

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXCALIBUR SCHOOL LOCAL
GOVERNING BOARD HELD AT THE SCHOOL
ON 3RD JULY 2023 at 17.00.**

Governors attending	Governor Category	Designated Role	End of Term of Office
Gail Whittingham	Co-opted Governor	Chair	26 June 2026
Gill Burgess	Co-opted Governor	Vice Chair	1 December 2024
Juliet Jones	Headteacher	Headteacher	n/a
Tom Egley	Co-opted Governor		15 May 2027
Shaun Smith	Co-opted Governor		3 July 2027
Rachel Morrison	Parent Governor		20 March 2027
Anna McArdle	Staff Governor		24 September 2023
Sue Lambeth	Clerk		n/a
Yvonne Hilditch	SBM		n/a

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.05.

	Item
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business</p> <p>The Vice Chair welcomed governors to the meeting especially the new Shaun Smith, a parent with a financial background, who was the new Co-opted Governor. Introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies received from Liz Martindale, Simon Cotterill, Rachel Hackney and Philip Yeomans were accepted.</p> <p>Items of Part One business requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the Year 6 residential
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>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.</p>
3.	<p>Chair's Action</p> <p>The Vice Chair advised that the recent MAT governance day had been an informative, positive and useful day. Governors had learnt about the difference between a Local Governing Board (LGB) in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and one in a maintained school and discussion had taken place around questioning models and the importance of governors asking about impact and validation. The opportunity had arisen to discuss the written responses to the questions asked of the directors at the last meeting with the Chair of Directors.</p>

The Chair expressed the view that the written answers had been both inadequate and not of the level of response required; however, discussions had centred around the growth of the trust, the exponential level of investment required to move forwards and later economies of scale.

Q: Was there any surprise that the CEO would be working as Headteacher in a school 4 days per week?

A: CEO accountability is retained alongside the Headteacher (HT) role 4 days per week. As a development opportunity other Heads across the trust would take on additional leadership activities to work together to maintain standards.

JJ reported that schools would be re-imbursed for the time of the Heads when undertaking trust-wide work, that no specific amount of additional work had been proposed and that the arrangement would not impact negatively on the school. Governors felt that it appeared one school was gaining over and above the others in the trust. However, it was acknowledged that the CEO would step in for any school in the same situation, and this was not a long term solution.

Governors felt this needed to be watched closely and, if the Excalibur Head were to feel under pressure, the arrangement was not acceptable.

Question for directors: How is the funding working for the CEOs time at TB? Is it that TB is seeing a cost benefit in their budget because they are not funding a Headteacher for the rest of the year? or is it that they are paying for the cost of the CEO to assume the responsibility of the Head? In which case how is the allocation of budget from the top slice for the CEO being re-apportioned to the schools who have funded it this year and next year? And how will this be reflected in the top slice for next year?

Q: What is the position with the recruitment of a Head at TB?

A: The post was advertised earlier this year and the school was unable to recruit.

Q: How long will this arrangement continue?

A: Directors agreed that this would be for a year.

Q: Why was the arrangement for a year not a term?

A: This is not known.

Q: Are any schools in the trust failing?

A: There is one school designated to be requiring improvement.

Question for directors: Why has the trust taken the decision to shore up the Head role at TB when there is a failing school in the trust? And why is a co-operative of Heads from other schools being used to return the failure? What is the rationale for not addressing the failure first?

