TLA Director of Finance & Governance (NPS)
Mrs J Bradbury (JBY) (item 8.2)

Clerk: Mrs C Gritton

Administration

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Hermitt and Mr Jackson. The meeting was **not quorate**, but **the Chair agreed** to proceed with the meeting and any items requiring LGB approval would be dealt with after the meeting, by email with all LGB members.
2. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.
3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2021, were **approved**, subject to approval by DH and NJ
Matters Arising
 - 3.1 **Finance – The Chair reported** that she will be writing to the Trust CEO to express the LGB’s disappointment in not receiving financial information throughout the 2020/2021 school year. Governors accepted that Finance was not a delegated responsibility to the LGB, but were concerned that they might not be able to support the Headteacher’s school improvement plans without an overview of the financial position of the school. Governors also expressed concern around the Head’s ability to effectively run the school if he was not being provided with monthly or regular financial updates. **The COO reported** that the LGB had received P9 accounts and apologies were sent with regard to P10 accounts. No accounts are produced over the summer and P12 accounts’ turnaround always take a little longer to complete as they are the final accounts for the year. **The COO assured** Governors that the flow of information will improve this year, as the new systems’ integration is now complete. Following training, the Headteacher and Department Heads will have direct access to the school budget online and the Management Accounts will be provided by the 15th of each month. The LGB were reminded that their role lies in the delivery of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and student and staff welfare. Governors expressed that the request for regular financial information was not for close scrutiny, but to be able to support the Headteacher with any proposal he may make, and for the Headteacher to receive the information so that he is confidently able to make decisions, understanding any financial impact to the school. It was acknowledged that financial communication routes could and will be improved this school year.
 - **Governors asked the Headteacher whether he felt confident in the support he has.** The Headteacher reported that he had enrolled a Director of Operations and Finance at the school (successful candidate Mrs N Phillips) over the summer break. Coupled with the new way of working within central finance, this has increased confidence for this academic year.

- **Governors asked the Headteacher whether a dashboard of information might be more suitable/helpful.** The Headteacher reported that the budget information is fairly straightforward and there are dashboards available within the finance system, that he will be able to make use of.

- 3.2 **Work Placements** **Governors asked whether work placements were still in-school.** It was reported that increasing numbers of students have begun to go out for work placements.
- 3.3 **Bus Service** – It was reported that the Wincham area bus service, referred to at item 19.2 of the 16th June 2021 Minutes, was up and running. The service will make a loss this year but is expected to be cost neutral next year. Only KS3 currently use the route, but some of those students may have CSS as their future destination.
- 3.4 **School Uniform** – Governors were reminded that this minute referenced changes to the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021, passed on 29th April 2021:
Governors asked whether the school has second hand uniform available. It was reported that uniform items are donated and distributed where appropriate. It was noted that parents may well have second-hand uniform in good condition (following the covid closures). **ACTION:** The school will write to parents to ask whether they have uniform items to donate.
4. **Composition of LGB and Governance Matters** – It was agreed that the school will hold elections this term for two Parent Governors. Unsuccessful candidates may be considered for the role of Appointed Governor. Governors were reminded to update their Declarations and Confirmations on Governor Hub (GH).
5. **Matters for the trust Board to Share with the LGB** – The outcomes, including refreshed and reprioritised strategic objectives (the Strategic Objectives) of the 13th September Strategy Morning will be presented to the Board of Trustees (the Board) at their 18th October Board Meeting. Following Board approval of those outcomes they will be presented to LGBs for feedback.

Finance Update and Risk Register

6. **Finance** – It was reported that the school is in a strong financial position. The school is in receipt of Covid and catch-up funding. A small deficit has been set for this year, but this will leave the reserves at year-end still in excess of the Trust target of 5% of General Annual Grant (GAG). The reserves amount does not include the School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding. Large-scale estates planning is ongoing for KA and CSS. There followed a general discussion around growth, use of the school sites, catchment and academic and vocational courses for both KA and CSS, which are considered in unison for some matters, due to shared staffing and teaching spaces.
7. **Risk Register** – It was reported that there is a robust risk management process at Trust level, which schools' specific risks sit beneath. Risk management will be linked to the Strategic Objectives, which are sufficiently broad and encompass risks and mitigation. The Trust Risk Register will be uploaded to Governor Hub. (since the meeting, this is uploaded in the resources section of governor hub).

Strategic Vision

- 8.1 **School Performance** – **Paper 8.1 School Performance Cheshire Studio School 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and **was received.** It was reported that Teachers Assessed Grades (TAGs) were awarded based on the evidence gathered. Progress 8 scores are problematic for CSS as they are based on an assumption that students do ten GCSE subjects, which CSS do not do, nor do they do English Baccalaureate (EBacc). However, the Progress 8 scores still show that progress made by CSS students is on an upward trend.
- **Governors asked what the key drivers were of that trend.** It was reported that the school had begun to address English and maths results two years ago, when recognising that they could be improved. Blended classes with KA were thought to be a positive step and whilst the absence of examinations may have assisted in reducing exam stress anxiety, the figures are believed to represent true results. Science outcomes are being addressed by new Teaching and Learning initiatives. There is a target on the science development plan to improve outcomes.

- **Governors asked whether Covid measures impacted on CSS students' learning to a greater degree than on KA students' learning.** It was reported that CSS students did appear to be disproportionately affected by Covid Measures because many of these students come from less advantaged backgrounds. It was reported that Maths and English attainment has improved over the last three years. The 6th form cohort changes in Yr12 and because there is a wider range of studio courses in the 6th form it can be easier to secure attainment and progress than in KS4. The school are pleased with CSS attainment at level 3, where the average is now a C grade. Students of different abilities all benefit greatly from having the CSS and KA 6th form availability.

8.2 Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) – **Paper 8.2 Cheshire Studio School SEF September 2021** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**.

8.3 School Improvement Priorities (SIP) – **Paper 8.3 School Improvement Priorities Cheshire Studio School 2021 2022** had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was **received**. It was reported that JBY has been looking at Teaching and Learning (T&L) priorities with KKY. JBY has completed a coaching course and has approached all staff to ascertain their T&L aims for the year. JBY will train Heads of Faculties in how to coach staff to achieve their aims. JBY attended the meeting to talk to governors.

- **Governors asked how the school will measure success and whether milestones will be in place to help assess impact.** It was reported that Heads of Faculty will be encouraged to look at the appraisal system and JBY will look at conversations logged on the online reporting system BlueSky. JBY and Faculty Heads will have meaningful conversations and JBY will provide constructive feedback following observation; Continuing Professional development (CPD) will be used as a strategy to move the classroom forward as new ideas and innovations for looking at education in different ways positively benefit all students. Governors were pleased and encouraged by the report and look forward to **ACTION:** updates to follow over the year.
- It was reported that following work on the curriculum for the last two and a half years, Teaching and Learning are strong. The Teaching and Learning Team was created to provide a vehicle for improving T&L across the academy and studio school. It will provide keen, skilled staff with development opportunities. One year secondment, Associate Assistant Headteacher roles and middle leadership roles were created in Teaching and Learning areas, which will benefit students and staff.
- It was reported that the school has introduced the initiative 'The Knutsford Way' designed to provide a new structure to Teaching and Learning. This is led by Mrs Gaynor Speakman and is, based on three elements: 1. Quizzing: interleaving teaching and recycling knowledge throughout the year, 2. The premise that the teacher is the expert and 3. Production of a piece of work utilising newfound knowledge. Governors noted the initiative was good for staff professional development and therefore a good use of the budget.

Student Welfare and Safeguarding including Covid Update – A report by CLH

9. Student Welfare and Safeguarding – Paper 9 Safeguarding and Attendance had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received. Positive links with the Mental Health Support Team and strengthening of the school's safeguarding team were highlighted. The data for Looked After Children (LAC), Child Protection (CP), Child In Need (CIN) and Early Help, was presented. There is no change to LAC figures, but there is an increase in CIN cases.

Attendance – It was reported that there had been a promising start to the school year regarding attendance, but that it is now being affected due to seasonal illnesses as well as increasing cases of covid 19. As reflected nationally, absence rates have risen, but the school continues to address these issues.

- **Governors asked whether there is a concern about Covid risks which are affecting attendance.** It was reported that positive Covid case numbers are rising in Cheshire East, but there are still special attendance codes for students who are isolating or who have covid.
- **Governors asked whether similar figures are being experienced across the trust.** It was reported that there are similar, widespread, low levels of illness across the Trust. The Trust and its schools maintain

contact with Public Health England (PHE), who are actively monitoring the ongoing situation and CSS has good systems in place to mitigate Covid risks. The Trust may consider pre-emptive measures again in the future if necessary, but it follows operational guidance and PHE advice.

- **Governors asked when the vaccination programme will be taking place.** It was reported that it is thought that the programme of student vaccination will begin at the beginning of November and the school is in the process of writing to parents for consent.

Local Matters

10. Roof repairs are underway, paid for by Condition Improvement Funding (CIF).

It was reported 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.

Policies

11.1 Admissions' Policy - It was reported that:

- The TLA Scheme of Delegation (SofD) currently defers the responsibility for in-year admissions to the Headteacher, but a recent statutory amendment states the decision can no longer be made by one individual. The Trust Board will therefore be considering this at their October 18th meeting and further information will follow.
- Chair's Action had been utilised to agree LAC statutory amendments.

11.2 Relationships and Sex Education Policy - Paper 11.2 RSE Policy had been uploaded to GH prior to the meeting and was received and approved by those Governors present. **ACTION:** The Clerk will obtain approval of DH and NJ and confirm ratification to all Governors and the Headteacher upon receipt of that approval.

LGB Roles

12.1 Link Governors – The safeguarding meeting was scheduled for Friday 1st October. The Chair met with the newly appointed school SENCO to begin to build on the Governor/staff relationship.

12.2 Training Update – The Trust will shortly be inviting all schools' Governors to volunteer to be trained in exclusions. There will also be an NGA (National Governors Association) training programme made available.

Matters to Share with the Trust Board

13. The matter reported at item 3.1 above, with regard to financial information provided to the LGB and Headteacher.

AOB

14. Governors discussed changes to local timetables for public transport including buses. ACTION: KKY will look into whether the school might have any influence on the local bus-routes' times, regarding buses running at more suitable times to bring students into school and take them home.

Governors wished to note that they were impressed with the progress the school continues to make and its achievements and asked that their thanks be passed to staff. The Headteacher thanked Governors for their continued support.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 30th November 2021 at 4pm

Meeting Closed 6pm

CSS ACTIONS – Post September 2021 Meeting			
AGENDA ITEM AND ACTION	By When	By Whom	Confirmed Completed
3.2 The school will write to parents to ask whether they have uniform items to donate.	ASAP	KKY	
4. Parent Governor elections to be held asap	Autumn Term	Chair/Headteacher/ LGB/Clerk	
8.4 Coaching impacts updates will be provided to Governors at LGB meetings	June 2022 ASAP	JBY	
11.2/3 The Clerk will obtain approval from DH and NJ for the following: The minutes of the 16 June 2021 The Relationships and Sex Education Policy.		Clerk	
DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 30th November 2021 at 4pm			

Minutes approved:

Date:.....