



Excalibur FGB Pt 1 Minutes 27/06/2022

► The School ► Monday, June 27, 2022 ► 17:30 ► Chair: Jo Bain ► Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending: >Jo Bain, Juliet Jones, Kate Jepson, Gail Whittingham, Philip Yeomans, Rachel Hackney, Gill Burgess, Simon Cotterill, Anna McArdle

Governors Apologies: >Mike Cross, Michelle Goodrich,

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth, Yvonne Hilditch,

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ► Staff Presentation

Design and Technology (D&T)

Rachel Hilditch circulated a document which included an overview of the Intent, Implementation and Impact of D&T at Excalibur School and reported that prior to September 2021 most projects undertaken for D&T were classed as art projects and lacked sufficient cover of objectives in some year groups. Not every class was completing three topics through the year, art was favoured, and design and making was not always taking place. Progression was not clear, and the subject and the evidence booklets used were not popular with the pupils. New whole class books were devised, and the new curriculum was designed based on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) undertaken with Black Firs School, at which details of the basic progression of skills were shared. From this was designed an overview with a tighter progression of lessons. All pupils now had experience of food technology with the use of utensils, which was greatly enjoyed. It was now possible for each strand to be followed through from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 6.

MINUTE

A whole staff meeting had been held and details of the programme had been shared. Lesson plans were prepared for teachers and distributed to staff. Each project lasted for one week during which pupils were off timetable to complete it. Monitoring had included Pupil Voice, book scrutiny and cross-referencing the progression map. Further work was being undertaken to improve the pupils' clarity of why they undertook the projects and to ensure they had a choice in their design and resources. Pupil feedback had been collected and was shared with the meeting.

A Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) week was being planned to reach the school aim of being a 'school of STEM'.

JJ confirmed there was now a more rigorous approach to D&T with the three projects which enabled pupils' various skills to be developed.

RHi left at the meeting at 17.41 and SC joined at 17.44.

Art

An approach similar to that in DT was being taken in Art, and a presentation would be uploaded to TTG for governors.

CHALLENGE

Q: As this is the first year, what has gone well and what would be improved?

A: Having a week to focus on D&T was successful. Books will be shared in a staff meeting, and the expectations of books will be made clear.

Agenda Item 2 ► Welcome, Apologies and AOB

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.33.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTE

Apologies received from Mike Cross were accepted.

No additional items of Part One business were requested.

Pupil books were available for governor scrutiny prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item 3 ► Compliance matters

Conflicts of interest

There were no potential pecuniary interests or conflicts of interest between an individual and the governing board as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting.

Membership

Gail Whittingham's term of office as Parent Governor was due to expire on 12th July.

MINUTE

The LGB agreed to appoint Gail Whittingham as a Co-opted Governor with effect from 27th June 2022. A parent governor would be sought by the end of the summer term.

The DBS clearance for Phil Yeomans had been received, and he was now a full member of the LGB.

Outstanding Trust Governor Compliance

All governor records on TTG were up-to-date.

Chair's Action

The Chair advised that no action had been taken on behalf of the LGB.

ACTION

To recruit a new Parent Governor as soon as possible. (YH)

DECISION

The LGB agreed to appoint Gail Whittingham as a Co-opted Governor with effect from 27th June 2022. A parent governor would be sought by the end of the summer term.

Agenda Item 4 ► Part One minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions

MINUTE

The Part One minutes of the Summer 1 LGB meeting were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

Governors undertook to update actions on the system and the following points were noted:

* JB would set a date for an informal discussion on the Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP).

- * Investigations into further funding for a vestibule and fencing through Alsager Town Council had resulted in no response to date. JB would speak to the Clerk of the Town Council.
- * It was agreed that the action to send out links to specific governor visit agendas to governors should be discontinued.
- * MC, SC and RH were reminded to complete the online safeguarding training on the national online safety system as soon as possible and record its completion on TTG.

Agenda Item 5 ► Finance

The budget report in the Chancery Trust format was attached to the meeting.

Section 1 showed a deficit of £10k currently with a forecast of £11k and a carry forward of £79,319 not including Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) applications. The school had been successful in its CIF bid which would require a contribution of £89k and information would be presented to Directors in July. A movement of reserves would take place and would not affect the £79k carry forward.

