



Yvonne Hilditch Chancery MAT [85] 15 July 2021

Excalibur FGB Pt 1 Minutes 01/03/2021

► Virtual ► Monday, March 1, 2021 ► 17:30 ► Chair: Sarah Sproston ► Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending: >Juliet Jones, Gail Whittingham, Jo Bain, Simon Cotterill, Petra Wayman-Zwart, Rachel Hackney, Kate Jepson, Gill Burgess, Sarah Sproston, Mke Cross, Anna McArdle

Governors Apologies: >

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth, Yvonne Hilditch

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ► Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business Items

MINUTE

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.37.
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
All Governors were present.
No additional items of Part One business were requested.

Agenda Item 2 ► Conflict of Interest

MINUTE

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 were declared.

Agenda Item 3 ► Membership

MINUTE

Changes in Membership
There were no vacancies currently and no governor terms of office were due to expire before the next LGB meeting.
PW reported her term of office would expire on 4th June and the clerk confirmed that a Parent Governor election would be required, with PW eligible to stand for a further term.

Agenda Item 4 ► Chairs Power to Act

MINUTE

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

Agenda Item 5 ► Part One Minutes, Matters Arising and Actions

MINUTE

The Part One minutes of the Spring 1 LGB meeting on 11th January 2021 were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the Chair.
There were no matters arising.
The action log was reviewed and updated on Trust Governor with the following points highlighted:

- MC agreed to update his declarations of interest on TTG to include the new active pupils venture 'Beyond The School Gates'.
- Further reports from discussions with school curriculum links would take place at the next meeting.
- The audit of LGB effectiveness was carried forwards.

Agenda Item 6 ► Headteacher Report

MINUTE

The report was available to Governors on Trust Governor prior to the meeting.
JJ explained the adjustments made to the risk assessment (RA) e.g. the wearing of face coverings in communal areas included in the report. Lateral flow tests were in place twice weekly.
Attendance
The report showed attendance was up slightly and broadly in line with national averages. Key worker pupils and vulnerable group provision was included. Some site visits had been offered to pupils to smooth the transition back to school.
Staff wellbeing
A whole team effort was taking place and the report showed the systems in place for support.
Staff absences
The Staff Governor reported that there was some anxiety due to local circumstances.
With regard to vaccination for staff, it was suggested that school could contact the Alsager Health Centre to explore the possibility of vaccinations for staff.
Governors commented positively on section 3.1 the quality of teaching and felt the building up of social interaction was very interesting. The mental Maths plan was thought to be good.
Governors thanked JJ for her report and the work on aspects of the SDP with information provided by subject leads. Governors thanked the staff for their work and JJ agreed to pass this on.

CHALLENGE **Q: Will the risk assessment continue after 8th March?**
A: Yes.

Q: Are staff meeting socially?
A: Not currently. This could be a good idea and could be considered in order to pull the staff together.

Q: What is the position with the three clinically vulnerable staff?
A: They are vulnerable but not extremely vulnerable, one person has a shielding letter. The one person shielding will work from home.

Q: Are staff nervous about going back?

A: Up to this week most teachers have been at home. This week staff have been into school to have face to face time with their class as part of the transition back in

Q: Has the school given positive feedback to parents on the work they have done during lockdown?

A: Yes. This is done daily and is included by JJ in her newsletters.

Q: What are the target end dates against the listed priorities (Section 5 SEND)?

A: There is a move to class teachers taking ownership of SEN and a staff meeting has updated staff on the responsibilities of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). This will be an ongoing process. Autism training is booked as well as Mental Health First Aid training developed by MIND. A more whole school approach is planned with emphasis on mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Timescales currently are difficult.

Q: What is the significance of the parental survey response that 25% of parents felt unable to support their child, and only 34% felt confident that their children were making progress?

A: The situation will be reviewed once pupils return and parental feedback will be analysed. School will learn from what has been in place over the previous 5/6 weeks. The pupils will be carefully but discretely monitored on their return. It is likely that a difference will be visible between those who have engaged and those who have not.

Q: The survey outcome had one negative comment on school leadership? Is there anything for governors to consider?

A: The comment was not founded on any accuracy and governors have been presented with the numbers of pupils in school. Some pupils have been invited in in addition to the key worker pupils according to their best interests, and classes have been kept below 15 as per the risk assessment.

Agenda Item 7 ► Finance

YH explained the format of the Finance Report uploaded to Trust Governor in advance of the meeting which showed the financial position at the current time including a deficit of £8.5k in the year.

The projected carry forward at the end of 2023/24 was £37335.

Governors agreed the following virements:

- £7,440 decrease in SEN funding as planned new EHCP's for current pupils had not yet been achieved.
- £8,435 decrease in Other income as a reduction for the Out of Hours provision as it has not been fully utilised during the January to March lockdown.
- £3,255 increase in Teaching staff costs due to reorganisation of staff from January 2021
- £1,212 decrease in support staff as extra staffing was not required for the Out of Hours club from December to February.

A discussion took place on benchmarking and the reason for Excalibur School not spending as much on teaching resources as comparison schools. YH assured Governors that the correct analysis was in place and that the school took great care of resources especially paper and books, with everything carefully stored and used. There had been no change in spending.

A discussion ensued on whether the budget of Excalibur was paying for the trust. However, YH assured Governors that the data shown was the DfE's way of accounting for it, rather than including an item of benchmarking across central teams.

Governors expressed concern around the projected loss for The Berkeley included in the figures, as evidenced in the minutes from the Directors' meeting, and requested further information. YH confirmed there were no concerns regarding TB.

Governors then considered the various top slice models and YH confirmed that Chancery had adopted the model of GAG pooling in line with 67% of other academy trusts. Governors also questioned the expansion of staff at trust level.

MINUTE

After discussion Governors agreed that scrutiny of the minutes from the Directors' meetings and the Chancery Academy Trust finances was essential and that Nikki Ratcliffe as a Director should attend the Excalibur LGB meetings. The LGB had sight of the Part One minutes of the Directors' meetings and financial statements were available on the Chancery website. It was agreed that KJ would scrutinise the documents available.

Governors agreed training on finance would be useful in order to be able to ask the directors for the specific information required and to receive assurance around the safeguarding in place in the trust to safeguard reserves.

In conclusion, Governors agreed they were not feeling the benefits of being part of Chancery Academy Trust and there was some lack of understanding and communication between trust and LGBs.

Governors noted:

- the finance report
- the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value
- the profit from other activities
- the spend of ring fenced grants be noted
- the business risks listed
- the going concern of the school
- the benchmarking data

Governors noted and approved:

- the virements presented

KJ left at 18.17.

ACTION

To question the increased loss at The Berkeley School with the Chair of Directors. (SS)

To contact the Chair of Chancery Directors to discuss the financial concerns, to obtain assurances and pass on feedback. (SS)

Governors agreed the following virements:

- £7,440 decrease in SEN funding as planned new EHCP's for current pupils had not yet been achieved.
- £8,435 decrease in Other income as a reduction for the Out of Hours provision as it has not been fully utilised during the January to March lockdown.
- £3,255 increase in Teaching staff costs due to reorganisation of staff from January 2021
- £1,212 decrease in support staff as extra staffing was not required for the Out of Hours club from December to February.

DECISION

Governors noted the finance report, the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value, the profit from other activities, the spend of ring fenced grants, the business risks listed, the going concern of the school and the benchmarking data.

Governors noted and approved the virements presented.

CHALLENGE

Q: What is the amount of the top slice in other academy trusts?

A: 67% of academies have a top slice of approximately 5%.

Q: Data in the report (See point 7.2) would suggest that there is a greater spend on administration supplies and a lesser spend on teaching than the comparison schools. Where are the school priorities?

A: School spending is £50k with median of £45k which includes some of the central service administration costs. The central administration spend is split over the schools. Without this it would make the school in line with other schools. Costs for the year were £209 per pupil rather than £205 previously. There would be an increase in central administration costs for the next year which would result in school spending of £52k.

Q: What is the reason for the virements of £7.5k for SEND funding decrease due to lack of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for current pupils?

A: One EHCP was rejected and has been resubmitted. Two were anticipated but have not been received. They will be processed shortly and funding will follow immediately.

Q: Is it correct that the amount of pupil premium funding at £1365 (see Section 4.8) has been the same since October 2019 and is similarly predicted?

A: This may be increasing in the next year.

Q: What will the impact on staffing be of the loss of income for Special Educational Needs (SEN) hours due to the smaller number of pupils on the register (see Section 4.9)?

A: Any staff employed for SEN with hours always have a contract with the name of the child on it, if the child has an EHCP. Staff then leave with child.

Q: Has the out of hours provision lost money?

A: Yes during the last year. However, a member of staff since left and it is now making money (see 5.1). Holiday club is now running with no extra hours only when staff are available to run it. Income for out of hours this the year to date is £11961 and was expected to be £23k.

Q: Where are the friends of Excalibur accounts shown in the document?

A: They are under 'other activities'. However, there is nothing for this year. Details for previous years would be on the website. YH would include up to date details in the February accounts.

Agenda Item 8 ► Health and Safety

Urgent Health and Safety (H&S) issues

There were no urgent H&S issues to discuss.

MINUTE

Health and Safety Audit documents received since 11th January 2021

No audits had taken place and the next Local Authority (LA) audit would take place in April.

Agenda Item 9 ► Reports from Governors with Specific Responsibilities

GW had met with Dan Hancock regarding the new Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and its monitoring. Lesson planning and resources were provided with the new scheme and from the parental perspective it was felt to be very good.

MINUTE

GW met Anna McArdle to discuss mental health. The plans in place, with a focus on pupils who were not seen often enough, sounded good.

SSDP / Subject Governor Reports

Further reports would be given at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 10 ► Governor Development/Training

Training Liaison Governor Report

The Clerk agreed to ensure Governors all had access to GovernorHub to book Cheshire East training and the Chair reported that joint MAT training was being prepared.

MINUTE

PW commented on the amount of information provided by The Key and The School Bus which was available to all Governors.

SS reported she had details of how to access the trust Governor Induction Programme if Governors required them.

Agenda Item 11 ► Safeguarding

MINUTE

There was nothing additional to the Headteacher report.

ACTION

To carry out a safeguarding audit. (SS)

CHALLENGE

Q: Has there been any increase in demands on the school capacity for safeguarding?

A: No. Only one family were hard to reach and school has been in contact and responses received.

Q: Has the child been seen?

A: Not since the autumn term.

Agenda Item 12 ► School Improvement Partner

MINUTE

The virtual SIP visit from Louise Gore (CEO) had taken place with a remote provision focus. The outcome had been excellent.

Agenda Item 13 ► Educational Visits

MINUTE

Educational visits were not possible at the moment.

Agenda Item 14 ► Cheshire East Governance Newsletter Spring 2021

The Chair reported that:

MINUTE

- Cheshire East training continued virtually.
- The website should undergo an audit. YH confirmed that she undertook this annually in July and presented it to Governors, who could spot check it.

PW reported that the links in the CE Information Advice Support Service section did not work, and the Chair agreed to investigate.

Agenda Item 15 ► School Policies

Policy Listing

The document had been uploaded to Trust Governor prior to the meeting for the information of the governors.

MINUTE

Policies for review and approval

The following policies were reviewed and **agreed** by governors:

- Geography
- History
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

DECISION

The following policies were reviewed and agreed by governors: Geography, History and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Agenda Item 16 ► Meetings

The dates of the Summer LGB meetings were confirmed as:

MINUTE

- Monday 26th April 2021
- Monday 14th June 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

Agenda Item 17 ▶ **Any Other Business****MINUTE** Governor Communication Protocol

It was agreed that this item was no longer required as the subject would be dealt with on a trust-wide basis.

Agenda Item 18 ▶ **Impact Statement**Impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School**MINUTE**

- Governors learnt that remote learning had had a good impact and positive feedback had been received from parents.
- The Headteacher report assured Governors that much learning was going ahead.
- The parental survey confirmed that there had been minimal disruption to learning and to parents.
- Governors were given a clear understanding of the staff's wellbeing and the honesty of JJ/AM about difficulties met was appreciated.
- Governors challenged and questioning the SBM on the budget and in depth financial scrutiny took place. A potential risk was identified and would be actioned to safeguard the future of the school.
- Governors were assured that the school obtained value for money and undertook benchmarking.
- Governors were assured that there was a solid plan in place for the return of all pupils on 8th March.
- The Headteacher report showed that school leadership listened and strove to continuously improve.

AM left and the Part One meeting closed at 18.55.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

Excalibur LGB Spring 2 2021 Pt1 *dated:* 01/03/2021

Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch