

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXCALIBUR SCHOOL LOCAL
GOVERNING BOARD HELD AT THE SCHOOL
ON 20TH MAY 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
Tom Egley	Co-opted Governor		Present
Felicity Hawkins	Co-opted Governor		Present
Shaun Smith	Co-opted Governor		Present
Philip Yeomans	Parent Governor		Present
Rachel Morrison	Parent Governor		Present
Kay Griffin	Staff Governor		Present
Sue Lambeth	Clerk		Present
Yvonne Hilditch	SBM		Present

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.01.

	Item
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting.</p> <p>All governors were present.</p> <p>Items of Part One business requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of quotations for the path to Treetops and KS1 mobile • Governor visits
2.	<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>
3.	<p>Chair's Action The Chair reported no actions since the previous meeting.</p>
4.	<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.</p>

The resignation of Simon Cotterill with effect from 17th April 2024 was noted and confirmation was received that governor information on the school and DfE websites was up to date.

There were no other governor terms of office due for renewal before the end of the academic year and there were currently no plans for further recruitment.

5. Headteacher Report – Part One

The HT's report was included in the meeting pack and the following areas were highlighted:

Attendance

The FFT tracker would be uploaded to GVO which showed school attendance at 96% compared to national at 94.4%. Two areas only were below national: SEND and EHCP. One was for medical reasons and one related to a child on the school vulnerable list.

Q: Absence has worsened versus last year. All student categories with the exception of EHCP have decreased attendance. What are the trends/reasons and what will the school approach be to improving it?

A: Attendance last year was 97.28%, in July 2023 it was 94% and currently it is 96%. Attendance is monitored daily and the school has eleven pupils deemed to be persistent absentees, three of whom are for medical reasons. Some pupils included are Pre-school or Reception who are not considered persistent absentees. One pupil is now electively home schooled and one pupil from Year 2 left. Four pupils had absences due to holidays and four are concerns on the vulnerable list. Talks have taken place with CE.

Absence trends have been analysed by pupil category for Spring 2023 which show 21 sessions of holiday and 462 sessions of illness. Spring 2024 shows a total of 138 sessions - 62 sessions coded G family holidays not agreed and 76 coded H as family holidays agreed. There were 840 sessions of illness. Further analysis within illness showed 46 pre-school sessions, 216 sessions of absence of ten days or more of which 55 sessions were medical. Some holidays have been reported as illness.

Discussions during the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) visit had revealed the same picture across CE with a potential £60 fine no deterrent. School was aware of the vulnerable children and home visits took place where deemed necessary with CE auditing on a termly basis. Holidays were felt to be the bigger issue. Remote learning would be explored where possible and appropriate.

A brief discussion on praising attendance took place and the view was that this approach this went against school inclusivity, and illness for both staff and pupils required a period of recovery.

Data

Attainment of the Year 4 cohort was a focus and would be discussed further in Pt 2 of the meeting. Governors were advised that staffing changes were to take place and booster sessions were to start in Year 5 in September. Pupils' progress was higher than their attainment.

Stakeholder surveys

Parents

Further investigation would take place into the 3 pupils in Year 5 who were reported as not liking school and also the 5 parents, three of which were in Year 4, who would not recommend the school and which was felt upsetting. Most children felt safe and enjoyed school and there were many positives. It was disappointing that 10 parents reported that they did not feel they were made aware of what their children were learning, despite the Meet The Teacher session at the start of the year, termly newsletters, web pages and parents' evenings. Nine parents also felt school did not keep them aware of how their children were doing, despite parents evenings and the open door policy. Governors encouraged the HT not to be unduly concerned and thanked her for her excellent work. It was felt a greater number of parents could have responded with a wider cross section of positive and negative feedback. Many parents felt school did not run sufficient clubs despite activities being provided by both teachers and sports contractors. Whilst it was acknowledged the number of clubs was limited by space, both Ofsted and the SCiES team had been impressed and commented positively on the number and variety of clubs provided.

Pupils

The meeting discussed the number of responses to the question on bullying in Year 1 and the understanding of pupils of that age. A body of work would take place with safeguarding ambassadors. School currently used the KiVa approach although it was felt that all pupils were able to articulate its meaning. As a result consideration would be given to the CE Bullying Strategy with a view to its introduction in September 2024.

ACTION: To arrange a PP link governor visit to carry out an end of year meeting. (RH)

Q: In light of the one sexual harassment/violence incident per term, is there is any particular trend to this? and what action is being taken to eradicate it?

A: The two incidents involved the same child who has Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) needs, and parents were contacted. The SCiES Team has signposted the school to resources and the safeguarding link governor has sight of the incident

Q: What was the protected characteristic?

A: It was a sexual harassment incident, was isolated and was dealt with under the school policy.

	<p>The Chair explained the principle and practice of the new online Boxall tool for pupils with additional SEN with a view to moving forward with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) if required. Boxall is a tool used by educational psychologists, which breaks down the needs of the pupils in order for them to succeed. The initial assessment carried out by the person in school with the best knowledge of the child produced three first targets. Governors were reassured that the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) had a clear understanding of Boxall and its capabilities. Other tools used by educational psychologists were to be shared with the school.</p> <p>Q: Has the Nursery had an impact on the SENCO's capacity? A: Staffing and budgetary changes could impact and SEND would be carefully supported and monitored. The SENCO is preparing for next year. Recruitment of staff particularly teaching assistants is extremely difficult due to competitive salaries in posts outside education with less responsibility.</p> <p><u>Compliance</u> The HT confirmed the fire risk assessment was now complete as were the drinking water and intruder alarm items. The document would be updated.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding in a nutshell</u> Q: What is the reason for the discrepancy between the number of Child Protection (CP) cases on the nutshell document and the HT report? A: The CP case was closed in March. The nutshell is the live document.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Finance Report <u>Budget for 2024 – 2025</u> The document contained three columns for 2024-25 and the following two further years.</p> <p>All <u>budget assumptions</u> in the document on GVO provided by the CFO and Chancery Trust, had been incorporated with notes showing the steps taken by the SBM to incorporate them.</p> <p>Items currently not incorporated were the support staff pay award at 4% for 24/25 and 2% in 25/26, and teacher pay increases were expected to be 3% and then 2%.</p> <p>School was anticipated to have revenue surplus of £24,912 in 2024/25 leading to an uncommitted revenue balance of £104,562. The anticipated uncommitted revenue balance for 2025/26 was £110,989 with £118,757 for 2026/27.</p> <p>Based on the previous method of calculation (including pay rises and on a worst case scenario) it had been anticipated that school would remain in credit at the end of the 3-year forecast.</p> <p>Q: Have income assumptions been conservative? A: As conservative as was possible based on the budget assumptions given.</p>

	<p>Q: What would be the position based on previous assumptions used? A: No inflation of General Annual Grant (GAG) income would be included (currently at 1.9%). SEND and PP income for pupils leaving the school would not be retained; however, based on the assumptions provided these were retained subject to a sensible budget and a 1.7% increase in future years.</p> <p>Q: Is Project Safe Access included? A: Yes. The premises spending each year is up to the allocated amount.</p> <p>Q: Is PP income inflated to 1.7%? A: The guidance is that school should assume the same number of PP pupils each year but the DfE will provide 1.7% extra income per child.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) had met with the DfE / ESFA earlier in the year to discuss budget assumptions. It was thought that the move this year was to ensure standard assumptions were used across all schools.</p> <p>Q: Is the top slice remaining at 5.5% despite staffing changes? A: There is a document available on GVO which details the use of the top slice. However, this does not include the detail of the use of the top slice spend for the previous year. The balances at all Chancery schools are showing in the annual financial statements. As far as the school is aware the Headteacher at The Berkeley will dual role for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Governors requested the following information from Chancery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Trust Central Team staffing structure for the remainder of 2023/24 and for 2024/25? • Why is the top slice assumption for future budgeting not taking a new staffing structure into account? • What will the future staffing structure be which generates the 5.5% top slice? <p>Governors approved the budget for 2024/25.</p> <p>ACTION: To raise the top slice questions at the next Chairs' meeting. (Chair)</p> <p><u>Management accounts May 2024</u> Governors had no queries and were requested to submit questions for the SBM on GVO.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Premises / Health & Safety (H&S) Matters <u>Urgent issues</u> A visit from previous H&S provider, Cheshire East, had not taken place and the trust had now moved to Entrust for the service. The H&S evaluation now comprised a self-evaluation completed by the SBM, Site Manager and HT, followed by a further evaluation for governors in the autumn term carried out</p>

	<p>by school staff. A visit would be scheduled for January 2025 after which visits would take place either annually or every three years.</p> <p>The next H&S walk was scheduled for 7th June 2024 to be attended by the link governor.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Link governor reports</p> <p><u>SEND</u> See feedback including in SEN discussions under the Headteacher item.</p> <p>Discussions had taken place with the SENCO around pupils with EHCPs who did not necessarily require full-time one-to-one support. The HT assured governors that JJ the arrangements would be made to work as was always the case. Further recruitment was planned in July for a September start.</p> <p><u>Metacognition</u> A meeting with Kay Griffin had taken place on 1st March 2024 to discuss School Development Plan priority point 1.4 the embedding of metacognition across the curriculum.</p> <p>Metacognition, an Ofsted recommendation to enable pupils to remember and recall previous learning, was embedded in Maths across the school and a range of books from Years 2 and 5 had been seen. Consideration of differing ways of encouraging recall was underway particularly for pupils lower down the school. School had benefitted from input from the Maths Hub in Year 2 to embed key learning. Metacognition was established in English particularly around grammar knowledge and was also well embedded. Use in Science was developing well. Exit questions were embedded across the curriculum to recap and retrieve information at the end of lessons as seen in Science and History. Retrieval questions were seen in History books which allowed pupils to remember their previous learning. Verbal discussions with pupils lower down the school had taken place and evidence was seen in pupil books matched to pupils' age and needs. Staff overload had been avoided and the aim was now to investigate different forms of knowledge retrieval and link retrieval questions into pupil knowledge organisers. A bank of examples was being created to demonstrate metacognition across the school.</p> <p>Metacognition was essentially working in long term memory based on end points in the curriculum in order to enable pupils to make links with their learning. This would be further embedded across the curriculum.</p> <p><u>SCiES audit visit</u> A visit had taken place on Monday 20th May which had resulted in a glowing report. The day had consisted of teacher, TA, safeguarding governor and safeguarding team interviews together with observation of play time and lunch time, scrutiny of the Single Central Record (SCR), policies and the curriculum. SCiES had questioned the advisability of Chair being the Safeguarding lead; however, it was agreed that the LGB provided challenge.</p>

	<p>The height of the fence on part of the perimeter had been once more flagged although it was accepted that school were unable to take steps to raise it. A Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid had previously been rejected as the height of the fence was not deemed to be a priority nor a legal requirement. The state of the roof remained a school priority.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Impact statement <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"> • The safeguarding link governor had met with the SCiES Team during the recent compliance visit the outcome of which had been excellent. • Governors had challenged and received reassurances on pupil attendance. • The school budget for 2024/25 had been discussed in depth and approved. • Governors were assured that a new H&S supplier, Entrust, was in place and an internal H&S audit would take place. • A governor had visited school during the recent SATs and reported that pupils were not stressed or overly anxious and had demonstrated an excellent attitude.
<p>10.</p>	<p>Policies</p> <p>The Staff Use of School Devices Policy (from Spring 2) would be further investigated by the HT and brought back to the Summer 2 meeting.</p> <p>The Marking & Feedback Policy would be added to GVO for approval.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy would be added to the Summer 2 LGB agenda for approval.</p> <p>ACTION: To add the Marking and Feedback Policy to GVO for governor approval. (HT)</p> <p>ACTION: To bring examples of pupil marked books to the Summer 2 LGB meeting. (HT)</p> <p>ACTION: To add the Attendance Policy to GVO for approval at the Summer 2 LGB meeting. (HT)</p> <p>ACTION: To ascertain the existence of an Acceptable Use of IT Policy for Parents and Children and report back to Summer 2 LGB. (HT)</p> <p>ACTION: To investigate the Staff Use of School Devices Policy (from Spring 2) further and bring back to the Summer 2 LGB meeting. (HT)</p> <p>The meeting noted the following Chancery policies approved by Directors since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible Working Policy • Redundancy Policy • Paternity Policy • Leave and Time Off Policy

<p>11.</p>	<p>Governor Training There was no feedback from recent governor training.</p> <p>Phil Yeomans was appointed as Training Link Governor.</p> <p>Governors were requested to complete the following training urgently: Safeguarding (on Every) - TE and KG GDPR (on Every) - FH, GW, RH, TE and KG Prevent (on GVO) – PY, RM, TE and KG **Cyber Security (on GVO) – PY, RH, RM, TE and KG</p> <p>** if you have access to the school network</p> <p>ACTION: To complete mandatory training urgently (see Pt1 mins) (FH, GW, PY, RH, RM, TE, KG)</p> <p><u>Skills audit summer 2024</u> Governors were requested to revisit their latest skills audit on GVO if they so wished, and those new to the board were requested to complete the audit on GVO by the Summer 2 LGB meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: To complete the governor skills audit on GVO asap. (FH, KG and PY)</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Cheshire East Director of Children’s Services Report The Summer 2024 report plus summary had been shared on GVO and governors noted the contents.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions The LGB confirmed the approval of the Part One minutes of the meeting on 18th March 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"> • The clerk would investigate the availability of notes from Chairs’ meetings for those unable to attend. • The outcome of a review of the standards of the school relative to KCSiE and internet access monitoring was reported to the Spring 2 meeting. • The Chair had been unable to attend the previous LGB Chairs’ meeting to raise discussion of the value of the <u>Chancery 15 Steps</u> initiative. • A bid for work on the school roof had been submitted and refused.e <p>ACTION: To investigate the availability of notes from Chairs’ meetings for LGB chairs unable to attend. (Clerk)</p>

<p>14.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Approval of quotations for the path to Treetops and KS1 mobile</u></p> <p>Site Manager, Dave Pickin, presented three quotations for a new access point along the front of the car park. Options had included a new pathway across the car park to and through the fence and into the new block area together with a standing area for parents to collect children. The aim was to address the potential risk for pupils exiting Treetops or clubs and directly accessing the car park thereby meeting moving traffic. Greater separation of moving vehicles and pedestrian was required. A low level fence from the pedestrian gate would ensure pedestrians went around the car park and would prevent possible contact of children with vehicles. Other gates would be installed as required. The main driveway would be locked shut whilst parents and pedestrians arrived and left the school, and fences would prevent pupils from accessing the car park at all points. A double gate, at a cost of £500 – £700, would be required through the fence and original materials would be re-used wherever possible.</p> <p>A swift decision from governors was required as all companies had indicated work over summer holidays was possible.</p> <p>Quotations from four companies had been received, only one of which, from GWG, covered all elements at a cost of £16k without VAT. That from Play GC at £20k did not include the cost of tarmac on the path or the waiting area for parents.</p> <p>Q: Does the plan allow access for fire appliances? A: Yes. They use the double gates at the side of school. Ambulance and delivery access will also be uncompromised.</p> <p>Q: What will the metal fencing comprise? A: The fencing around the carpark to the main door will be the same blue round-top rail fencing The fence across the front of the car park to the entrance to Years 1 and 2 will be a rigid and fixed wire fencing one metre in height. Materials will be re-used wherever possible to keep costs down.</p> <p>The Site Manager confirmed that parking for parents would be unaffected and the staff car parking would be uncompromised.</p> <p>Governors approved the GWG quotation.</p> <p>Governors were requested to arrange visits directly with the HT.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Date of Next meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting of the LGB was confirmed as 1st July 2024.</p>

The Part One meeting closed at 18.38.