The concept of General Annual Grant (GAG) pooling was explained. The trust would operate with a top slice of 5.5% of GAG funding (excluding ring-fenced funding) as agreed by Heads in 2022/23. YH confirmed that the top slice contributed to the central costs of the trust. GAG pooling was an alternative approach, and although not currently best practice, was recommended by the DfE. Under this system, all funding would go into one account and would be divided between schools according to need. Currently there were no plans for the trust to move from the current top slice model. In 2021 60% of trusts operated a top slice in the 5%-6% range.

Section 2 contained a summary of the budget 2022/23, income, revenue and salary expenses together with Key Performance Indicators which allowed comparisons to Kreston. Capital income and expenditure was also included.

The additional amount included in agency staff reflected that staff absence insurance was no longer purchased. The amount for the teachers' pay award had not yet been agreed.

MINUTE

Section 3 showed the 3-year forecast from 2021/22 to the end of 2024-2025 and included also was detail on the spending of the 5.5% top slice in the central team.

Section 4 detailed the financial sensitivity and the risks of the budget

Governors were advised that GAG funding was used for the needs of the school, with schools having different priorities. The range of needs may well grow as diverse schools join the trust. It should not be an issue provided the trust stays true to its values and ethos. However, governors do have a right to appeal the level of 5.5%.

Governors expressed the view that it was important that the top slice was seen to benefit all schools in the trust.

Governors agreed that a top slice of 5.5% was acceptable but would require an explanation if it was to increase further.

Management accounts were also available on TTG.

Benchmarking Report Card

The report card had been read by governors prior to the meeting and the challenges below were made.

DECISION

Governors agreed that a top slice of 5.5% was acceptable but would require an explanation if it was to increase further.

CHALLENGE

Q: What are the implications of teaching staff salary cost increases on the budget? Will the school have to employ less expensive teachers?
A: The 3-year forecast includes no inflation in funding, but it is likely that GAG funding will increase each year. If salaries for teachers go up, additional funding is likely. However, there is always an element of risk, and budgets are built on a worst case scenario with teacher salaries and no GAG increase except for that relating to pupil numbers. Budgets cannot allow for increases in GAG funding.

Q: Would a 3-year history of actuals be possible?

A: This would be difficult as certain elements now included had been received separately in the past e.g. the pension and pay grant.

Q: Will the budget allow the addition of staff if required?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the reason for lower staff development costs in 2022/23?

A: Spending on CPD has been greater previously, and now the focus will be on embedding the training. Spending has now reverted to the previous level.

Q: Has the top slice been discussed with JJ?

A: Yes, heads know where money is spent. Ultimately the level is decided by the directors based on the input from the heads and staff.

Q: What is the position on paying for costs such as onboarding?

A: This is difficult as the circumstance has not arisen. However, the extra between 4.8% and 5.5% could have been spent on pupils in the school.

Q: How much does the increase from 4.8% to 5.5% represent in financial terms?

A: This approximately £3k to £4.5k.

Q: How large is the trust looking to be?

A: 10 schools. There are five schools currently, and conversations are being held with maintained schools who are being cautious. The onboarding process normally takes approximately 6 months.

Q: Is the increase to improve the central team capacity?

A: Yes. A Trust Capacity Funding (TCAF) bid for £99k was successful which enabled work to take place with the central team to ensure systems were in place for onboarding, for governance, equipment and structures, and paid for governance reviews.

Q: Is the central team in place suitable for a MAT of 9 or 10 schools?

A: Currently the team consists of four, the CEO, the CFO, the Governance and Compliance Lead and the SBM and Onboarding Lead. When further schools join then the structure could expand to include a Teaching & Learning (T&L) Lead, and also part-time Estates and part-time IT Leads for projects. The possibility of a central lead around the provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and / or Disability, including an Educational Psychologist, has been discussed.

Q: Are central costs projected to increase?

A: The only costs built in currently relate to the costs of the existing team.

Q: Why would a T&L Lead be necessary?

