

Minutes



THE LINK SECONDARY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING ON 20th FEBRUARY 2018 AT 6PM

Attendees:	Roger Mills (RM)	Interim Chair/Governor
*Absent	Annabel Faulkner (AF)	Governor/Vice Chair
	Maryanne Vernede (MV)	Parent Governor
	William Scott (WS)	Governor
	John Reilly (JR)	Head Teacher
	Amanda Griffiths (AG)	Deputy Head, Associate Member
	Karen Hayward (KH)	Staff Governor
	Sandy Turner (ST)	Governor
	Sameera Saleem (SS)	Parent Governor

Also present:	Sarah Farncombe	Clerk
	Norman McDonald	Schools Business Manager
	Jane Gibbs	Observer/prospective Governor

Absent:

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Governors absent and the meeting was quorate.

John Prior, The Executive Head of OHCAT, sent apologies for not being able to attend as an advisor.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Governors welcomed Jane Gibbs as a proposed new Governor. They were pleased to hear that Jane lives locally and now that her family is grown up she would welcome the opportunity to give back to her community by serving as a Governor. She has personal experience of special needs children and 30 years' experience in the financial services industry.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None not already declared.

4. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

Roger Mills proposed, and Annabel Faulkner seconded the appointment of Jane Gibbs as a Governor.

Governors agreed her financial and personal experience will strengthen the Governing Board and their ability to hold the HT to account.

Governors unanimously approved the appointment by a show of hands. The appointment will be recommended to the Trust Board for approval.

RESOLUTION: Governors recommend the Trust Board approve the appointment of Jane Gibbs to the LGB.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

WS and SS arrived at 6.06-6.08

The minutes were circulated in advance of the meeting and agreed to be an accurate record (subject to noting the next meeting will be on the 12th June rather than the 13th) and a copy signed for filing.

6. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Governors asked for an update on the meeting with the LA (Local Authority) regarding the SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) consultation mentioned on page 5.

Governors were advised that the Heads from both the Primary and Secondary school had held constructive meetings with the LA regarding the commissioning of services. Senior leaders had agreed to visit the schools and a new Commissioning Lead is joining the LA in April. The LA had agreed in principle to treat The Link Schools as specialist providers (in the same way as Carew Manor) rather than non-maintained independent schools.

Governors asked whether a similar approach will be made to other LAs. The HT confirmed that as part of the increasingly proactive approach being adopted The London Borough of Croydon was next on the list.

Governors were also pleased to hear that the both Heads had joined the Sutton Secondary Heads Partnership and are looking to develop links with mainstream schools with a view to offering support and interventions.

Governors were encouraged to attend the additional Curriculum Governors training day which had been set for 3rd May

7. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Governors were taken through the Head Teachers report which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Points of note raised in answer to questions and in discussion included:

Pupil Overview

- There are 35 students on role
- As discussed earlier there is a proactive and rigorous approach to recruitment. 44 sets of parents attended the open days. Feedback was good and leads are being actively followed up to translate expressions of interest into placements.
- One year 9 was given a fixed term exclusion due to exceptional circumstances. In taking the decision to exclude the HT had consulted the Chair of Governors and Executive Head

of OHCAT. The decision had not been taken lightly but was necessary from a safeguarding perspective and in the interests of the student and wider school community. The HT has met with the parents and the child is now back in school with a support plan in place. There have been no further incidents.

- There has been a drop in attendance from last term (91%) to (87.4%). For context it was pointed out a lengthy unauthorised holiday over Christmas, one three month absence and a school refuser have a significant adverse effect on the statistics.

Governors sought reassurance and evidence, that pupil attendance was now being monitored centrally.

They were advised that absences are being recorded on SIMS and from September attendance will be recorded lesson by lesson. Absence is also now a standing item on the SLT agenda. Governors will be presented with a fuller report at the next meeting.

ACTION POINT: Governors to be briefed fully on Attendance at the next meeting (HT/Agenda Item)

Governors asked about the authorisation of absence during term time and were advised by the HT that no requests had been authorised.

There had in fact not even been a request in relation to the absence which exceeded the Christmas holidays. Unauthorised absences are followed up with the parents but the options on sanctions are limited.

Governors questioned whether the staff sickness was spread across the work force or relate to a smaller number of individuals.

They were advised the majority of absences related to 2 members of staff. One is now back at work. The other absence is being managed with support from HR and OHCAT but a resolution is not expected imminently. Managing cover (without relying on supply) is challenging and the students are affected by the uncertainty.

Safeguarding

The Deputy Head briefed Governors on the OHC&AT Safeguarding audit and action plan circulated in advance of the meeting. They noted in particular:

- A number of actions had been completed and the majority will be completed this term
- A further supervision session by OHCAT has been booked
- Lock down procedures and Critical Incidents have been added as items as a result of the meeting with the Safeguarding Portfolio holder (ST)

Governors challenged the HT with a number of questions, including:

- Governors observed that generally training appeared to be an issue and were assured that it was being addressed. The DHT advised that she received regular updates on safeguarding issues from OHCAT and from the NSPCC through their CASPAR newsletter.

- Governors questioned whether the CSR (Central Single Register) had been checked. They were advised it was checked by OHCAT HR in September and agreed it should be checked as part of the portfolio visit in future.
- Governors questioned whether the safeguarding training they had been told in June would be given had been completed and were advised it had been.
- Governors suggested adding in a column in the action plan to record completed actions.
- Governors questioned the use of coloured ID tags for non DBS checked visitors. They were assured that any non DBS visitors (such as parents) were never left unsupervised.
- Governors questioned whether portable DBS certificates were accepted and were advised they were.
- Governors sought reassurance that all staff appointments are made subject to references and were advised they were.
- Governors expressed the view that given the importance of E Safety there should be a dedicated member of staff taking the lead and taking responsibility for supporting parents in that regard.

Teaching and learning

Governors were talked through the data grids and particular attention was drawn to:

- 9 pieces of evidence were assessed and scored to arrive at the average score
- Sustained improvement was evident with reds and yellows on the grids being converted to green
- Those members of staff who scored less than 5 in the autumn term have met with the HT to identify why they did not meet the standard
- Those failing to score at least 5 (and who intend to remain at the Link) are on support plans
- Level 1 support includes weekly meetings with the DHT and drop in sessions on lessons. If the necessary improvement is not achieved stage 2 support will be provided which includes working with the HT
- There have been 30 lesson observations in a term in addition to learning walks and book scrutiny. Whilst time consuming it is important to understand the challenges and improve the quality of teaching
- As the amount of data grows it will be possible to present graphs showing trends over time and quality evidence for Ofsted

Governors were pleased to see the evidence of improvement in the quality of teaching. They acknowledged the significant amount of time and effort it had taken but the impact was evident.

The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Points of note and matters arising from discussion included:

- The New Deputy Head with responsibility for Curriculum & Assessment joins at Easter

- Having challenged the RI teaching the year 2 year target will be to get the teaching graded 'Good' to 'Outstanding'
- The impact of Leadership and interventions is evident
- The report by David Scott and the need for Governors to monitor the improvements being made and ensure they are sustained and secured
- The expectation that future observations will be externally validated as evidence of the approach to teaching and learning and the improvements that have been made
- Governors will be invited to join learning walks
- In the longer term it would be desirable to have external moderation with other schools

Governors asked whether teachers felt the SLT were working with them or wanted to 'catch them out'.

The HT explained that he hoped to use the increased capacity the appointment of the Deputy Head (Curriculum & Assessment) provides to address any such perception and to also help those teachers who were already 'good' to move their practice on as well.

Governors asked about staff morale and were assured that generally it was pretty good.

The teaching staff were undoubtedly finding the jump in the level of scrutiny and accountability difficult and some have expressed feeling under pressure. However, they have been reassured that if they are meeting the teaching standards and delivering well planned lessons they have no cause for concern. Staff wellbeing and strategies to deal with the impact on staff are covered in the HR portfolio holder's report.

Leadership/Management Reports

- Governors may have the opportunity to see the VR (Virtual Reality) Headsets in action at the Governor Training day on the Curriculum
- The fundamental review of the curriculum has been shared with SLT. It will be shared with all staff tomorrow and tweaked by the end of term so staff have a full term to adjust to the changes before the roll out in September.

Governors asked about the role of the Inclusion Lead and questioned the number of Senior Leaders given the size of the school.

The HT explained that the Inclusion Lead Role was important in terms of managing the SSAs, the EHCPs and IEPs (and provision mapping which gives important evidence of cost and impact).

- More broadly there was an issue with capacity in administration support.

