

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXCALIBUR SCHOOL LOCAL
GOVERNING BOARD HELD AT THE SCHOOL
ON 18TH MARCH 2024 at 17.00.**

Name	Governor Category	Designated Role	Attendance
Gail Whittingham	Co-opted Governor	Chair	Present
Gill Burgess	Co-opted Governor	Vice Chair	Present
Juliet Jones	Headteacher	Headteacher	Present
Rachel Hackney	Co-opted Governor		Present
Simon Cotterill	Co-opted Governor		Not present
Tom Egley	Co-opted Governor		Apologies
Felicity Hawkins	Co-opted Governor		Apologies
Shaun Smith	Co-opted Governor		Not present
Philip Yeomans	Parent Governor		Apologies
Rachel Morrison	Parent Governor		Apologies
Kay Griffin	Staff Governor		Apologies
Sue Lambeth	Clerk		Present
Yvonne Hilditch	SBM		Present

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.04.

	Item
1.	<p>Staff Presentation <u>RADY project – Deb Rogers (SLT)</u> As part of the Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP), Excalibur and other Chancery and local schools were taking part in the Cheshire Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) project. The one-year progressive training programme begun in September 2023 was about to be launched to staff. Focus was on seven pupils in one class due to the small number of pupils in the disadvantaged (Pupil Premium) and vulnerable category. Data showed that 44% of disadvantaged pupils nationally achieved reading, writing, maths expected or plus compared to 66% of other pupils. The theory behind the project was that as Pupil Premium (PP) pupils started their journey with lower prior attainment than their non PP counterparts and made only the same progress, then their progress end point would also be lower. Some of the external factors for the lower starting point were nationally recognised to be hunger, poor health, lack of resources at home, poor attendance and learned helplessness. The four-strand Rady Pledge was explained (see presentation). Year 4 pupils had been selected and the area highlighted in yellow applied to the target group whilst the remainder of the pledge applied to all PP children. The golden thread would be launched to staff in Summer 2024 and staff would be responsible for weaving it into their curriculum.</p>

	<p>Q: What is the reason for the move from Quality First teaching? A: The best Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research details a tiered approach, namely Quality First teaching followed by targeted interventions and then the wider curriculum which all support children to achieve. Some pupils will need more than Quality First i.e. core teaching and will move to targeted interventions e.g. booster reading groups. The RADY project enhances what the teachers do e.g. through targeted questions. Essentially, a false ceiling for disadvantaged children is being removed.</p> <p>Q: What is the reason for the selection of Year 4? A: They are the chosen target group for meetings with the RADY group and reading is the focus. The main influencing factor identified was poor attendance with no other significant elements.</p> <p>Step one of the approach called for the pupils to be ranked based on test scores for reading and the average calculated. Step two was a calculation of the difference between the non-PP and PP pupils. Step three was the addition of an uplift of the amount of the difference to PP pupils' test scores. After this addition, all pupils were re-ranked which would result in PP pupils moving up the progress rankings.</p> <p>Q: What other steps are then put in place? A: This is for teachers to decide and include in their planning. One benefit will be pupils growing in their self-esteem. Catch up groups could be required for some pupils but not all.</p> <p>School believed that this approach championed PP pupils and gave them the best opportunity. Staff were aware of the targeted pupils and would ensure their expectations were at least equally as high as for other pupils.</p> <p>Governors thanked Debs for her presentation.</p>
2.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from Tom Egley, Phil Yeomans, Rachel Morrison, Kay Griffin and Felicity Hawkins were accepted. Simon Cotterill and Shaun Smith were not present.</p> <p>Items of Part One business requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of holiday dates 2025/26
3.	<p>Declarations 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.</p>
4.	<p>Chair's Action The Chair reported no actions since the previous meeting.</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>Membership The membership of the LGB was confirmed to be as shown on this document.</p> <p>Mike Cross remained on leave of absence, and Cheshire East advice was awaited with regard to Serena Hallam who was currently standing back from her governor role. No contact had been received from Simon Cotterill since the previous meeting.</p> <p>There were no other governor terms of office due for renewal before the end of the academic year and there were currently no vacancies.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Headteacher (HT) Verbal Report – Part One</u> The HT thanked governors for their questions on GVO in advance of the meeting and reported as follows:</p> <p><u>Attendance</u> Attendance was as indicated in the HT report plus the additional document which allowed direct comparison of data. A second supervision session from Cheshire East (CE) had focussed on a successful attendance review. There were no areas of concern. Excalibur had 16 children classed as persistently absent, and weekly and daily tallies of persistent absences were kept which led to detailed discussions with CE. Trends were identifiable by week and reasons could be identified. Reasons for lower pupil attendance in some weeks were recorded and discussed in the review meetings. Reasons for particularly low attendance e.g. home schooling were logged and advice from the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) team sought. Governors were assured that where there were safeguarding concerns, pointed conversations took place with parents and the HT completed home visits.</p> <p><u>Year 4 cohort</u> Although a subdued atmosphere had been noted in the Year 4 classroom during the H&S link governor visit, the HT advised that the class had responded exceptionally well to the recent residential visit. <u>Attendance</u> stood at 95.8%, just below the rest of the school, with one child being electively home educated. Attendance for the class from September to Christmas was 96.93% and from January to date was 93.95% including and 95.66% excluding the electively home educated pupil. Five pupils were on the persistently absent register, two of which were due to holidays, one with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and two, also on the vulnerable register, with various. The HT advised it was unlikely that the level of absence was a symptom of the teacher leaving. <u>Pupil Progress</u> meetings for Year 4 were taking place, and there was concern around reading where 37% of pupils were below expected for progress. For spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) and Maths only 10% (3 children) were below expected. The expected progress from the end of Year 3 to the latest test assessment point was 3 scale points; however, that for Year 4 was 2 scale score points. This equated to 4 pupils who had not made enough progress for a variety reasons. Spelling was also a cause for concern due to lack of progress and</p>