A: In order to ensure consistency and to fill a valuable role ensuring a clear vision and values and to monitor the curriculum in all schools.

Q: Why is the expenditure on support staff 2.5% higher than the baseline?

A: Support staff includes 4 Teaching Assistants (TAs) in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage (KS1), 2 in Key Stage 2 (KS2) and 6 welfare assistants working one-to-one with pupils. All are partially funded.

Q: Why is educational consultancy 2.3% higher than the baseline?

A: An SEND review was purchased together with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on literacy first, reading (for pleasure) and the input of subject expertise such as that from Stoke City and other external providers. All had a measurable impact on pupils and staff.

Q: Is funding for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) being received from Cheshire East?

A: Yes.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ Headteacher Report

The report had been available on TTG prior to the meeting and governors confirmed it had been read.

JJ confirmed that pupil mobility at the school was low, and places were swiftly filled as they became available. The low amount of long staff term sickness was positive.

Governors commented positively on the work on SEND, and comments had been referred back to the CE SEND and safeguarding team. Pupils and families at Early Help level were not receiving support through CE, and this was similar in all schools. Additionally schools were now asked to lead much more. Governors discussed whether this was the role of the school. Administratively it was time consuming and only a parent contacting their MP had had an effect. The Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) team had also been contacted. The meeting discussed the great difficulties in engaging external agencies within social care who were unable to meet their responsibilities due to lack of capacity. Excalibur School felt it must support the families. The Chair advised this would be raised with the CEO at the Chairs' meeting on 8th July.

MINUTE

There were currently 21 pupils on the SEND register, and next year the SENCO would have one day of designated SENCO time.

School was pleased with Read, Write, Inc. and designated 40 minutes time each day for all children. Fidelity to the programme had been maintained, there was consistency and rigour, all staff had been trained and significant impact had been seen.

JJ highlighted the new attendance section in the Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) attached to the meeting. Absence in 2020 autumn term and persistent absence was in the lowest 20% of schools.

The SEF summary had been revised down to 3 pages with most items rated 1 and 2, outstanding and good.

Governors discussed whether the accreditation was necessary but agreed it was always good to have.

ACTION

To make the CEO aware of the difficulty in engaging external social care agencies for pupils with needs. (Chair)

Q: Why is attendance so low?

A: School attendance is 94%, the desired attendance is 97%, and nationally attendance in primary schools on 26th May was 92.2%. Many holiday requests have been received and pupils have been absent for that reason.

Q: Why are pupils in Year 2 still requiring work on Read, write Inc.(RWI)?

A: These are pupils whose school life has been most impacted. Comprehension skills are adequate, but they require greater fluency with phonics. Further assessment is taking place and guiding reading and reading comprehension sessions also take place.

CHALLENGE

Q: Is the improvement in the performance in writing due to the work of Jonathan Riley (JR), external adviser?

A: This is difficult to assess this. JR's attention is needed in other areas, although impact was seen in the autumn term. In the next academic year JR would work with year groups on moderation.

Q: Why was the AcSEED award was not done this year?

A: It will be done next year after discussion of what it will bring since the award is time consuming.

Agenda Item 7 ▶ Health and Safety

Urgent H&S issues

There were no urgent H&S issues, and a site walk was planned for 8th July. The one major item identified on the H&S audit relating to tidiness of stock rooms would be re-visited. All documentation was in order.

MINUTE

A successful H&S review had taken place. YH reported that legionella testing was carried out monthly, and fire doors were checked every six months. Both would be verified by the H&S Governor on her visit.

Agenda Item 8 ▶ Safeguarding

SCiES Safeguarding Report and actions

The audit and the thorough and fair report had provided external validation. Action points had been identified, some of which were already known to the school. A CIF bid for the perimeter fencing would be submitted in November. All action points would be reviewed by the SCiES team in the autumn term.

The CIF bid for the replacement mobile building had been successful which would allow plans for a nursery to go ahead. It could be built on the footprint of the original mobile or elsewhere if necessary and could be finished for Easter 2023.

MINUTE

Governors felt that as no key questions were included in the document, which was personal to the school, it should not be shared with other trust schools.

Safeguarding issues

There were no safeguarding issues.

