

**MINUTES
THE LINK SECONDARY SCHOOL MEETING ON
16th JUNE 2020 AT 6PM VIA ZOOM**

Attendees:

Rama Venchard	OHC Trustee/ Chair
Annabel Faulkner (AF)	Governor/Vice Chair
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
Jennifer Sutcliffe	Governor

Also present:

Sarah Farncombe	Clerk
Sarah Brooks-Watson (SBW)	OHCAT Management Accountant
Hannah Wallwork	Deputy Head
Amanda Griffiths (AG)	Deputy Head/observer

Absent: Annabel Faulkner Governor

1.	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	
	The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome and thanks for attending.	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Apologies for absence were received from AF.	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	RV declared an interest as a project manager for OHCAT and Trustee of Orchard Hill College.	
4.	CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS	
	No changes to report.	
5.	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate record and a copy will be signed by the Chair for filing.	
6.	MATTERS NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA	
	<p>i Item 6: Matters arising - Additional data on progress to be presented to the Summer meeting</p> <p>The Principal reported that due to the Covid-19 lock down cutting across the point when the data was due to be entered the decision was taken to delay the process. The data is now</p>	

		being entered alongside the report writing process. The data will be circulated when the process is completed. ACTION POINT: JR to circulate the spring data	JR
	ii	Item 6: CIF Bid: Update and confirmation as to whether Trust funds that could be used Governors were advised that the CIF bid had been unsuccessful. The funding will therefore need to come from other sources. It has been included in the budget for next year and a contribution will come from reserves.	
		Item 6: JR will circulate the summer term dates. The dates have been superseded in the light of Covid-19.	
	iii	Item 7: RV asked SBW to consider and report back regarding the criteria and process for using reserves for external play areas It was confirmed that the reserves can be used for the external play areas.	
	iv	Item 7: SBW to report back to Board at next meeting regarding next year's budget See agenda item 8	
	v	Item 8: RV asked if there were Trust benchmarking figures for staff absence, KH undertook to ask Charlotte Evans Governors were advised that due to the unique cohort and structure of each of the trust schools, other than for staff absence, there are no other schools to benchmark against. In another school the Chair has looked at the last three years of data and taken an average as the starting point for benchmarking.	
	vi	Item 8: Post cards to be addressed to the child Governors were advised that it had become apparent that due to the way letters sent home are automatically generated (and fields auto populated) there are practical hurdles to addressing postcards direct to the children which would be very time consuming to overcome. Governors agreed that in the circumstances matters should be left as they are.	

	vii	<p>Item 8: Effectiveness of Leadership and Management Governors: RV update at Trust Level discussion on issue of recruitment</p> <p>RV confirmed that he had made enquiries and understood that the board will be making a statement in due course.</p>	
	viii	<p>Item 9 Business Development and Marketing: Update on costs of running such a residential trip.</p> <p>ST confirmed that the costs are in the budget and that the trip is one of the targets in the equality agenda.</p> <p>ACTION POINT: SBW to be included in the circulation of the minutes.</p>	SBW
	ix	<p>Item 12: Governor Hub: RV to report on discussion with the Trust's Governance Manager about user issues.</p> <p>ACTION POINT: SS and AF to consult Susanne Wicks if they continue to have problems accessing Governor Hub</p>	SS/AF
	x	<p>Item 13: Progress from Joint Primary and Secondary Schools' working party: Joint Governing Body update</p> <p>Covered in the agenda</p>	
7.	A.	PRINCIPAL'S REPORT	
		<p>Governors were talked through and discussed the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>AG (Deputy Head) also talked governors through the Covid 19 annex to the Safeguarding offer which had also been circulated in advance.</p> <p>In response to Governor questions it was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a full role of 62 students the largest class size would be 10. Most are 7-10 with the smaller classes which have the children with the most needs. • Feedback from the parent governor was that the level of support and phone calls had been very helpful and much appreciated • The senior leadership team have adapted well to new ways of working. The virtual interviews for staff recruitment have worked well and the students participation had been a positive experience • There have been no new formal safeguarding referrals since the lockdown. There has been contact with those 	

	<p>already supported by social services. Home visits have been made and Early Help has been given to some vulnerable families. Support in relation to issues with housing and accessing food banks has also been given. Every child has been RAG rated and those ragged Red are monitored by AG and HW. Those ragged green are monitored by their form tutor who reports weekly to AG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal congratulated AG for drawing up the guidance for running Zoom sessions on line which have been circulated across the Trust as best practice. • The Zoom lessons are working well and are well received. All students have access to lessons in all subjects daily. They are expected to access at least one session but can join more. • 4 Yr 11 students are expected to be awarded their GCSE's • There have been no internal applications for the staff vacancies. Recruitment of an English Teacher role is proving difficult and the vacancy may have to be covered by supply initially. Shortlisting for the SSA roles is tomorrow. The majority of roles should be in place by the end of term • There are no cross school roles at the moment (except for ST) but that will come with phase 3 of the alignment process • At the moment the strategy is to plan for a full return in September but much will be dependent on the constantly changing Government advice • Thanks were expressed by Governors to the whole team for keeping the online resources going • The priority has been to address levels of anxiety and making sure the students do not lose their feeling of connection with the school community. Sociability and communication have been to the fore. When the school reopens in September the school will be better placed to identify curriculum gaps and what support is needed. Anxiety and stress levels will have to be addressed. If the students are calm and stable they will be able to learn. • Although the situation has been very difficult and it was 'sink or swim', the school has definitely swum and this is partly due to the resilience of the staff, parents and youngsters. Good emotional health has been a particular success and stands the students in good stead • Far from falling behind some students are thriving with Zoom lessons and exceeding expectations. An example was given of one student overcoming one of their particular issues 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will in time be an event to mark the end of 6th form and presentation of certificates • Exercise is being encouraged. PE activities have been sent out with the work packs <p>Governors have a good level of confidence that no student has slipped under the radar (as may be the case in other mainstream schools) which is testament to the hard work of staff. Governors offered their thanks in particular for the good level of communication between families and the governing body when the lock down began.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for a comprehensive report and Staff were congratulated and thanked for all their hard work in challenging times.</p>	
8.	FINANCE AND FUNDING	
A.	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (for information) SBW ran through the accounts for April and confirmed that the accounts for May are now also finished. There were no concerns to report. The increase in pupil numbers has impacted positively and a surplus of £47k for the year is projected.</p> <p>SBW advised that since joining the team she has gained an understanding of the school. She and the Principal have a good working relationship and are able to identify where funds would be best targeted.</p> <p>Governors offered their congratulations on achieving a surplus noting that the School had been facing a £350k deficit just a couple of years ago.</p> <p>The GB is mindful that as the finances were brought under control some expenditure had been put on hold. It is now important to invest in maintenance and upkeep to avoid falling too far behind.</p>	
B	<p>BUDGET 2020-21 (for information) The draft budget was circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. Points of note drawn to their attention by SBW included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget is very healthy thanks to the good pupil numbers • The Board will need to approve the budget • There may be some minor tweaks before being presented for approval to take account of the changes to TA appointments 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be capacity to increase spending this year for the first time in a while • Capital Committed Expenditure includes the playground (£80k) and a break out room (£20k) which will be required having regard to the needs of the expected intake from the primary school • The cost of the Management Accountant has now been brought back into core services • A contingency provision has been made for agency cover 	
	C. CONTRACTS/SLA IN EXCESS OF SET LIMIT (for approval)	
	None.	
9.	SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING OFFER	
	The Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy circulated in advance of the meeting was noted and was also covered in agenda item 7.	
10.	RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION	
	The requirement to teach Relationships and Sex Education from September 2020 has been put back until summer 2021 by the DFE. The school has already started the process of revising the curriculum and it will form part of the SDP for next year. The Equality Objectives include a consultation with parents bearing in mind the diversity of the school community and the need to be sensitive to cultural sensitivities.	
11.	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT	
	<p>ST talked Governors through the following which were circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity Procedure • The Evaluation of the Equality Objectives for 2018-2020 • The SENCO Development Plan 2020-2021 <p>In response to Governor questions it was noted that Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is a condition which is part of the autism spectrum. It is characterised by an overwhelming need to avoid or resist demands. The anxiety the condition causes can result in a variety of behaviours from mild attempts to divert attention away from tasks to extreme aggression. The condition can be challenging but the children can do well if the condition is understood and adaptations and strategies are put in place.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual review of the equalities agenda is a good opportunity to look at practice and for reflection 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality is central to the way the school thinks and the school is committed to making sure there is no tokenism in its approach The objectives are set with the context of the school at its heart 	
12.	GOVERNOR VISITS	
	None this term due to Covid 19.	
12A.	PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR REPORTS	
	No visits had been carried out this term due to Covid 19.	
12B.	OTHER VISIT REPORTS	
	No reports were submitted.	
13.	GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	
	Governors confirmed the skills audit had been completed. Copies are retained in the school office.	
14.	POLICES AND PROCEDURES	
A.	Governors noted the following policies and procedures were approved via authority delegated to the Chairs of the OHC&AT Board on 5 April 2020 and are available to view Governor Hub.	
B	To receive and review any local policies or procedures, as follows:	
	There were no local policies or procedures to review.	
15.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>Governors were thanked for filing in their audits.</p> <p>Reflecting on the new GB structure, it was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governors have accepted their new roles The new GB benefits from a good deal of experience A priority in the new term will be to invite Governors into both schools for a tour WS has accepted an offer to join the GB of Addington Valley <p>Governors wished to record their thanks to AF for her service and support on the GB over many years. They were sorry she was not at the meeting to be thanked personally.</p> <p>RV was thanked for acting as the temporary Chair of the Governors. RV thanked the GB for their support and wished them well in the next phase of the school journey.</p>	

	<p>The Chair offered personal thanks to JR for having turned the school around in the last 2.5 years. It was agreed it was a shame that Ofsted would not be visiting before he moves on to the new school to recognise the achievements.</p> <p>JR thanked the GB for their support, commenting that the LGB had always held the best interests of the child at heart. They had worked well together to move the school forward and whilst not always in total agreement they could all look back and be proud of what has been achieved. He said it had been a privilege and honour and wished everyone all the best.</p> <p>In response to a Governor's observations it was confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IT infrastructure is being replaced over the summer holiday • There are also plans to introduce a horticulture element into the 6th form offering • A gardening club would be considered 	
16.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
	<p>The LGB approved the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 18th November 2020 at 6pm (at the Primary School) • Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 6pm (at the Secondary School) • Wednesday 23rd June 2021 at 6pm (at the Primary School) <p>The date and venue for the Pay Committee will be agreed outside the meeting with the Chair of the new GB, the Principal and the Finance Portfolio holder.</p>	
17.	CONFIDENTIALITY	
	There were no items declared confidential.	
	Closed at 7.40 pm	

Signed.....Date.....

Chair of the LGB