

Minutes

THE LINK SECONDARY LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (LGB) MEETING ON TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2020 AT 6PM

Attendees:	Rama Venchard	Chair
	Annabel Faulkner	Vice-Chair
	Jane Gibbs	Governor
	Karen Hayward (KH)	Staff Governor
	John Reilly (JR)	Principal, Ex-officio
	Sameera Saleem (SS)	Parent Governor
	Will Scott	Governor
	Jenny Sutcliffe (JS)	Governor
	Sandy Turner (ST)	Governor

Also present:	Sarah Brooks-Watson (SBW)	Management Accountant
	Amanda Griffiths (AG)	Deputy Headteacher
	Hannah Wallwork (HW)	Deputy Headteacher
	Lisa Jewell	Clerk

Item	Action
1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE No apologies were received.	
2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS RV welcomed all to the meeting.	
3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RV declared an interest as a project manager for OHCAT and Trustee of Orchard Hill College.	
4 CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Governors noted that the OHCAT Board had appointed Rama Venchard and Annabel Faulkner as Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB for 2019-20 ii Governors noted the resignation of Maryanne Vernede as a Parent Governor with effect from 3 December 2019. The LGB noted that she had not yet been replaced and that there would be a discussion under item 13 regarding the future of the LGB iii Governors noted the outcome of the skills audit of the LGB carried out this academic year, and that no gaps have been identified 	
5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 were agreed as an	

accurate record.

6 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

- i. The Disaster Plan had been circulated to all Governors.
- ii. JR had noted the recommendations for future staff surveys.
- iii. RV reported that he had raised the issues of staff progression with John Prior, CEO.
- iv. Review of Admission Policy: JR confirmed that this had been done for 2020/21.
- v. 3rd pathway at key stage 3: HW reported back to the meeting that a small nurture group at key stage 3 was being considered but that this would require a new teacher, and so depended on budget. JR had discussed with SBW and John Prior. This group would also need more support so that children could move onto Key Stage 4. However, children in this group would not necessarily stay in it for the whole of key stage 3. Governors moved onto discussing the problems of staff recruitment and noted that recruiting specialist staff at secondary level was difficult. This was discussed further under the Principal's Report.
- vi. Additional data on progress broken down by class and subject: JR said he was working on this and would bring it to the Summer meeting. JR
- vii. Cultural Capital: Governors were given a synopsis of the Cultural Capital knowledge taught in the school as part of the curriculum.
- viii. RSE Curriculum: JR confirmed that OHCAT has set up an RSE forum to look at delivery of this from September 2020. There will be a Parents' information evening in the Summer term.
- ix. CIF Bid: Governors asked about the progress of the CIF bid for funding to improve the security of the site and if a bid for improvements to the playground could also be submitted. They noted that the DfE only accepted one CIF bid at a time. The original bid for Security had been submitted but nothing yet had been heard. JR thought that revenue funds could not be used for any of this work. Governors asked if there were Trust funds that could be used for any of this work. KH said she would ask Lynn Barratt and let RV know. KH
- x. KH has circulated the dates of events at the school. JR will circulate the summer term dates. JR

7 FINANCE AND FUNDING

Management Accounts January 2020

SBW presented the Management Accounts to the Board and noted that although there was a slight deficit in these January figures, the figures for February will show an improvement and that she is confident that the accounts will break even by the end of the year. She asked the Board to note that as it is a small school a little change can make a big difference. She continued by stating that staffing was the biggest expense and had been static recently.

JR commented that with the support of OHCAT and the School the deficit is being reduced and that the increase in student numbers will make a significant impact on improving the finances.

The Board discussed the need for work on the external play areas and asked if this could be paid for out of reserves.

Action: RV asked SBW to consider and report back regarding the criteria and process for using reserves for such work

SBW

Action: SBW to report back to Board at next meeting regarding next year's budget.

SBW

The report was received, and the Chair thanked the team for their work

8A PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

JR welcomed questions and comments about his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and matters discussed are detailed below.

Student Information Overview

JR said he was confident that there would be a minimum of 59 on the roll next year but expected 62 or 63. The PAN has been discussed with Sutton. The DfE registration is for a maximum of 66. JR confirmed that there was an error on page 2 of his report, there had been one exclusion, fixed term for one day. Governors noted that attendance had improved and was above average for a special school. A small number of students with known medical conditions were responsible for the majority of the absences.

JR reported that staffing had been steady recently, and that one member of staff had been signed off resulting in the majority of staff absence. RV asked if there were Trust benchmarking figures for staff absence, KH undertook to ask Charlotte Evans

KH

Safeguarding

AG provided further information on the online safeguarding reporting package, saying that this was working well and that all staff can log on to record any concerns.

SS said that students love receiving postcards but suggested that they be addressed to the child. JR said he would do this.

JR

Governors noted the data for behaviour incidents detailed in the report. JR explained that some of the unexpected incidents were related to the older students attending NESOT college, where the busy canteen environment had resulted in high levels of anxiety for some. Attendance at NESOT was important for students as they prepared for their next stage and their passage to independence. JR said that there was a funding request for more staff to support these important visits.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Governors noted the detail on teaching evaluation in the report, and were pleased to note the improvements, and the outstanding ratings received by staff.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Governors noted this section of the report and the positive health check visit by David Scott. JR explained to Governors the challenge in recruiting subject specialist staff to the Secondary setting, as these staff often wanted to be teaching to A level standard, but the structure in the Link was very different to a mainstream school. In addition, recruitment of Maths teachers was a challenge for all schools. He continued that a special school was not an ideal location for a secondary NQT. AF suggested that a Primary Maths specialist might be a better solution. RV said he would raise the issue of recruitment at Trust Level.