the HT would be evidencing Pathways to Read in action. Whilst progress was not causing concern, a period of stability was required for the cohort.

The current long term supply teacher did not wish to continue after the Easter break, and the HT was mindful of the needs of the cohort. Despite unsuccessful agency approaches, further attempts to recruit a supply teacher would take place. The date of the class teacher's return was as yet unknown. Chancery sources, re-deployment of staff and all possibilities were being considered. Jonathan Riley, an external consultant, had worked with the existing Year 4 teacher to design a programme of writing.

YH joined the meeting at 18.00.

Safeguarding in a Nutshell

Governors welcomed the format of the document which would be presented to each LGB meeting. The Chancery Special Educational Needs and /or Disability (SEND) group was working on action plans. Governors proposed the inclusion of RADY data to the in a nutshell document.

Parent Charter

Governors pointed out the apparently secondary focus of the document and the use of CE and East Cheshire Association Headteachers (eCaph) language. This was outside the control of the school.

The Single Central Record (SCR) had been checked in November and was reviewed weekly by the School Business Manager (SBM). The spring check was yet to be scheduled.

ACTION: To check the SCR asap. (Chair)

Governors thanked the HT for her responses to questions.

7. Finance Report

Budget v actuals

The document in the meeting pack showed budget versus actuals to January 2024 and latest budget forecast. Responses to governor questions had been supplied on GVO.

5 year budget forecast

This showed details as required by the DfE. A MAT review had been undertaken by the DfE who had provided assumptions to be used for future 5 year forecasts e.g. around income and salaries. This would be included in documents going forwards and differences in assumptions used would be flagged. Inflation would be built in where required.

Ringfenced funds

A report to January was attached to the meeting pack.

Profit making activities

	<p>Tree Tops was doing well.</p> <p>Q: When will the Treetops income be stable enough to forecast? A: The forecast has been increased and includes the level of required staffing. Up to 60 pupils can be accommodated in the evenings, and the latest number is 54. Activities are devised which include a sandpit and play equipment, and more play equipment has been purchased. Numbers are based on the ages of the attendees and are checked regularly. The school carries the expenses e.g. heating to which Treetops currently contributes £30k. Currently income for the year to January is £45k, with a similar forecast for the next six months plus the summer holiday club for a maximum of 16 children per day.</p> <p>Q: Is there a greater risk of debt as income grows? A: Most parents pay immediately, and only those with child care vouchers receive invoices. Whilst there is approximately £2k outstanding historic debt at, all those currently receiving invoices are paying. The aged debt is provided for as the pupils are still in school. It is difficult to evidence attendance in order to demand payment of historic debt and writing off debt for pupils who have left could be considered. The current debt is not increasing and the SBM is now familiar with the system.</p> <p>Q: Is the SEND funding issue resolved? A: Not yet.</p> <p>The SBM advised that some 30 hour funding would be moved to Tree Tops.</p> <p>Pre-school numbers were increasing and recruitment for staff in the afternoons was underway. The reason for the existence of pre-school was the transition of pupils into Reception.</p> <p><u>Debtors and any write offs</u> See above.</p> <p>There were no <u>school-specific audit points</u>.</p> <p><u>Funding bids</u> Whilst there were no current bids, one could be considered for the school roof which governors agreed was a Health & Safety issue.</p> <p>ACTION: To approach Jenny Whiston and E3Cube to discuss a bid for work on the school roof. (JJ)</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Premises / H&S Matters <u>Report from the SBM</u> Governors had no comments or issues with the document included in the meeting pack.</p> <p>The report from the visit of the H&S link governor was also in the pack and the contents had been shared and discussed with reception. A review would</p>

	<p>be undertaken and feedback was awaited. A further H&S walk was scheduled for 18th April at 9 a.m. The Year 6 storeroom remained an issue.</p> <p><u>Premises Improvement Plan</u> The SBM advised that the items on the plan were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) bid for the roof was the first priority (<u>medium term</u> i.e. within next 3 years). • One <u>short term</u> item was the raising of the height of the fencing at the back of the site in line with a previous SCiES team report. This had not been eligible for a CIF bid. • Fencing and paths at the front of the school were a <u>short term</u> priority (within the year) to ensure a safe path across the car park to Treetops and a safe path to the mobile together with the disabled parking at the front. • <u>Long term</u> items were the playground and car park re-surfacing and work on Laura and Richard's sensory gardens. Assistance from parents would be sought. • One <u>short term</u> item was for the library bus to be brought onto the site adjacent to the Key Stage 2 playground. <p>Q: Is there an emergency route for roof work? A: The DfE will not class the roof as an emergency. This has been raised with E3Cube each year who advised that the situation was not sufficiently serious to warrant a CIF bid. There will be emergency funding available.</p> <p>Discussion on the use of the area of the former mobile building took place.</p> <p><u>Updated risk register</u> Governors commented positively on the mitigations in place. The document had been updated to show greater controls in place.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Strategic Focus <u>Updates since Ofsted Oct 2023</u> The HT report now fed back on the SSDP rather than curriculum areas.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Chancery collaboration No chairs meetings had taken place since the previous meeting and the H&S link meeting on 16th February had not been attended.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Link governor reports <u>H&S (GB)</u> The SBM confirmed that all risk assessment items identified during the visit had been added to the risk register and would be reviewed and signed off at the next walk with the Site manager. Actions e.g. the nurture room and path had been dealt with. The comments around Reception had been passed to the relevant member of staff and the Year 3 shelving weight issue would be addressed.</p> <p><u>Metacognition (RM)</u></p>

	This report would be discussed at the Summer 1 LGB meeting.
12. Impact statement	<p><u>Impact of the work of the governing board on the pupils of Excalibur School since the last meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors were assured of the continuing performance of the Year 4 class and understood the mitigations in place for the current year. • The RADY project and its progress was explained to governors. • The fabric of the building, particularly the roof, had been discussed and identified as an area of concern. • The H&S visit had identified areas for attention which were now being dealt with.
13. Policies	<p>The LGB approved the following school policies in line with the policy review schedule subject to the comments by governors on GVO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Handbook • Educational Visits Policy • EYFS Policy and Procedure • Letting Charges • RE Policy <p>The <u>Staff Use of School Devices Policy</u> would be approved at the Summer 1 meeting.</p> <p>No Chancery policies had been approved since the last term.</p>
14. Cheshire East Director of Children's Services Report	<p>The Spring 2024 report plus summary had been shared on GVO and governors noted the contents. Questions had been answered on GVO.</p>
15. Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions	<p>The LGB confirmed the approval of the Part One minutes of the meeting on 5th February 2024 on GVO.</p> <p>There were no <u>matters arising</u>.</p> <p>The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and the following points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion of the value of the <u>Chancery 15 Steps</u> initiative would be taken to the next LGB Chairs' meeting. • Parental feedback on the Year 1 and 2 building would be ascertained through the summer term parent survey. • Three quotations were being sought for the work on a path to the mobile and the standing place with work to be undertaken over the summer.

16.	Any Other Business Holiday dates 2025/26 were approved .
17.	Date of Next meeting The date of the next meeting of the LGB was confirmed as 20 th May 2024.

The Part One meeting closed at 19.02