**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXCALIBUR SCHOOL LOCAL**

**GOVERNING BOARD HELD AT THE SCHOOL**

**ON 1ST JULY 2024 at 17.00.**

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| **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 |  | Apologies |
| 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 17.02.

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|  | **Item** |
|  | **Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business**  The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting.  Apologies received from Phil Yeomans were accepted.  No additional items of Part One business were requested. |
|  | **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. |
|  | **Staff Presentation**  YH presented the findings of the Outdoor Plan And Learning (OPAL) audit (see meeting pack) and highlighted the following points:  Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)Audit  The latest audit had been carried out, prior to which the areas for action identified in the previous audit had been addressed by the Site Manager, the School Business Manager and Dan Hancock. The outcome was a score of 65 out 72 (90%) which was deemed to be Platinum.  The next reassessment was scheduled for 2026 and school would be looking to not only maintain the area but also add to it and ensure all equipment was maintained to a usable standard. One action identified was to have a Governor Champion who was required to visit once per year and report to LGB. **Gill Burgess, as Health & Safety (H&S) link governor agree to take on the role of OPAL link governor**. A second action was the creation of a Play Charter which would address the grading in the extended access area of the audit. After consideration, it was agreed that Stay and Play sessions would be scheduled at the at the end of each half term i.e. in October, February and June with parents invited to remain from the start of school until 10 a.m. in order to celebrate the school provision. The purpose of the session would be for the parents to experience the provision rather than extended play for the children and to increase the amount of parent involvement in the school. The governors received confirmation that school would have sufficient staffing from a safeguarding perspective. Governors were assured that all necessary safeguarding measures and a risk assessment would be in place. Parents would only be present with their own children and they would not have access to the school buildings.  Felicity Hawkins joined the meeting at 17.12.  Further actions were increased training for the Play Coordinators and the rebranding of the Midday Assistants to the Play Team and the inclusion of a sandpit and a digging pit.  The governors congratulated the school especially Mr Pickin (responsible for the equipment) and YH. The HT reported that children engaged very well, behaviours at lunchtime had improved in many year groups, greater evidence of teamwork had been visible and this was a good alternative to football. Year 4 boys were particularly fond of the den building. |
|  | **Chair’s Action**  The Chair reported no actions on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting. |
|  | **Membership**  The membership of the LGB was confirmed to be as shown on this document.  The **LGB approved the appointment of Sarah Sproston, a former Chair of Governors, who wished to return to the LGB in September 2024.**  The resignation of Mike Cross with effect from 24th June was noted, and Cheshire East advice was awaited with regard to Serena Hallam who was currently standing back from her governor role.  The re-appointment of Gill Burgess as a Co-opted Governor with effect from 1st December 2024 for a further 4 year term of office was agreed.  The members of the Excalibur LGB Pay Panel 2024/25 were agreed to be:   * Sean Smith * Gill Burgess * Gail Whittingham   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. |
|  | **Headteacher Report – Part One**  The following areas were highlighted:  School Improvement visit 18th June  Craig Richardson, an external HMI inspector, had visited to follow up the autumn term Ofsted report with a focus on Science, History and the sequence of teaching. Whilst the report was very positive, further work continued on the monitoring of the delivery of curriculum and ensuring pedagogic choices were appropriate. The leaders were confirmed as excellent.  **Q: What was the HMI view on allowing time in the curriculum for review and on moving away from the teaching plan temporarily if required?**  A: The current lesson structure now gives greater time to retrieval, knowing more and remembering more. Time will be found creatively to plug gaps and misconceptions will be addressed through Flashback 4 activities at the start of lessons. The school will always teach more adaptively and the needs of the pupils will always be the priority.  The school welcomed the rigour of an external School Improvement Partner (SIP) who would visit again in Autumn 2024 funded by Chancery.  The Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) Visit May 2024 had had an extremely positive outcome. All actions identified as red (needing to happen) had been actioned, and work on the four identified as green (even better ifs) was underway e.g. recording on the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS), Acceptable Use Policy and visiting Safety Central. The next visit would take place in 3 years’ time funded by Chancery Trust.  KG had accompanied Louise Gohr on her CEO Visit, the positive report from which had been included in the meeting pack. Governors had no questions.  Attendance Report  Pupil attendance, currently at 96% and above the national average, was a major focus for all local authorities, and half termly meetings continued to take place with all schools to identify persistent absentees. The HT confirmed that Excalibur School monitored attendance extremely carefully and regularly and had it under control. The reasons for absence for those pupils considered persistent absentees were well known to the school and were constantly monitored.  Literacy First Visit  Jonathon Riley had visited and worked with KG on a number of areas as seen in the report in the meeting pack. Outcomes had been positive and would feed into the School Development Plan (SDP) 2024/25. The high standard of the books had been noted and mention of the Drawing Club and correct holding of pencils were particularly highlighted by governors. The HT confirmed that the school focus in the current year had been writing in KS1 and Reception, and books were available for governors to see after the meeting.  The LGB received confirmation that the S175 audit had been completed and returned to the LA by the deadline.  Data  Reception had achieved 80% Good Level of Development (GLD), an increase from 77% in 2022/23. Writing had been a focus in Early Years and Year 1 this year as 6 pupils had not achieved GLD in Writing compared to 2 pupils in the current year. Overall 6 pupils had not achieved GLD for reasons such as Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), having English as an Additional Language (EAL), personal, social and emotional development issues, Special Educational Needs or Disability or confidence in Maths. The outcomes were felt to be appropriate for all pupils.  97% of pupils had achieved the pass mark in phonics, a level of success which was attributed to Mrs Rogers and the Read, Write Inc. (RWI) programme. School had also benefited from visits by the Lacey Green Hub over the previous two years. All staff were trained in RWI and it took place regularly for 40 minutes per day. Impact was clearly visible. All but one child achieved this year and governors particularly commended Mrs Rogers for her engagement with and encouragement of parents and the value of parents listening to pupils read in class. Governors offered their congratulations to the whole team. The two pupils in Year 2 who had not been successful in the phonics test in the previous year, had also not achieved the required level this year. Nevertheless, school was confident that the outcomes were correct for those pupils and further appropriate interventions would be put in place.  ACTION: To pass on the congratulations and thanks of the governors to Mrs Rogers and all staff involved in the delivery of phonics. (HT)  Data for Year 4 had improved from 40% not on track in reading in the spring term to 23% (7 children) who would be a focus for next year. The high number of low achieving boys in the cohort would feed into the SSDP focus for 2024/25. Writing data had previously shown 46% not on track which was now down to 27%, Maths had been 23% and now only 7% not on track, and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) previously 47% was now 40% not on track. SPAG would also feed into the SSDP. Full data and the SSDP would be presented to governors in the autumn term. The HT confirmed that outcomes from the National Federation for Educational Research (NFER) assessments were used and assessments were standardised. The results reflected the ability of the pupils. The areas for development of spelling and reading in Year 4 were thought to be a result of the impact of Covid. The Year 4 class teacher had now returned from maternity leave and a new spelling precision intervention was in place for those with a specific need.  Year 2 data had revealed 90% of pupils at expected plus in reading and 27% working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS), 70% at expected plus and none at GDS in writing, and 90% at expected plus and 13% at GDS in Maths.  Data and reviewed indicated that spelling, vocabulary and handwriting (transcriptional skills) should be focus areas.  The HT advised that with regards to GDS, the data indicated school was doing an exceptionally good job of getting pupils to the point at which they should be. When comparing the number of pupils achieving GD compared to the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) 20, 40-50% were expected achieve Greater depth at the end of Year 6. The question of whether school was working in such a way in Years 1 to 5 to enable children to achieve in Year 6 had been discussed. The demands of pupils in Year 2 were felt to be high and there could be an element of caution in higher years. Standardising in Years 1-5 based on NFER materials was felt to be appropriate and leaders needed to be assured that pitch and challenge were in place to stretch the higher ability pupils. School would not be teaching to the test; however it needed to ensure that the more able have opportunities for a deeper level of thinking. After discussion it was felt that the criteria for achieving greater depth in writing for Years 6 and 2 were felt to be unattainable due to the maturity level of the pupils. The White Rose resources now in place would ensure sufficient opportunities for extending pupils in Maths.  Priorities for the SDP 2024/25 would be:   * Priority 1 – Teaching & Learning * Priority 2 - SEND and disadvantaged pupils * Priority 3 - Leadership |
|  | **Finance Report**  Budget v actuals  **Q: What is the expected outturn for the year?**  A: A break even budget (£2k loss was anticipated) currently as the budget does not yet include pay rises for support staff due in April. The anticipated carry forward will be £104k from the previous year.  **Q: Is the £104k carry forward allocated?**  A: It is accounted for in the 5-year forecast for pay increments and building work e.g. the roof. The roof has been inspected and the Department for Education (DfE) has contacted school to ascertain the current position. A moisture survey has taken place and a bid could be submitted. However, any successful CIF bid would involve either a CIF loan or matched funding.  **Q: Given that the General Annual Grant (GAG) is less than the assumption, where will the clawback of £19k be found?**  A: Some may be offset by Treetops and nursery. GAG funding may reduce further due to pupil numbers and more will be known in October 2024.  School was pleased with the position of the Profit making activities which were ahead of forecast although did not include premises costs but did include staffing. The classroom space (for 24) was limiting numbers and the nursery would be at capacity from September taking into account the required ratios. Access to Treetops was available for parents with excess hours in childcare vouchers.  Debtors and any write offs  Debtor balances were approximately £7k at the end of May, £1926 of which  related to older debtors. Nothing had been written off since joining the trust, and bad debt provision stood at £2963. The SBM confirmed that provision was in place to cover any debts written off. Some debts from 2021 and 2022 were being chased, and a listing would be submitted to the CFO to evidence chasing before being written off. Most of the debts related to Treetops and were due to the financial management system of Treetops at the time. Currently only parents with child care vouchers received invoices and all others paid in advance. A report would be shared with governors and older debtors would be written off against the bad debt provision at the end of the year.  There was nothing to discuss on the Latest Benchmarking Report and there were no school-specific audit points.  Update on any funding bids  See discussion earlier in this item.  Governors were assured that the PE and Sports Funding impact statement would be published by the end of July 2024. |
|  | **Premises / Health & Safety (H&S) Matters**  SBM report  The latest H&S self-evaluation document on GVO would be followed by a further self-assessment in the autumn term. The SBM confirmed that all areas were reviewed on a termly basis. The latest self-assessment revealed two areas for attention: some elements of training and a risk assessment for tools. The autumn self-assessment would be followed by an audit by Entrust (Staffordshire) in January 2025 and a resulting decision on the compliance of the school.  There were no other urgent issues other than the roof.  ACTION: To send the termly H&S report to the clerk for uploading to GVO. (YH)  The Lettings charges for 2024/25 had been approved at the January LGB meeting. |
|  | **Strategic Focus**  The Chair agreed to draft the annual governance statement and share with governors for comment.  ACTION: To draft the annual governance statement and share with governors for comment. (Chair) |
|  | **Chancery collaboration**  Governors proposed no changes to the CMAT Scheme of Delegation.  Feedback from any Chair or Link governor meetings  No link meetings had taken place since the previous LGB meeting and the notes from the Spring 2024 Chairs’ meeting were included in the meeting pack.  ACTION: To prepare a report on the conference and share with governors on GVO. (GB) |
|  | **Link governor reports**  FW agreed to arrange a visit to review behaviour in September.  Governors were requested to arrange visits at least once per term and submit reports. A yearly planner would be formulated.  ACTION: To formulate an annual planner of governor visits. (Chair/HT) |
|  | **Impact statement**  Impact of the work of the governing board on the pupils of Excalibur School since the last meeting   * Governors congratulated school on the excellent report on the OPAL provision audit and agreed the many benefits to pupils. * The positive safeguarding report from the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) team was celebrated by governors and thanks were given to all involved. * The excellent outcomes of the H&S self-evaluation were noted which demonstrated the site was a safe environment for the community. * Congratulations were extended to the school for the excellent outcomes of the external reviews carried out by Craig Richardson and Jonathon Riley. * Governors received assurances that an improvement in data for Year 4 had been seen and that steps were in place to bring about further improvements. * Governors had welcomed the opportunity to examine pupil Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) books. |
|  | **Policies**  The meeting confirmed the approval of the following school policies subject to the comments on GVO:   * Staff Use of School Devices Policy * Attendance Policy * School Uniform Policy * Asbestos Management Plan * Mental Health Policy * Letting Charges 2024/25 * Cyber Response RPA   The meeting noted that no Chancery policies had been approved since the last meeting. |
|  | **Governor Training**  There was no feedback from recent governor training.  Governors training would be revisited in the autumn term and the outcome of the GVO skills audit indicated that the LGB had a wide range of skills and no current areas of need. |
|  | **Clerking Arrangements**  The meeting confirmed the clerking arrangements for the current year would continue for 2024/25. |
|  | **Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions**  The LGB confirmed the approval of the Part One minutes of the meeting on 20th May 2024 on GVO.  There were no matters arising.  The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and the following points highlighted:   * Discussions around the top slice had taken place with Mark Bayley on his visit and a report was to be shared by RH. * A PP link governor visit would be scheduled in the autumn term. * The necessity for an Acceptable Use of IT Policy for Parents and Children was to be reviewed with the safeguarding link governor. * Governor training would be reviewed in the autumn term. * All other actions were complete. |
|  | **Any Other Business**  There was no other business for discussion. |
|  | **Date of Next meeting**  The date of the next meeting of the LGB was confirmed as 30th September 2024. Meeting dates for 2024/25 were agreed as:   * 30th September 2024 * 25th November 2024 * 3rd February 2025 * 24th March 2025 * 19th May 2025 * 7th July 2025 |

The Part One meeting closed at 18.15.