RV

Governors noted the concerns regarding the recruitment of therapists, and that this was a difficult situation at the moment as two members of staff were on Maternity Leave. Efforts have been made to cover their absence, but it has been very difficult, although parents have been very understanding. The need for therapists is linked to meeting the requirements of each EHCP.

JS asked about how the school was promoting handwashing in the current Covid-19 situation. JR explained that a letter had been sent home, there were hand sanitisers in each classroom and children were encouraged to wash their hands more often. However, the school had instilled a culture of hand shaking, as the children are typically very sensory and tactile, and at this stage he did not wish to stop this.

8B DASHBOARD

Received.

9 GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

9A PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Governors received the portfolio reports and matters discussed are detailed below.

Ethos, Vision and Strategy

JS presented her report, Governors noted that areas of the report had already been discussed in the meeting. The Board were pleased to note that the School Counsellor was arranging wellbeing initiatives, and that the School Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plan had been circulated.

Teaching and Learning

Governors noted the report

Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding

Governors noted the report, and that the Contextual Safeguarding policy is now complete.

Finance and Resources

Governors noted the report and that a key factor was how the finances are able to cover unforeseen circumstances for example staff turnover and additional staffing to support a child in crisis

HR and Organisational Development

Governors noted the report and that the staffing structures for next year are a key issue.

Business Development and Marketing

SS presented her report and highlighted her concern about lack of science labs, and asked if another school's lab could be used? JR explained that this would cause timetabling and travel difficulties.

Governors discussed the possibility of the students attending residential trips, but JR explained that he wanted the school to be wholly inclusive and to run trips that did not require any financial contribution from parents. The School ran many day trips, but it was not possible for the school to fund residential trips, experience suggested that it was not feasible to ask parents to pay towards trips, and that 49% of the students were Pupil Premium. However, some Governors felt that one residential trip, maybe in year 9, would be so valuable for the students that SBW was asked to look at the costs of running such a residential trip.

SBW

9B OTHER VISIT REPORTS

There were no further reports. The Chair emphasised how important it was for staff to see Governors in school. HW said that staff do feel supported. AF said that she did meet staff but that she would also like to meet the children. RV suggested that Governors could do this as part of their visits. KH suggested that events in the school were detailed in the newsletter and that Governors could let her know and attend these events.

9C GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Governors requested further training on using GovernorHub.

10 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A Governors noted the policies and procedures that had been approved by the Board at their meeting in December 2019.

B Governors approved the Admissions Procedure.

11 OHC&AT GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION

Governors noted the updates to the OHCAT Scheme of Delegation and Schedule of Responsibilities.

12 GOVERNORHUB

Governors noted that all previous meeting papers are available to view on GovernorHub. Governors commented that they were having issues using GovernorHub, it was freezing and the log-in did not always work. RV said he would discuss this with the Trust's Governance Manager.

RV

13 PROGRESS FROM JOINT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS' WORKING PARTY

Governors received a verbal update on the next steps to creating a joint primary and secondary Link School.

JR explained that since the primary school's OFSTED inspection, plans had moved on. All parents had been written to, to explain the changes. JR continued that he would be leaving at the end of the school year, currently he was working two days a week setting up the new school, leaving AG and HW holding the fort. After Easter he would still be Principal of the Link Secondary school but would be supporting ST as she transferred to her new role as Principal of the joint school. JR noted his commitment to ensuring this transition was seamless and advised that the children do know that he is leaving but do not yet know about ST taking over. This will be explained to them and they will be given reassurance.

The new School is in Croydon and will be called the Addington Valley Academy (AVA).

ST continued that she was looking forward to getting up to speed with the secondary school and that she didn't foresee any problems. All staff across both schools now know what is happening and there is capacity at the primary school for ST to start the transition work at the secondary school.

JR explained that if Ofsted were to inspect the secondary school before the end of the school year then he would lead on this, and that he would issue the Principal's report to Governors at the summer meeting. ST can start to consider issues such as staffing, budget, and admissions and they will work together to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible.

ST outlined the three stages in the process:

- i. Primary and Secondary Alignment
- ii. Working Towards Joining
- iii. Looking forward to new purpose built/more suitable site

JR and ST continued by talking about their vision for the Local Governing Body (LGB) of the joint school. As part of the alignment stage they would form one governing body with the following proposed structure:

- Two Governors for Teaching and Learning covering all levels
- Two Governors for Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Two Parent Governors – one primary and one secondary
- Two Staff Governors – one primary and one secondary

ST said that she knew that a number of the current governors were coming to the end of their term, but that she did not want any of them to go, and she asked all the Governors to think if they would like to remain on the Link

Governing Body, and to discuss with her if they had any questions.

Governors were given a form to complete and return to KH if they were interested in continuing, and to list in order of preference the portfolio roles they were interested in.

ALL

JR then explained that there would be opportunities on the new school's Local Governing Body, and he would be very happy for Governors to join him. He asked Governors to email him if they were interested in this.

ALL

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS
There was no other business.

15 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
16 June 2020.

16 CONFIDENTIALITY
No items were deemed confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed..... Date:

Chair of the Local Governing Body