	<p>JJ assured governors that the school would not be compromised.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Membership The membership of the LGB was confirmed to be as shown on this document.</p> <p><u>New appointments</u> Shaun Smith joined the LGB with effect from 3rd July following his Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and governors welcomed him to the board as a Co-opted Governor.</p> <p><u>Resignations / Vacancies</u> The board noted the resignation of Jo Bain with effect from 28th June 2023. In her absence the LGB expressed their thanks for her commitment and loyalty to the school. Deletions from the DfE website, the school website, the Single Central Record and the GVO system had been made.</p> <p>ACTION: To write to JB to thank her for her commitment to the school. (GW)</p> <p>Jonathon Riley had been invited to join the LGB and an answer was awaited.</p> <p>There were no other governor terms of office due for renewal.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Staff Reports / Presentations <u>Geography at Excalibur</u> Heather Taylor shared the geography curriculum overview including the new intent statement and pointed out the starting point for the new curriculum in September 2022 when Geography had had a lesser profile than history, and its assessment had not been sufficiently rigorous or consistent. Staff confidence had been lacking in the area of fieldwork, and the previous topic-based curriculum had not demonstrated progression in the subject.</p> <p>The actions taken to address these points included the discrete teaching of history and geography in order to develop geographers and to demonstrate clear progression in pupil books. The same subject was now taught across the school at the same time, considerable training had taken place and the Kapow scheme of work had been introduced. Assessments now included a choice of composite tasks or quizzes, with some tasks completed independently and some after discussion between pupils. Fieldwork sessions were included in each topic and further sessions were to be introduced. Pupil confidence with terminology had been discussed in staff meetings and geography displays would be working walls added to throughout the year. Knowledge organisers were in place.</p> <p>Q: How does teaching discretely match cross curricular teaching? A: The focus now is on progression rather than working in a cross curricular style. Books previously did not evidence progression. Discrete teaching allows more in depth work in the subject.</p> <p>Q: What is the approach towards pupil stereotypical views of countries?</p>

A: Seeing the whole picture is work in progress. There is a global lead in school to dispel stereotypes.

Progression across year groups from Year 1 immediate locality to Year 6 solutions to environmental / population issues was shared.

Q: Does the curriculum lead into work at high school?

A: Yes, it is more mature relevant and progressive. For each thread in every subject area school has mapped out a similar journey. Progression is visible across the year groups over the journey within school.

Shared fieldwork and data collection opportunities were in place for each year group moving from the school grounds to the local area including Delamere / seaside.

Monitoring had taken place through pupil voice, book scrutiny and progression map cross-referencing. Pupils were aware of the impact of what they were learning and were showing good recall and geographical terminology. Book scrutiny had shown that most of the knowledge had been covered, and presentation of work and timely marking of work were to be a focus going forwards. Quotations from pupil voice from Years 2,3 and 4 were shared.

The next steps were to ensure that the knowledge learnt sections reflected the knowledge organisers and that the expectations of books and working walls were clear. The aim was to introduce orienteering clubs, to continue monitoring and to work with Alsager High school.

Governors thanked Heather who left the meeting at 17.28.

6. Headteacher Report – Part One

The Head gave a verbal update.

Data headlines

EYFS

77% of pupils achieved Good Level of Development (GLD) compared to 80% in the previous year and 77% in the year before that. Of the seven pupils who did not achieve, three had Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) needs, one of which had an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and three did not achieve in the area of writing and one in maths.

Phonics results were a great success at 93% which was a testament to Mrs Rogers and her work on Read Write Inc (RWI). Of the two pupils who did not achieve the threshold of 32, one scored 28 and one 26. In the Year 2 cohort four of the five who did not achieve last year were successful, and the fifth was on the SEND register and scored just below the required. Intervention in Year 3 would be put in place to access RWI.

The Vice Chair recommended governors visit at phonics teaching time in the mornings to see the hive of activity.

Key Stage 1

Reading was 84% at expected or above, compared to national average in 2022 of 67%. Greater depth stood at 17% compared to 18% last year.

Writing was 70% at expected or above, compared to last year 58% nationally previously. 3% achieved greater depth.

Maths was at 80% expected or above with 20% working towards and 30% at greater depth. National figures for 2022 were 68% expected plus and greater depth was double the national figure last year. This was due to the impact of the White Rose maths programme.

Writing would be a focus in 2023/24 and discussion was to take place around the best time to start writing and how it was progressed.

Key Stage 2

Four pupils had not achieved expected standard in writing. Two were at greater depth and all others were at expected level. Standardised Assessment Test (SATs) results were expected on 11th July.

Attendance

School attendance was 96.1% compared to the national figure of 93.9%. 13 pupils were persistent absentees who were monitored daily and weekly. Many parents were taking children out of school for holidays and there had been an outbreak of chicken pox and a sickness bug. Although absence was considerably above national levels, school had no concerns but the situation was being monitored.

The SSDP and SEF had been added to the meeting pack for new Governors for information purposes which was agreed to be useful.

Q: Are the SEF gradings starting points for discussion?

A: It is difficult for Heads to pinpoint the school position. Behaviour and personal development could be considered outstanding, the quality of education was a journey and could improve following a period of embedding and ensuring that assessment is feeding in. The leadership section will be good with further work to be done on succession planning.

Q: Should the role of the MAT be stated more clearly?

A: This will be looked at and the Quality of Education judgement amended upwards as it relates to governance and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The Head confirmed the S175 audit had been completed and returned to the LA. Prevent training certificates or reference numbers were still awaited from TE, RH. All staff and teachers had completed the necessary training.

ACTION: To send Prevent training certificates to YH. (TE, RH)

	<p>Q: 1.3 Bullying incident. Has the investigation and consequent actions led us to review any of our processes with regard to bullying? What has been the impact on the individual child?</p> <p>A: One child had an incident recorded as bullying. School has put systems in place for the child if time away from playground is required. The Head checks in weekly with the child and regular conversations take place. Ongoing friendship issues but not bullying were possible.</p> <p>Q: Are processes to be reviewed?</p> <p>A: Processes are responsive quickly, although there is work to be done around children reporting incidents. The pupil safeguarding team worked with Year 1 and Year 6 around the interpretation of bullying no negative feedback had been reported.</p> <p>Q: What was the reason for the length of time for evacuation during the last fire drill?</p> <p>A: The Head was not in school and checks had to be made on all classrooms to ensure all pupils and staff had left. Full details are recorded on Every.</p> <p>YH outlined the fire evacuation procedure.</p> <p>Q: How does the school address the phenomenon of violence within schools?</p> <p>A: A lockdown procedure is in place and identified by a different bell tone. There are keys and locks on all doors. Staff are instructed not to move and lock pupils and themselves inside the building. Colleagues are updated termly.</p> <p>ACTION: To invite GB to the next fire evacuation. (JJ)</p> <p>ACTION: To reply as necessary to GVO questions on the Head's report and Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP) document. (JJ)</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Finance Report</p> <p><u>5 year budget forecast</u></p> <p>YH reported that the budget for 2023/24 had been set with the 5.5% top slice accounted for along with nursery income and salaries.</p> <p>An £8234 surplus at the end of 2023/24 was forecast with a revenue balance at that point of £83, 862, and the school would have used up reserves and gone into deficit in 2026/27. It was hoped the 18 pupil nursery would avoid this.</p> <p><u>Profit making activities</u></p> <p>A discussion around the assumptions of pupils and timeline ensued, and YH explained the required staffing ratios relative to pupil ages. A full time teacher and deputy would be considered going forwards dependent upon demand. All forecasts had been made on a conservative basis.</p>

Q: Is the financial planning on worst case or best case scenario?

A: This is a worst case scenario unless pupils cannot be admitted into the nursery from September.

The Head advised that the nursery proposal had been submitted to the Regional Schools Director and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who could foresee no difficulties. Agreement had been given that forms for parents to register could be sent out. The official sign off on the nursery was expected by Friday 15th July. Building work was ready to start and staffing was in place.

Q: Has the LGB thanked Friends of Excalibur (FOE) recently for their contribution?

A: This will be done after the summer fayre or in the next newsletter.

Q: B0 - £13k sickness cover is quoted (presuming as a result of historical insurance charges) but £8k is budgeted for. Why the difference? How has the £8k been benchmarked?

A: Cover for sickness is not purchased.

Q: C0 – What is the reason for the allocation of £800 for air fresheners??

A: These are situated in toilets.

Governors approved the Excalibur School budget 2023/24.

Management accounts questions / Virements

Q: A0 - why do we show a YTD variance on GAG funding? Is it timing?

A: It is yet to be added for the month.

Q: B0 - What's our plan on staffing cost variance?

A: This relates to the non-teaching pay award budgeted from April but not yet paid. It will not affect next year's budget.

Q: D0 - School trips - have we knowingly overspent by £10k? or was this held in contingency?

A: The budget was set based on previous years when few or no trips had taken place. Now there is more income and more expenditure. It is not an overspend as income covers spending. The amount is being monitored if parents do not pay.

Latest Benchmarking Report

The SBM explained the budget and benchmarking comparison document which would be circulated after discussion at the forthcoming Chancery Directors' meeting. This would allow comparison with other Chancery schools in areas such as total income and General Annual Grant (GAG) income per pupil, staffing cost ratios, reserves as a percentage of GAG, support and premises costs. The document included DfE areas for investigation by the school which for Excalibur were the cost of administrative supplies and non-educational support staff and catering costs.

	<p><u>Debtors and any write offs</u> There had been no write offs this term and debtors over 120 days had reduced. Those over 120 days had been provided for in the accounts. Weekly checks were done on out of hours and dinner money.</p> <p><u>Update on any funding bids</u> The school had submitted a DfE Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) funding bid in the last round for 2022/23 for a mobile classroom which had been unsuccessful.</p> <p>The governors received confirmation that the PE and Sports funding impact statement would be published by the end of July. Spending had been monitored against income and would be reported back to governors. Sports Week had been very successful.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Premises / H&S Report <u>Report from the SBM.</u> The report had been discussed at the previous meeting.</p> <p><u>ROV Central Team report</u> Q: What is the purpose of this visit? Is it a MAT audit? A: Yes - they happen at least twice per year, across all the schools. This is a follow up from the January / February visit and covered areas such as premises, single central record, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and website compliance</p> <p><u>Asbestos Management Plan</u> Q: Please can we clarify the role of the LGB in this plan? A: The LGB is required to be aware of its existence.</p> <p><u>Urgent issues</u> Despite advance payment, the H&S visit from CE had not taken place and a new supplier had been engaged for the next year which would provide an annual audit, support and training. A refund would be requested.</p> <p><u>Lettings charges for next academic year</u> No changes were envisaged for 2023/24.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Strategic Focus <u>Outcomes of the NGA 16 questions for LGBs</u> This compilation document was attached for information.</p> <p><u>Arrangements for drafting the annual governance statement for publication on the website</u> This would be drafted by the Chair and uploaded to GVO for discussion and governor input before publication on the website.</p>

	<p>ACTION: To draft the annual governance statement and post to the discussion zone on GVO for comment. (GW/GB)</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Chancery Update <u>Changes to the CMAT Scheme of Delegation.</u> There were no suggestions for amendment to the Chancery Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><u>Termly Governance Update</u> The Head reported that CPD with Jonathan Riley including moderation in all year groups continued and she had carried out subject deep dives in other schools. The 15 steps programme across Chancery schools was to be re-arranged.</p> <p><u>Feedback from any Chair or Link governor meetings</u> There was no feedback for this meeting.</p> <p>Question for directors: Are we saying that the funding for Anthony Reddy, Jonathan and Helen was provided as part of the top slice funding? I seem to remember it appearing in our budget as a separate line item. Please can clarification be provided. Are the school reimbursed from the top slice?</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Link Governor Reports <u>SSDP 2 & 3</u> The report had been uploaded to this meeting and governors had no questions.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding, SEND and Wellbeing</u> The Chair had visited and had spoken to pupils about their experiences in school. Checks had been carried out on the embedding of safeguarding in the work of the teaching and the support staff such as the Site Manager, lunch time supervisors and Tree Tops personnel. All staff received details of safeguarding scenarios from the staff meeting and were aware of the necessity to write up all pupil disclosures. Changes in procedure around disclosures were visible. Conversation had taken place with the Office Manager being first contact with parents and a check on her wellbeing took place. It was felt the vestibule added to the safety of the building. The Site Manager discussed his role in safeguarding around the site and his awareness of who to report to. The Head confirmed that all staff had received basic awareness safeguarding training which would be updated with SCiES in September 2023. Cheshire East should be delivering the training to contracted staff; however school had an expectation that all staff complete safeguarding and Prevent training. All staff were spoken to about emotional wellbeing including the Head and Business Manager. Conversations took place with Tree Tops staff and Ofsted questions were discussed with pupils.</p> <p>The current position around SEND had been discussed with AM.</p>

	<p>GW reported a great change in safeguarding and SEND in the school. A Safeguarding Children in Educational Setting (SCiES) audit had taken place recently followed by a report. One action point had been identified around the production of a safeguarding leaflet. However, the school electronic signing in process contained agreement to safeguarding measures.</p> <p>Governors were advised that due to a change in the law anyone having suffered sexually assault could now receive counselling before the matter had gone through court.</p>
<p>12. Policies</p>	<p>There were no school policies for approval at this meeting and no Chancery policies had been approved since the previous meeting.</p>
<p>13. Governor Training</p>	<p><u>GVO Skills Audit report / future training needs</u></p> <p>The Vice Chair proposed an approach to attack the lowest scoring sections as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding strategic priorities - LGB meetings to use this language more and ensure that all members understand the discussion. New SSDP roll out in 2023 to be given time at first applicable LGB to ensure that governor link roles are fully aligned and understood. 2. Finance reporting and funding understanding - propose LGB specific finance and funding training in September 2023. 3. Engaging with stakeholders - governors to be added to all external comms from school to parents and the wider community. Pupil Voice feedback to be regularly received by LGB. New staff survey to go live in September 2023. LGB members to be made aware of community events and assemblies. 4. LGB meeting its legal and compliance responsibilities - all members to read Chancery Scheme of Delegation as it relates to LGB. Propose members also attend 'Understanding Local Governance in a MAT' training provided by Cheshire East. <p>ACTION: To review the questions and suggestions on governor skills audit outcomes on GVO. (All)</p> <p>ACTION: To forward CE training details to governors. (YH)</p> <p>ACTION: To re-organise safer recruitment training for GW. (JJ)</p> <p>ACTION: To contact RH with reminder to complete Prevent training. (YH)</p>
<p>14. Part One minutes</p>	<p>The Part One minutes of the Summer 1 LGB meeting had been reviewed and approved on GVO.</p>
<p>15. Matters arising and actions</p>	<p>There were no matters arising from the Summer 1 LGB meeting.</p>

	<p>Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and the following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with MC had taken place around completing and recording statutory safeguarding training. The SCR included the Chair's safeguarding training. • All governor declarations of interest had been completed on GVO. • Shaun Smith had now joined the LGB and would strengthen the board's financial expertise. • The Annual Governance Statement would be completed on the Chancery template. • A different staff survey was to be organised and circulated to staff.
<p>16.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Governors approved the planned Robin Wood Year 6 residential visit in November 2023. YH confirmed that the Cheshire East Evolve system was used for all school residential trips. Governors' responsibility was to ensure that all necessary risk assessments were in place.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mental Health First Aid training through MIND would be investigated by JJ.</p> <p>ACTION: To investigate MIND Mental Health First Aid training. (JJ)</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Date of Next meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting of the LGB was confirmed as 25th September 2023.</p> <p>Dates for Excalibur LGB meetings 2023/24 were advised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 25th September 2023 • Monday 20th November 2023 • Monday 5th February 2024 • Monday 18th March 2024 • Monday 20th May 2024 • Monday 1st July 2024
<p>18.</p>	<p>Impact statement</p> <p><u>What is the impact of the discussions, decisions and actions on the pupils of Excalibur School?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor visits had assured LGB of the safe running of the school and its safeguarding and delivery of English. • The Chancery Governance Day had increased governor knowledge and understanding on their role. • Appointment of the new governor with a financial background would increase the level of scrutiny to ensure that finance continued to be used for the best support of the pupils. • The geography presentation assured governors that a plan was in place to ensure learning was more progressive and that the best possible curriculum was delivered to the pupils.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge to the Chancery Directors would ensure that the school was receiving appropriate funding and that the pupils continued to receive the best possible educational experience.
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The Part One meeting closed at 19.20.