

# Minutes

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## THE LINK SECONDARY LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (LGB) MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 AT 6PM

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<b>Attendees:</b>	Rama Venchard	OHC Trustee/Acting Chair
*Absent	Annabel Faulkner (AF)	Governor/Vice Chair
	Maryanne Vernede (MV)	Parent Governor
	William Scott (WS)	Governor
	John Reilly (JR)	Principal
	Karen Hayward (KH)	Staff Governor
	Sandy Turner (ST)	Governor
	Jane Gibbs (JG)*	Governor
	Sameera Saleem (SS)	Parent Governor
 <b>Also present:</b>	 Sarah Farncombe	 Clerk
	Norman MacDonald	OHCAT Management Accountant
	Hannah Wallwork	Deputy Head
	Jennifer Sutcliffe	Prospective Governor
 <b>Absent:</b>	 Jane Gibbs	 Governor
	Amanda Griffiths (AG)	Deputy Head/observer

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was opened by the Chair.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Jane Gibbs and consented for the reason given.

The meeting was noted to be quorate.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise not already made.

### 4. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

The Trust Board is expected to consider the appointment of Jennifer Sutcliffe at the meeting of the trust board on the 28<sup>th</sup> June.

### 5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting were agreed to be an accurate record and a copy signed by the Chair for filing.

Governors noticed in point 8 'School' should be corrected to 'Scott.'

## **6. MATTERS NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

It was noted that the apologies from Jane Gibb sent to the office in advance of the last meeting had inadvertently not been passed onto the meeting.

- i **Item 6: Safeguarding to be a standing agenda item**  
Governors were agreed that since 'Safeguarding' is a standing item in the report by the Principal an additional standing item on the agenda it was in fact not necessary.
- ii **Item 6: An audit of the office notice board to be undertaken for GDPR compliance**  
The action has been completed and is covered in the Safeguarding Portfolio report. The notice board was confirmed as being GDPR compliant.
- iii **Item 6: The HT to liaise with Chair to exploit and maximise the use of LGB meetings**  
The Principal confirmed that the action is under consideration. Further discussion will be recorded in AOB.
- iv **Item 8: Teaching and Learning: KH to re-send DS report.**  
The report had been sent as requested. A copy will be resent to WS.
- v **Item 8: Update on school trip**  
The update is referenced in the portfolio reports.

Governors questioned how many trips there were across the year. The Principal confirmed that there was a log kept but he could not recall the exact number without checking. There has been a whole school community trip each term since the Principal joined the school and there are also curriculum related trips for Art, PE and Science.

Whilst the parents were happy with the number of day trips they would like to see a residential trip which their peers in mainstream have the opportunity to experience.

The Principal was pleased to confirm a potential provider for a residential trip had been identified in Guildford and plans were being made for a trip next year. Importantly, having regard to the inclusive ethos of the school, the venue was close enough for everyone to fully participate in the daily activities but those who would struggle to stay overnight could go home. Potentially the trip (apart from travel costs) could be funded by bursaries. The school minibus could be used as transport for those not staying overnight.

To ensure the experience was a positive one there would have to be a dialogue with parents about whether their child would manage a stay

away from home or whether it would cause undue anxiety. It was also acknowledged that as there had not been a residential trip for a number of years some parents may also have reservations.

Another option being explored was Jamie's Farm which offers a therapy based programme for a week. However, the cost may be prohibitive and a week-long trip may be too ambitious at this point.

Governors were also briefed on the timetable of events for the last week of term:

- Monday: Sports days at Carew (to include athletics and archery)
- Tuesday: Day trip to Littlehampton (which having regard to feedback from last year will include more time on the beach rather than set activities)
- Wednesday: Chessington World of Adventures (with three groups catering for those who do and do not like the rides and those who will want to see just the animals). The School is working with Chessington with regard to fast access passes and the arrangements.
- Thursday: Leavers assembly with prize giving and BBQ

Governors were cordially invited to attend any of the events and a formal invitation will follow.

Governors noted there had been a debate as to whether two trips out on consecutive days might be too much for the children. On balance it was agreed it would probably be better to spread them out but there had been logistical issues which it was anticipated could be avoided next year.

vi **Item 9: Training opportunities to be identified/planned on Governors being 'Ofsted ready'**

Governors agreed to the suggestion made by the Principal to ask David Scott to deliver a training session on the 24<sup>th</sup> June at 9am when the next Health Check visit takes place.

The Chair also agreed to look into procuring a training session on the new EIF (Education Inspection Framework) for early in the new term.

Governors noted that the names of and remit of the portfolios will need revision in the light of the new framework.

**ACTION POINTS:** JR to arrange Ofsted training for Governors with David Scott and the Chair to procure trust training on the EIF for the autumn term **JR**

**ACTION POINT:** Chair to raise the question of renaming/allocating portfolio roles with the Trust. **RV**

## 7. A. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Governors confirmed they had been able to read the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors were taken through the report by the Principal. Points made in response to Governor's questions and arising from discussion included:

- Governors were pleased to see their feedback from the last meeting had been taken on board and very much appreciated the more detailed narrative in the report.
- The suggestion that having sections 1-3 after section 4 might be better was agreed.
- Page 1: The majority of referrals are from LB Sutton. The profile of students is becoming more complex. The LA is looking for clarity on the offer to meet the growing numbers of students with complex needs. Nowadays students with speech language and communication challenges may be expected to access, and be supported, in mainstream education.

Governors were advised that Croydon Council has appointed Orchard Hill College Academy Trust as the provider to run the new Addington Valley Academy which will open in 2020. The school will cater for 150 pupils aged from 2-19 with Autism Spectrum Disorder and learning difficulties. It may be that the LB Croydon will in time transfer some Link pupils to the new facility and the current level of commissions can not necessarily be relied upon. Transfers are more likely at the key stage transfer points. It is expected to reach capacity over 4 years.

- Page 2: Although Governors had asked for the statistics for attendance to be split to show the figures with and without persistent absentees that had proved more difficult than expected. There are three students with attendance below 60% which impacts significantly on the whole school average of 91.2%. Governors were assured that if challenged the narrative behind the persistent absences and interventions could be explained.

The child with attendance of 42.7% has issues which are out the control of the school. The child is still able to do their exams.

- The target in the SIP is 96% which is ambitious and exceeds national for special schools.
- The trend is overall positive.
- Page 3: Governors were grateful for the more detailed breakdown of staff absence showing both student facing and other staff. Governors

noted the number of absences had been falling and in response to challenge it was clarified that one lengthy absence had made significant impact on the data. The response to Governors' questions about the long term absences reassured them that they are being managed appropriately with HR support. For various reasons the data is likely to improve moving into the new term.

- Page 4: Governors noted the acknowledgement that the postcards for charity work was an area for improvement. It had been unfortunate that the Sutton Foodbank had not needed the support anticipated.
- Dashboard: The Principal confirmed that data in the report is correct. Why the Trust version of the dashboard was inaccurate was a subject of speculation. It could be down to when the report was generated.
- Page 7-10: Governors challenged the SLT to elaborate on the behaviour and incidents data with particular regard to Rowsell Class. Points of note included:

A range of interventions were put in place which included:

- communication with parents
- Appointing a new form tutor and additional SSA
- Personalised timetables
- Extra-curricular and training opportunities
- Targeted therapy
- Regular monitoring

Governors were pleased to see the positive impact of the interventions had been demonstrated by the dramatic reduction in the number of incidents (from 8 to 1). Importantly, the students themselves also seemed much happier and supportive of each other.

The issues affecting the children were very diverse and although one ethnic group was over represented ethnicity was not considered to be a factor in their behaviour or barriers to learning. The small numbers involved also makes the stats volatile.

- Page 11: The target setting and monitoring process is still work in progress given the relatively recent introduction of the Solar System and the limited data. The colour coding aspect works best where there is steady rate of progress but that is not necessarily the case with our students and a red rating may cause concern unnecessarily. Moving to a termly rather than half termly reporting structure may therefore be more useful. The experience in the primary school is that having 3 -4 year's data will significantly improves the accuracy of target setting.

The data is constantly monitored and published internally every two weeks.

Data needs to be purposeful

The data informs the decision making in school

Governors asked about the data for Johnson class. They were advised the curriculum for KS4 is under review with a view to making it more engaging and progressive rather than going back over the basics

- Page 12-14: The term 'life skills' in this context comes from the LA and covers PHSE, Careers and Citizenship rather than the 'life skills' normally referred to in a special needs setting

Governors noted that the underperformance in maths is covered in the Teaching and Learning Portfolio report

- Page 15: Governors offered their congratulations on the improvement in the quality of teaching. They noted the stark difference between the autumn term and now. They gave particular credit to the work and tenacity of Hannah Wallwork

In response to a question it was confirmed that David Scott is involved in the process and the results are externally moderated. Both WS and AF have also made monitoring visits

- Page 16: The data shows the commitment to a rigorous programme of the monitoring
- Page 17-18: The evidence shows the vast majority of teaching is solidly Good with some Outstanding. The small pockets of yellow (RI) have been challenged and practitioners supported

In response to Governor questions it was confirmed that although the number of staff leaving appeared high they were due to variety of reasons and were not linked to low morale or concerns about the workplace

Governors noted the decision not to replace the French teacher. Not having modern language lessons frees up time which can be used more effectively on literacy support to improve outcomes

Governors were assured that the maths teacher has been preparing for a hand over. If the vacancy is filled in time (budget permitting) it is proposed to have the new recruit start before the end of term to ease the transition.

- Page 19: To date there have only been 14 replies to the parent survey. There had been a 60% response rate last year so it was hoped the number of responses will rise. Parent's evening next week will be an

opportunity to chase them up. Governors asked about putting the survey on line but it was noted not all parents have access to the internet and having two systems in place for a relatively small number would be administratively burdensome.

The student survey will be completed with the support of the Speech and Language Therapists.

Two parents have completed the DFE Parent View survey. Parents are being encouraged to take the survey which Ofsted gives priority to.

- Page 20-22: Governors would welcome a presentation on the implementation and impact of the initiative developed following the audit and training by the Autism Education Trust
- The inset day in June will be used for level 1-2 autism training to develop staff skills and understanding.

Governors thanked the Principal and the team for the report.

**B. DASHBOARD**

Covered by the Principal's report.

- C.** Action from last meeting: Update on Student Safeguarding Ambassador to be an agenda item for the next meeting.  
Covered by the portfolio report.

**8. GOVERNOR VISITS**

The Chair thanked Governors for visiting the school and preparing their comprehensive reports.

Governors confirmed they had received the reports in advance of the meeting and they were taken as read. Questions and comments arising from the reports are noted below.

**ACTION POINT:** Portfolio roles and allocation to be aligned to the new EIF RV

**A. PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR REPORTS**

To receive the following portfolio reports:

**i Ethos Vision and Strategy**

It was suggested that Jennifer might like to shadow Rama on the next visit.

**ACTION POINT:** A briefing on the disaster recovery plan is to be an agenda item for the next meeting. agenda

**ii. Teaching and Learning**

In response to a question it was confirmed that the Commander Joe programme is based on a Department for Education programme where

veterans devise a bespoke research and evidence based strategy to develop character, resilience and make good, positive choices. They will also deliver sessions on staff mental health and wellbeing. The programme will help introduce more differentiation and additional pathways for students.

Governors expressed concerns that the curriculum was being narrowed now there are no French or Music teachers. They were reassured that there is a wide range of creative and expressive opportunities and experiences still on offer including:

- Drama
- Film making
- Textiles
- Drumming
- Crystal Palace football
- Singing performances (and opportunities to play instruments)

iii. **Health & Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding**

Taken as read

iv. **Finance and Resources**

Taken as read

v. **HR and Organisational Development**

Taken as read

vi **Business Development and Marketing.**

In response to a question it was confirmed the twitter issues were being resolved.

**B. OTHER VISIT REPORTS**

Governors to provide verbal or written updates of other visits undertaken.

Governors noted the Pupil Assessment Report and in particular how the attendance of a governor at the open day had been a good opportunity to give some new parents the reassurance they needed.

**C. Action from the last meeting:** Update on accommodating visitors awaiting collection.

The action is covered by the Safeguarding Portfolio report.

**9. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

As noted above training in being Ofsted Ready and the EIF 2019 is being arranged. There were no other training needs identified.

**10. FINANCE AND FUNDING**



**A. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS** (for information)

Governors were directed to the management accounts by the Trust Management Accountant.

In taking Governors through the account particular attention was drawn to:

- The deficit is likely to be slightly less than forecast
- The reserve of £150k in respect of the claim by the ESFA for a refund (as the funding on conversion had been based on pupil numbers of 50 whereas the actual number had been 30).
- Overall there are no concerns
- There are 80 days of reserves which against a target of 90 is adequate

**B BUDGET YEAR-END** (for information)

Points arising from the presentation and in response to questions included:

- ESFA funding for next year is for 46 (up from 36)
- The outcome is expected to be a break even budget which is the OHCAT target
- The increase in student numbers is a testament to the team and shows the confidence the LA has in the school
- The maximum number the school can accommodate is 60 (6 x10)
- The breakeven point is 50 students.

**C. CONTRACTS/SLA IN EXCESS OF SET LIMIT** (for approval)

None

**11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT**

Governors noted a report on the following will be delivered at the next meeting:

- a Equality Statement;
- b General / Specific Duties;
- c Performance against Equality Objectives and Outcomes 2018-19;
- d Equality and Objectives and Outcomes 2019-20.

**ACTION POINT:** The Equality and Diversity Report will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

**agenda**

**12. POLICES AND PROCEDURES**

**A.** Governors noted the following Family policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board on 25 March 2019 which are available on the Governors' Portal.

- Attendance Policy (OHC)
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Exclusions Policy (Academies)
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Traffic Management Policy

Governors noted the policies were trust wide except the Traffic Management Policy

- B** To receive and review any local policies or procedures, as follows:  
None

### **13 OHC&AT GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION**

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

- A.** Schedule of Responsibility  
The schedule has been amended to reflect the arrangements for consideration of permanent exclusions and now reads:

*"[LGB] appoints a panel of at least three members, one of whom must be the Executive Head, Quality and Learning Support (or his or her nominee) to consider any permanent exclusions and other certain fixed-term exclusions as set out in the DfE Exclusions Guidance 2017."*

**B. Portfolio Guidance**

The revised and updated portfolio guidance, to take effect from September 2019.

### **14 CONSULTATION ON REVISED OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK**

Governors have noted the outcome of the consultation that closed on 5 April 2019.

### **15 GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK**

Governors have noted that the DfE Handbook was updated in March 2019. It is available [online](#) and on the Governors' Portal. A summary of the changes from the previous version has also been uploaded to the Portal.

### **16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

### **17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of the LGB meeting dates for 2019-20 and the meeting of the Pay Committee in the autumn term 2019 will be agreed by email

### **18 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Norman MacDonald and Hannah Wallwork were excused from the meeting at 7.50pm.

Confidential items relating to strategy and staffing were declared confidential and recorded in confidential minutes.  
The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed..... 2019  
Chair of the Local Governing Body