Governors thanked the HT for a detailed report which was considered to be very useful in terms of fulfilling their role.

8. PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR VISITS:

Ethos, Vision and Strategy

The Chair apologised that due to personal circumstances although he had been able to visit the school he had been unable to write up the report in time for the meeting.

Teaching and Learning

Governors were talked through the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and Governors noted that the comprehensive Safeguarding audit will be checked for progress along with the CSR at the next visit.

Finance and Resources

The report was noted to be self-explanatory.

The HT explained that he had met with a surveyor to discuss the reinstatement of PE changing rooms and improving the playground as a priority and potentially the kitchen area. The first step will be to commission an accurate up to date site map. Money has been allocated to a capital spend and the PTA will be invited to fund raise.

HR and Organisational Development

WS advised his meeting had taken place earlier today to discuss the progress made in the implementation of performance management systems, changes to the organisational structure and review the training and development opportunities offered to staff.

Matters

Governors were talked through the report which was tabled at the meeting and will be circulated by email as well.

Governors were reassured to note that in the drive to improve standards staff welfare is being taken into consideration.

Governors went on to discuss a confidential staffing issue recorded in part B minutes.

Business Development and Marketing

Governors were talked through the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors discussed the action plan and in particular with regard to the upgrading of the website. MV and KH are keen to be involved in the process which is due to start around Easter.

Governors were disappointed that the archived version of the last Ofsted report is still accessible on line but agreed with the HT it was important to talk about the report with parents to offer reassurance and a positive message. Perceptions do appear to be changing and most of the Year 6's in the primary have given the Secondary School as their first choice which is a significant improvement in just one year. Parental trust and confidence appears to be improving and seeing the two Head Teachers working together was considered to be a factor in that respect.

The Curriculum Training is on the 3rd May.

Other visit reports

None

Governor Training & Development Programme 2017-18

Noted

Governors to provide an update on training and development opportunities.

None to report

9. FINANCE AND FUNDING

Contracts/SLAs in excess of set limit.

There were no SLAs in excess of the limit which required approval.

Management accounts

Governors were talked through the management accounts up to the end of December which were circulated with the agenda.

Points of particular note and arising from discussion included:

- The slightly lower on income
- Costs are under control
- Net savings in salaries have been achieved by some leavers not being replaced.
- The SLT is stronger and the SBM meets with the HT monthly to review staffing
- 75-80% of the budget is on staffing costs
- Some additional operational cost savings have been achieved
- The operational deficit is less than expected
- The staffing restructure costs may change
- This is a transition year and the target for next year will be have a balanced budget
- The forecast is the 'worst case' scenario
- The budget for next year will be discussed at the next meeting by which time there should be an indication of pupil numbers

10. OHC&AT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Governors noted the family policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board:

NAME	TYPE	STATUS
Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy	Core	Review
Fire Policy	Additional	New
Missing Child Policy (Academies)	Additional	Review
Missing Student Policy (College)	Additional	Review
Relationships and Sex Education Policy (Academies)	Core	Review

There were no local policies and procedures for review.

11.OHC&AT GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION

Governors noted the following governance documentation approved by the OHC&AT Board are available to view on the Governors' Portal.

- Scheme of Delegation
- Schedule of Responsibility.
- Governors' Code of Conduct

Governors noted that the schedule of responsibility has been amended to reflect the responsibility of the Principals/Heads and LGBs with regard to website compliance.

12.GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)-IMPORTANT CHANGES IN LEGISLATION

Governors noted that General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which affect all organisations comes into force on May 25th 2018. Governors will be given updates on progress via the Trust.

In line with the new regulations, the Trust will examine ways to ensure compliance and from September 2018, will move towards paperless meetings. Governors may also be required to use Trust email addresses.

It was suggested and agreed that in future in the interests of efficiency and to minimise the risk of a data breach the appendices to the agenda would be uploaded to the Governor Portal.

13.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair advised Governors that he had agreed to be the Interim Chair of the LGB for the Primary School. He was keen to reassure Governors this was to cover the vacancy which had arisen in the short term and not a move towards bring the two schools together.

14.DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12TH June 2018

15.CONFIDENTIALITY

Governors agreed a confidential staffing issue should be recorded in part B minutes as noted above.

Closing Time of Meeting: 7.40pm

Chair's Signature Date: 12th June 2018