

**MINUTES
CHART WOOD SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING
23 MAY 2019 AT 5.30 PM**

Present: Kathrine Everett, Chair (KE)
Joanne Gale, Interim Principal (JG)
Shirley Bryant, Parent Governor (SB)
Stephanie Hill, Governor (SH)
Ryan O'Sullivan, Governor (RO)
David Thomas, Governor (DT)

In attendance: Laurie Cornwell, Executive Principal and Regional Lead (LC)
Norman MacDonald, Management Accountant (NM)
Susanne Wicks, Clerk

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present and everyone introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

All governors undertook to complete and return a Declaration of Interest form to the clerk.

4. Constitution and Appointments

KE thanked all present for volunteering to join the LGB.

- a Governors noted the appointments that had been made by the Board of Trustees with effect from 17 May 2019.
- b Governors noted the vacancies remaining on the LGB.
- c Governors recommended that Kathrine Everett be appointed Chair and agreed to defer appointment of Vice-Chair until the LGB had been fully constituted.
- d Governors undertook to complete and return a skills audit form to the clerk.

5. Governor Training and Development

The clerk outlined the range of learning and support available to the LGB and advised that a short induction session would be delivered at the start of the next meeting.

The clerk undertook to share the portfolio guidance with the LGB and KE commended the effectiveness of the portfolio model in scrutinising the work of the school.

6a. Principal's Report

LC presented the report, which she had written in consultation with JG and which had been circulated to the LGB prior to the meeting. LC welcomed questions and comments from governors and matters discussed are detailed below.

Ofsted

LC was not able to share the outcome of the Section 5 Ofsted inspection as the report was not in the public domain.

Student Matters

LC commended the school in securing destinations for almost every Year 11 student, which was better than the national performance.

LC explained that boys stay in the residential provision on an ad-hoc basis, and that the funding is paid in arrears, based on a monthly submission by the school. She described the challenge this presents to the school in setting their budget as they cannot accurately predict their income and confirmed that negotiations will take place with Surrey County Council (CC) about moving to a different model of funding, to ensure some certainty around income. KE reported that Surrey CC have started to consider this issue, as they equally need more certainty around expenditure.

Staff and Personnel

LC highlighted the high numbers of unqualified teachers and noted that, whilst schools across the country are finding it challenging to recruit and retain qualified teachers, it is even more difficult for a specialist provision such as this one.

LC explained how teachers' performance is assessed, through a range of evidence including lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutiny, which is pulled together to evaluate teachers, to give precise and detailed feedback and to identify objectives for improvement. She advised that as effective performance management continues to be embedded across the school, teachers will receive detailed verbal and written feedback with an action plan agreed in order for them to improve.

In response to questions from governors, LC advised that not all changes have been well received by all staff although some have been grateful to receive meaningful feedback. She highlighted that the relationships and trust between staff and students are very positive, but the students must receive high quality teaching. LC advised that the whole school culture needs to change which takes time.

With regard to levels of sickness absence, LC acknowledged that monitoring has not been robust and the recruitment of a new Office Manager will assist in ensuring that staff absence policies and procedures are properly followed. She also emphasised that working in a school of this nature can be very challenging so staff must be appropriately supported.

Health and Safety and Safeguarding

LC outlined the high levels of support given to the school by OHCAT's Director of Safeguarding and Learning Support, Jackie Van-West.

School Events

LC encouraged governors to visit the school, attend school events, and to meet the students.

Governors received the Principal's report.

6b. Dashboard

LC presented the Dashboard and explained that the same categories of information are presented to all Local Governing Bodies, to ensure that governors receive high level data. LC welcomed comments and questions and matters discussed were as follows.

Attendance

JG emphasised the importance of attendance for students in order to maximise their opportunities for learning. She reminded governors that some of the students do not want to be in school at all, so the rates of attendance achieved are commendable. JG advised that, with persistent absentees removed, attendance is at 96.4% and explained that for most persistent absentees there is a valid reason for their non-attendance.

KE congratulated the school on their performance in this area, and asked if it would be possible to receive information on students' rates of attendance at their previous school. LC responded that it could be difficult to obtain this information but it may be possible to demonstrate improved attendance as the student moves through the school. Governors agreed that it would be very useful for them to receive anonymised case studies on individual students in order to put some context behind the data.

Numbers on Roll

LC explained the importance of identifying young people's needs as early as possible and ensuring that they are placed in the appropriate setting, which for some may result in their return to mainstream education. KE described the 'graduated response' project underway in Surrey CC which will aim to support children much earlier and undertook to share information about the project with the LGB.

Behaviour Incidents

Governors agreed that it would be useful to know the kind of incidents that are categorised as 'high', 'medium' and 'low'.

Exclusions

JG acknowledged that rates of exclusion were high and LC advised that more work was planned around de-escalation in order to prevent exclusions.

At the request of governors, JG explained how and when internal exclusion was used to manage behaviour and KE undertook to share the appropriate Surrey policy which covered this issue. JG described plans to develop a hub where a more therapeutic approach could be developed. In response to questions, JG confirmed that some children have been subject to more than one exclusion.

JG gave a detailed account of the circumstances around one student in the lower school who is in crisis and the lengths to which the school and staff have gone to support him, with minimal support from the Police or Social Services. Governors noted the complexity of the situation and the impact that one child can have upon other students and staff. LC described the Annual Review process that is undertaken for all students, and noted that the required input from Health and Social Care is often lower than hoped.

Staff Sickness Absence

Governors noted the increase in sickness absence, which is partially due to the changes underway in school since it converted to an academy. LC reassured governors that support is in place for all staff, and staff wellbeing is increasingly a focus for OHCAT. However, she also reiterated previous comments about the need to ensure that that sickness absence is properly recorded and monitored and that appropriate policies and procedure are followed.

In response to questions from governors, JG explained that it can be challenging to use agency staff to cover sickness absence, due to the importance of staff / student relationships, which take time to build. Whilst acknowledging the impact on staff who cover sickness absence of colleagues, she emphasised the need for continuity for the students and to balance the wellbeing of students against that of staff.

Safeguarding

Governors noted that four LADO referrals had been made in the Spring term in total, and that out of the 91 students on roll, 89 have safeguarding files. JG advised that up to 12 referrals are being made by staff per day, which is an unmanageable level for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This has been recognised, and the Safeguarding Team has been enlarged to manage the range of issues facing the school. LC described the aim for the Behaviour Team to pick up lower level matters, so that the DSL may focus on more serious issues. JG confirmed that support has been sought, and given, from other DSL within OHCAT, but this did not mitigate the need to train and empower all staff to take responsibility for safeguarding, and to not automatically forward all concerns to the DSL, but to support a student to make a disclosure.

KE made the following suggested amendments to the format of the Dashboard:

- Include expected class sizes and number of classes per year group;
- Link staff CPD to the Dashboard;
- Make the key for the exclusions data more explicit;
- Amend the way in which pupils on roll are displayed to make it easier to read;

Governors received the dashboard.

7. Finance and Funding

7a. Management Accounts for 18-19 to March 2019

NM presented the management accounts in detail, and explained that a similar report would be presented to each LGB meeting. He explained that:

- Salary costs normally account for 75 – 80% of a school's budget;
- The key to managing the budget is to establish levels of income and staffing numbers.
- There is some uncertainty around income from residential provision. The budget is based on 15 students per night which is not the current level.
- Work is still underway to fully understand the budget, but currently there is a projected deficit of £73K at year end, with no reserves.

In response to questions from governors, NM advised that:

- Some information had been passed to OHCAT from the Local Authority upon conversion in order to enable the Finance Team to build the budget, but it was unlikely that detailed historical information could be obtained. KE undertook to check with colleagues in Surrey CC what information could be shared.
- The target in OHCAT is for the school to reach a positive budget position within two years, but this doesn't always happen. He noted that the key factor is the income that comes with each student (£10K per student plus top-up fees from the local authority based on each student's needs).
- There are some economies of scale to be achieved through the school being part of a MAT.

NM described the challenging financial environment for all schools, which has led to spending levels being reduced as far as possible, with minimal opportunity to make further savings. At the request of governors, he gave a detailed account of how the funding is calculated and how it can vary according to each child. He noted the importance of entering a dialogue with the relevant local authority, and try to agree a baseline top-up rate at a fixed price, which can give certainly around budget for both the school and local authority.

NM confirmed that negotiations on funding are underway with Surrey CC, which include the costs around waking night staff provision. LC explained that there is work to be done around students' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to ensure that students are receiving appropriate levels of support. She advised that Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is an emerging SEN need, and research suggests that it is on a spectrum, akin to Autism, with varying levels of need.

Governors received the management accounts.

7b. Budget for 2019-20

NM introduced the draft budget for 2019-20. He advised that the school must set a balanced budget, and outlined the assumptions made, as detailed below, but

emphasised that the new Principal may wish to make changes to staffing when he joins the school in September:

- Staffing structure to remain as is with a 2% salary increase;
- The increase in Teacher Pension contributions to be covered by Central Government for 19-20 but to cost around £70K to the school in 20-21;
- A PAN of 115, with 98 students needed to achieve a break-even budget;
- £10K funding per student, plus top-up to be agreed;

When asked by governors about numbers of applications for Year 7 in September, JG confirmed that there are more than enough applications to fill the places available but the school is limited by space in its current premises until it moves to the new site in Dorking in September 2020.

Governors received the draft budget for 2019-20.

8. Policies and Procedures

8a. The LGB noted the policies and procedures that had been approved by the OHC&AT Board on 25 March 2019.

8b. The LGB approved the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

9. OHC&AT Governance Documentation

Governors received the Scheme of Delegation, Schedule of Responsibilities and summary of LGB functions.

10. Governance Handbook

Governors noted the updates made to the revised Handbook, issued in March 2019.

11. Ofsted Inspection Framework and Handbook

Governors noted the updated Framework and Handbook would be effective from September 2019.

12. Any Other Business

LC thanked the Interim Principal for leading the school through the transition to an Academy.

SH gave a brief update on the refurbishment of the premises in Dorking that the school will move into in September 2020.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

Governors agreed that the clerk should circulate suggested dates for future meetings.

14. Confidentiality

KE reminded governors that matters discussed should remain confidential.

The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.

Signed: _____ (Chair, LGB)

Date: _____

Minute	Action	Allocated to
3	All governors to complete and return a declaration of interest form to the clerk.	All
4d	All governors to complete and return a skills audit form to the clerk.	All
5	Clerk to share portfolio guidance with all governors.	Clerk
6b	Governors to receive case studies on individual students in order to put some context behind the data.	Principal
6b	Governors to receive information on incidents that are categorised as 'high', 'medium' and 'low'.	Principal
6b	KE to share the Surrey CC RPI policy with the LGB.	KE
6b	KE to share information on the Surrey CC Graduated Response project.	KE
7a	KE to check with colleagues in Surrey CC what information could be shared on the school's budget prior to conversion.	KE
13	Clerk to circulate proposed dates for future meetings.	Clerk