

**MINUTES  
UNIFIED ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING  
19 NOVEMBER AT 5.30 PM**

**LGB Members present:** Kelly Phillips, Chair (KP)  
Ian Bowers, Governor (IB)  
Ruth Duggan, Governor (RD)  
Liam McGivern, Governor (LM)

**In attendance:** Brenda Scott [OHCAT Finance Team]  
Kelly Collett [Clerk]  
Barbara McIntosh [Governor and Chair Designate]  
Laurie Cornwell [Deputy CEO, OHCAT]

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

All present introduced themselves.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Geoff Tanner, Bronwyn Jansen Van Vuuren, and Stephanie Hill. David Thomas. Consent was given to their absence. No apologies were received from Shirley Bryant.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The clerk undertook to check which governors had completed and returned their annual declaration of interest form. There were no declarations made regarding agenda items.

**4. SKILL AUDIT ANALYSIS**

The clerk undertook to check which governors had completed and returned their skills audit form.

**5. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS**

- i Governors noted the appointment to the LGB of Barbara McIntosh, which will be approved by the Board of Trustees on 11 December 2020.
- ii Governors noted the appointment of Barbara McIntosh as Chair of the LGB, which will be approved by the Board of Trustees on 11 December 2020.
- iii Governors agreed to recommend that the OHCAT Board appoint Ian Bowers as Vice-Chair of the LGB until the autumn term 2021.
- iv Governors noted the appointment of Bronwyn Jensen Van Vuuren as Parent Governor with effect from 3 July 2020.

**6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair at the earliest opportunity.

## 7. MATTERS NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

- i Deep Dive meetings deferred to next term due to current restrictions. The programme will be reviewed at in the spring term by LC, BM, and Clerk.
- ii Governor to attend a meeting of the school council deferred to next term. LC invited BM to join a school council meeting in the spring term.
- iii DT to confirm arrangements for a staff member to present at the next LGB regarding recovery curriculum or attendance.

## 8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- a. Governors received the Principal's report written by Laurie Cornwell ahead of the meeting which she presented. Governors noted the following points:
  - The report was presented in a different format due to the impact of Covid-19. The usual headings in the report would not capture everything the school have been focusing on.
  - The school moved to a new site September 2020.
  - There were many delays with the move which resulted the students not being able to begin their schooling until 14 September 2020 once the site was safe for them to enter. For example, delays in laying of tarmac.
  - The school encountered delays with broadband being set up. Internet and phone systems were not in use. This has since been resolved.
  - Some students' taxis were not reinstated at the correct time, there were also concerns over taxis being shared due to social distancing rules. The school have had to work continuously with the Local Authority.
  - There has been lots of transitional work that needed to be done for the new Year 7 starters.
  - In Autumn 1, attendance was 75%. Extensive work is ongoing to increase that figure.
  - There has been a fair amount of staff absence due to Covid-19, which has had an impact upon the school.
  - Daily risk assessments are carried out regarding how the school's curriculum is delivered whilst keeping the students as safe as possible.
  - The school was contacted three weeks ago regarding an Ofsted visit. The aim of the visit was for Ofsted to get a real understanding of the implications of Covid-19, and what barriers the school are facing due to the pandemic and restrictions.
  - The Ofsted visit was very positive and was helpful to the school leaders. It also gave the school leaders the opportunity to reflect and feedback on all the work that had taken place. The information Ofsted gained will be fed back to the DFE. This was not a judgement visit; however, Ofsted will send a short 300-word letter detailing what was seen and discussed. Areas of focus were lost learning, recovery curriculum and several areas that were specific to the school's students.

- The school are working on a highly bespoke enrichment programme. This is proving difficult as pandemic restrictions have reduced what can take place.
- The school have been supporting students who experience high anxiety over the Covid-19 situation. This has been increased since some students have not been in school for six months. Some of their families have also been affected by the pandemic due to furlough and job losses. The school continues to try to ease the pressures on the students.
- A newly appointed Assistant Principal oversees pastoral and student support and has been providing training and strategies for staff to help them work and understand students' anxiety.
- Therapy dogs come into school five days per week. The students enjoy reading to the dogs as part of the school's literacy strategy.
- Behaviour and safeguarding reporting is now being completed through one system. This allows the staff to report on the behaviour whilst being able to identify any safeguarding issues.
- Pupil Premium generates a lot of funding for the school, which is indicative of the high number of students that are entitled to the grant. The action plan was circulated to governors. The funding supports the therapy dogs, attendance support and creating a bespoke curriculum for some of the students, as being in school five full days per week is sometimes not right for certain students' needs.
- Safeguarding reporting has since seen an increase due to issues relating to the pandemic.
- The 'Healing Together' programme has been introduced across the trust. This programme supports students who may be encountering domestic abuse in the home. Two trained practitioner's work one to one with individuals.

IB asked how the 75% attendance compares with this time last year. LC replied that this time last year it was lower at approximately 60%. This year shows an improvement, especially during the current circumstances, but the school is working on improving this further.

IB asked if reduced numbers of students would explain the higher attendance and LC expressed her view that that is not the case. LC stated that year on year comparison is not always meaningful due to the transient nature of the cohort.

LM asked about student attainment on returning to school after a long period of absence. LC replied that they have seen a backward step in many of their students with a decrease in progress for some. To mitigate that, the school are delivering a recovery curriculum and appropriate interventions are being put in place. The school are allowing greater access to therapy and working hard in plugging the gaps in the students learning.

LM asked about the off-site activities having been heavily reduced due to the pandemic. Did this have a negative effect on behaviour? LC explained

that it has affected behaviour. The students often struggle with being in a constant classroom setting. The provision on offer is for them to learn whilst being out and about and accessing enrichment activities. Sadly, these activities have been limited at this time.

LM asked how the staff have been coping during the pandemic. LC stated that a lot of work is being done to support staff across the Trust. The Trust is very mindful that the staff have their own families and fears. The school and Trust are very transparent about writing comprehensive risk assessments that are shared. There is also a regular dialogue with individuals to ask if there is anything else, we can do to support them.

KP asked if staff absence is having an impact on the curriculum delivery? LC confirmed that it does have a huge impact on the delivering of the curriculum. The students do rely on consistency of staff, so it does make it difficult to manage. There is ongoing work to address absence by the SLT, supported by HR.

**b. EQUALITY INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES 2020-21**

Governors received this document ahead of the meeting.

**c. DASHBOARD**

Governors received this document ahead of the meeting.

**d. SIP**

Governors received this document ahead of the meeting. Agreed in June 2020 meeting.

**e. PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT ACTION PLAN**

Governors received this document ahead of the meeting.

**9. FINANCE AND FUNDING**

BS presented the accounts to the governors.

The student numbers are lower than set in the budget. Although it is only month one, the school have re-forecasted to reduce the income, so that it is more realistic from the outset.

The school currently has an operating deficit of £43k against an original budget of a deficit of £8k. The staffing costs are up, due to several staff being off, this means a lot of additional support has to be brought in from agency staff. Most other areas are in line with where the budget should be at this time of the year.

The school is in a challenging financial position. However, they are addressing this and working hard to improve the school's financial position in the future. This is not something that can be improved immediately, it will take time. LC stated that although the school will be careful with spending,

they cannot reduce spend on areas that will provide improvements for the students.

BS advised that last years accounts ended in a better position than they expected, this was due to the impact of Covid-19. BS advised that everyone is working hard to make sure that the school succeeds financially to ensure that they can deliver the best outcomes for students.

KP asked about the end of year forecast? BS advised the end of year forecast is a deficit of £296k. This is due to low student numbers. The school are in talks with Surrey about other prospective students that can be placed at the school.

BM asked why was there a reduction in student numbers? LC explained that when applications are submitted, it does not automatically lead to the child being admitted. The school may be named on a child's EHCP, but the family may challenge this decision or move away. Students cannot be added to the roll until they start in school.

BM asked if Surrey County Council are a good partner, is it amicable, is it easy to negotiate with them? LC advised the relationship between Surrey and the school has improved, although there is always room for discussion. Surrey have been fair in their approach to funding negotiations.

LM reassured Governors that the amended budget forecast paints a realistic picture.

LC thanked BS for all the work that she has done to support the school in terms of their finances and noted how hard BS has worked to gain a good understanding of the school in order to work with the school finances, which has a positive impact on the whole school. LM echoed those thanks.

## **10. GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

### **Finance and Resources**

LM gave a verbal update following his discussion with BS about the accounts.

### **Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding**

KP conducted her monitoring visit via telephone. She reported that she felt reassured about the progress made by the DSL in building relationships with the students. Interventions are being developed to support the students. KP noted thanks to the DSL.

RD reiterated the importance of carrying out portfolio visits. LC agreed that these are essential and must not be interrupted by Covid-19 restrictions.

## **11. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

None undertaken.

## **12. PAY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Governors received a verbal report on the meeting of the Pay Committee held on 6 October 2020, at which the Principal’s recommendations on teacher pay had been discussed and agreed.

**13. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT board on 3 July 2020.

**14. KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION**

Governors noted that ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ has been updated with effect from September 2020. Governors noted the latest version is available on GovernorHub and must be read. Governors also noted that all relevant OHC&AT policies have been amended to reflect the changes. A summary of the changes has been circulated to the Safeguarding Portfolio governor.

**15. GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK OCTOBER 2020**

Governors noted that the Governance Handbook has been updated with effect from October 2020. Governors aware the latest version is on GovernorHub.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i LC and KP undertook to arrange a call with BM to deliver a handover.
- ii LC thanked governors on behalf of the school and students for all their support.
- iii On behalf of the LGB, KP thanked the staff for their hard work in such challenging circumstances.

**17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 4 March 2021
- 17 June 2021

**18. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

No items were deemed confidential.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair of LGB**

<b>SUMMARY OF ACTIONS</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Initials</b>
8.i	Deep dive Meetings deferred to next term. Group to arrange dates next term.	<b>LC/BM/CLERK</b>
8.ii	Governor to attend a meeting of the school council deferred to next term. LC to advise when this would be suitable.	<b>LC/BM</b>

8.iii	DT to arrange staff members to present at LGB's.	<b>DT</b>
8.iv	DT to confirm arrangements for a staff member to present at next LGB regarding recovery curriculum or attendance.	<b>DT</b>
10	Portfolio Visits to be booked in.	<b>LC/CLERK/BM</b>
16	BM to have a handover call with KP and LC.	<b>BM/LC/KP</b>