GW and JJ would meet again before the end of term.

The CMAT Review of SCR and HR at Excalibur had taken place in June, and everything was found to be in order and a judgement of 'impeccable' given. The structure of files would be shared with other schools.

Agenda Item 9 ▶ Chancery Trust Update

MINUTE

There were no updates from Chancery Trust and the next meeting of Chancery LGB Chairs was scheduled for Friday 8th July.

No changes to the Scheme of Delegation were requested.

Agenda Item 10 ▶ Governor Development and Training

There was no update from the Training liaison governor nor training reports from governors.

MINUTE

NGA Skills audit and 16 NGA questions for governors

Governors were reminded to submit their skills audit document by 1st July. The NGA 16 Questions for governors would be discussed in the informal governors meeting.

Agenda Item 11 ▶ Reports from Governors with Specific Responsibilities

MINUTE

Governors agreed to submit reports on their visits to the Clerk for uploading to TTG prior to meetings.

The post of Sustainability / Climate Change Governor would be discussed at the informal meeting of governors.

Agenda Item 12 ▶ Cheshire East Director of Children's Services Report Summer 2022

- MINUTE** * A self-evaluation discussion as detailed on Page 7 of the report would be covered at the informal meeting.
 * JJ advised that the PE and Sports Premium funding for 2022/23 was now confirmed, and spending for the current year was on the website.
 * The RE Lead was due to attend training on the New RE syllabus.

Agenda Item 13 ▶ **School Policies**

School Uniform Policy

- MINUTE** Governors commented positively on the references to cultural differences and applauded the school undertaking to deal with pupils' wearing of school uniform on an individual basis. Pupils would not be sent home for a lack of uniform.

Governors approved the School Uniform Policy.

- DECISION** Governors approved the School Uniform Policy.

Agenda Item 14 ▶ **Next meeting**

The following meeting dates for 2022/23 were confirmed:

- MINUTE** * 26th September 2022
 * 21st November 2022
 * 30th January 2023
 * 20th March 2023
 * 15th May 2023
 * 3rd July 2023

Agenda Item 15 ▶ **Any Other Business**

Pupil and Parent Surveys

Parent survey

The outcomes of the parent survey had been very positive. A small number of parents had raised a question around the amount of provision by Treetops. YH advised that holiday provision was dependent on the funding available, as the provision had to be self-sufficient. Originally parents had been consulted and the decision of 3 days was made based on the responses. The comments relating to lack of inclusivity referred to the choices for sporting clubs, as some year groups had not had the same opportunities due to the lack of sporting competitions.

- MINUTE** Pupil survey
 A significant incident in Year 6 had impacted the responses to the question about behaviour in the classroom. Both class teachers had had discussions and had shed light on the comments. Discussion ensued on the negative responses to the question around bullying in the school (8 in one year group and 4 in another Year 1), and the advisability of posing this question to younger pupils. It had been a trust decision for the survey to be completed by all pupils from Reception upwards. The format, based on Ofsted questions, had not been generated by the school, and its aim was consistency for outcomes to be reported to directors. Governors questioned the number of response options and whether the choice was excessive, and also debated the perception and concept of bullying in younger children. The number of pupils recommending the school was felt to be low due to a lack of understanding of the question.

Agenda Item 16 ▶ **Impact Statement**

Impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School

- MINUTE** * Governors challenged whether the school was getting value for money from the trust.
 * The level of attendance was questioned, and the governors were re-assured by the explanation provided by the Headteacher.
 * The discussion on the Read, Write Inc programme and its benefits assured governors that the teaching of phonics continued to be a major focus in the school and that pupils continued on the programme until staff were satisfied that their level of fluency was sufficiently high.
 * Through her detailed reports the SBM assured governors of the financial position of the school going forwards.
 * Governors learnt that the standard of H&S within the school was as high as possible, and that this would be validated by the H&S Link Governor in a forthcoming visit.
 * Governors discussed and agreed a way forward to provide adequately for the pupils with SEND despite the difficulties experienced with external agencies.

AM left and the Part One meeting closed at 19.11.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

Excalibur LGB Summer 2 2022 Pt1 *dated: 27/06/2022*

Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch