

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXCALIBUR SCHOOL LOCAL
GOVERNING BOARD HELD AT THE SCHOOL
ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

Name	Governor Category	Designated Role	Attendance
Gail Whittingham	Co-opted Governor	Chair	Present
Gill Burgess	Co-opted Governor	Vice Chair	Apologies
Juliet Jones	Headteacher	Headteacher	Present
Felicity Hawkins	Co-opted Governor		Present
Rachel Hackney	Co-opted Governor		Present
Tom Egle	Co-opted Governor		Apologies
Shaun Smith	Co-opted Governor		Present
Sarah Sproston	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 17.00.

	Item
1.	<p>Handwriting and spelling update Kay Griffin, SSDP Leader Priority 1.1 and 1.2 - Handwriting and Spelling, gave an update to governors and stressed that handwriting and spelling were cross-curricular tasks across the school which had the aim of raising standards to improve pupil outcomes.</p> <p><u>Handwriting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new school policy was for pupils to experience coherence and continuity in the teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work across all subject areas. National Curriculum requirements in Early Learning, Key Stage 1 (KS1) and KS2 had been examined at the inset day at the start of term and goals for each had been set. Expectations at KS1 were high and would lead to achievement of the requirement at the end of KS2. The teaching of handwriting was now more systematic with three discrete handwriting sessions per week for all classes. New resources were to be purchased to ensure consistency across school.

	<p>Q: Which resources have been selected? A: CGP resources, due to the similarity of the handwriting style with that currently in place. There is an emphasis on consistency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring took place through the regular checking on books by leadership and subject leaders. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was provided for support staff to ensure a sound understanding of expectations. • To date monitoring had shown that teacher input had changed and children were being given regular instruction from their teachers and opportunities to improve their handwriting. Some books already showed improved presentation. The need for reminders of the expectations for pupils' year groups had become apparent. <p><u>Spelling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim was to ensure the teaching of spelling was embedded and improved outcomes for children in line with the School Strategic Development Plan (SSDP) Priority 1.1. • High frequency word misspellings had been identified in the 2023 Ofsted visit. • School now followed the 'Pathways to Spell' programme with three lessons per week plus a test. Pupils practised focus words, and key vocabulary in foundation subjects was now displayed on classroom walls. • Formal assessment had revealed spelling as a weakness. This was particularly the case for older children who had missed their Reception class education during Covid lockdown. <p>Q: For which years is there a particular spelling focus? A: Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils have a good grammatical understanding; however, some conventions have not been established during Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 due to Covid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling formed part of pupil homework either weekly or through a block at the start of each half term. Words from Pathways To Spell were included in English lessons where required and errors in cross curricular work were identified and corrected by the child. • Books were regularly monitored by the leadership team and subject leaders. <p>The Head advised that an impact had been seen and books would be presented to the next meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business The Clerk welcomed governors, particularly Sarah Sproston and Chancery Link Trustees Amanda Mellor and Simon Varo, to the meeting. Introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies received from Tom Egley and Gill Burgess were accepted.</p>

	No additional items of Part One business were requested.
3.	<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> <p>Completion of Chancery Governor Compliance tasks for 2024/25 would be verified by Jenny Whiston after the meeting and individual tasks would be allocated where governors were not compliant.</p>
4.	<p>Election of Chair</p> <p>Gail Whittingham, nominated by Felicity Hawkins and seconded by Rachel Morrison, was duly elected as Chair of Excalibur LGB for 2024–25 and took over the meeting from this point.</p>
5.	<p>Election of Vice Chair</p> <p>Gill Burgess, nominated by Rach Hackney and seconded by Shaun Smith, was duly elected as Vice Chair of Excalibur LGB for 2024-25.</p>
6.	<p>Chair's Action</p> <p>The LGB agreed to delegate the power to act on behalf of the LGB to the Chair and, in the absence of the Chair, to the Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair reported no actions on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting.</p>
7.	<p>Membership</p> <p>The membership of the LGB was confirmed to be as shown on this document.</p> <p>Serena Hallam had now stepped down from her governor role.</p> <p>The members of the <u>Excalibur LGB Pay Panel 2024/25</u> comprising Shaun Smith, Gill Burgess and Gail Whittingham had met.</p> <p>The members of the <u>HT PM Panel</u> were to meet on 24th October 2024 and comprise the Chancery School Improvement Partner, Helen Gorst, the Chair of the LGB and the Link Director, Simon Varo.</p> <p>Governors noted the appointment of Sarah Sproston from 1st July 2024 with a term of office of four years.</p> <p>There were no other governor terms of office due for renewal before the next meeting and there were currently no plans for further recruitment.</p> <p>The following link governors were agreed:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND – Rachel Morrison • Safeguarding – Gail Whittingham • H&S - Gill Burgess • PP - Rachel Hackney <p><u>SDP area link governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Priority 1</u> (Teaching & Learning and improving outcomes including Pre-school) – Tom Egley, Felicity Hawkins, Rachel Morrison and Phil Yeomans • <u>Priority 2</u> (Disadvantaged pupils) - Rachel Morrison and Rachel Hackney • Priority 3 (Leadership, Succession Planning and Developing Middle Leaders) - Sarah Sproston, Gill Burgess and Shaun Smith <p>Governors received assurance that all membership records on the website and GIAS would be updated by the school.</p>
8.	<p>Headteacher Report – Part One The Head gave a verbal update.</p> <p><u>Attendance to date</u> was 97.7% compared to the national average of 95.5% and included one pupil who would return to school on a phased basis with support. School was happy with the attendance which was monitored daily by the Head. The Fischer Family Trust (FFT) attendance review was available in the meeting pack.</p> <p>The <u>Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP) for 2024-25</u> had three areas informed by the outcomes of the parent survey, data and attainment and pupil voice.</p> <p>One area of focus under Priority 1: Teaching & Learning was greater depth achievement, the aim of which was to ensure teaching was sufficiently adaptive to allow challenge for less and more able pupils to achieve their potential.</p> <p>End of year <u>data</u>, included in the meeting pack, revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was above national and Cheshire East (CE) in all areas. • EYFS data was 80% at Greater Level of Development (GLD) and above CE at 68% and national at 67%. • Phonics had been a great success with 97% achieving the phonics score this year compared to 93% last year and less than 90% in the year before that. This upward trajectory would feed through school. • In year data was good with a push for higher achieving pupils, and those just below age expectations had bespoke plans in place.

	<p>To ensure school remained on track and was maintaining momentum, leaders were following a rigorous monitoring schedule focussing each week on one area from learning environment, behaviour for learning, pitch and expectations and questioning. Immediate supportive feedback to teachers and had been acted upon and teachers had been seen to have progressed. Feedback had also been discussed in staff meetings with the aim of improving further.</p> <p>Cheshire East would be ceasing the <u>catering service</u> and the Chancery school had joined a consortium which had shortlisted four potential replacement companies. The trust was working towards a new and improved contract from January 2025. The catering provision had increasingly not been to the required standard and it had been felt that the cost did not reflect the quality of food provided. The change would be welcomed by the school.</p> <p>A <u>Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)</u> bid through E3Cube, the trust advisers, was to be made for work required on the leaking roof. Surveys had been carried out and the contribution from school would require trustee approval.</p> <p><u>Pathways and fencing</u> were agreed to be a great improvement which eased congestion on exiting the site. The area outside KS1 Hub had been developed, led by Governor Felicity Hawkins, who was thanked for her work.</p>
9.	<p>Finance Matters</p> <p>Governors accepted the Academy Trust Handbook 2024 and noted that the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures was being updated to reflect changes in the Academy Trust Handbook. Documents had been circulated to all finance staff in the school.</p> <p>A Freedom of Information request relating to the Friends of Excalibur accounts had been received was being dealt with by the school. This had also been forwarded to the Governance and Compliance Lead for Chancery records.</p>
10.	<p>Premises / Health & Safety (H&S) Matters</p> <p>There were no urgent <u>H&S issues</u>. Governors were advised that all audit meetings had been re-scheduled for 2025.</p> <p>Q: Will the re-scheduling of H&S audits leave the school vulnerable? A: No, the self-assessment was carried out, shared with governors and JW and was also now on the Every system. All actions are complete.</p>
11.	<p>Link Governor reports</p> <p>Governors were requested to email the Head to arrange link governor visits into school.</p>

12.	<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 governors had re-organised the KS1 area with the help of parents from the Reception class and had created an outdoor area for pupils. Pupils were delighted. • Link governors had been appointed to the strands of the SSDP to monitor and challenge its progress and completion.
13.	<p>Policies The meeting confirmed the approval of the following school policies subject to the comments on GVO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of Medication Policy • Behaviour Policy • Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy • Online Safety Policy • Curriculum Statement • Relationships Policy • Attendance and Punctuality Policy • SEND info report due for review Nov 24. <p>The <u>Antibullying Policy</u> was currently being reviewed in collaboration with staff and pupils to ensure fine tuning of approach. This would be added to GVO for approval once complete.</p> <p>The meeting noted that no Chancery policies had been approved at the summer trustees meeting. The following had been approved at the autumn meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Statement • Health & Safety Policy • Dealing with incidents of unreasonable behaviour towards staff • Central Team Pay Policy • Staff Wellbeing Policy • Whistleblowing Policy <p>The CMAT Menopause Policy had been ratified.</p> <p>All policies were available on Every.</p>
14.	<p>Governor Training There was no feedback from recent governor training.</p> <p>ACTION: To complete mandatory governor training. (SS)</p> <p>Safeguarding audit training for the Chair would be shared by the Head.</p>

	Governors were requested to respond to the governor forum survey circulated by Jenny Whiston. A date for the next event would be arranged based on feedback.
15.	<p>Cheshire East Director of Children's Services Report</p> <p>The Autumn 2024 report was not available at the time of the meeting. However, once available it would be shared with governors together with the helpful summary from Jenny Whiston. Discussion would take place at the Autumn 2 LGB meeting.</p>
16.	<p>Term Dates</p> <p>The LGB approved the term dates for the academic year 2025/26.</p> <p><u>Polling day school closures</u></p> <p>The Head advised that the school was obliged to close for polling days as no staff or children were allowed to be on site for safeguarding reasons. As a result a closure would take place on Thursday 3rd October, rather than in May 2025, for local elections.</p>
17.	<p>Educational Visits</p> <p><u>Planned educational visits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 6 were to visit Robin Wood on 16/17th October for two nights. A two-night visit to London for the next Year 6 class was under consideration. This would have a cultural capital focus and could include a visit to the Houses of Parliament plus a theatre experience. • Year 2 would visit Delamere in March 2025 • Year 4 were to spend one night at Standon Bowers in the summer term 2025. <p>Governors requested school explored the possibility of a one day train trip to Manchester for Year 5 pupils in preparation for the longer trip to London.</p> <p>Appropriate <u>risk assessments</u> were in place.</p> <p>Q: Would it be possible for child care vouchers to be used for residentials?</p> <p>A: Child care vouchers cannot be possible for residentials without school being set up as a child care provider.</p> <p>The residential for next year's Year 6 would not be in September to allow for payments in instalments.</p>
18. Ro	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions</p> <p>The LGB confirmed the approval of the Part One minutes of the meeting on 1st July 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 Chair would take discussion of the value of the <u>Chancery 15 Steps</u> initiative to the next LGB Chairs' meeting. • A Pupil Premium (PP) link governor visit would be carried out as soon as possible. • The requirement for an Acceptable Use of IT Policy for Parents and Children would be verified by the clerk. • The termly H&S report would be presented to the Autumn 2 LGB meeting. • The annual governance statement and a schedule of governor visits would be created by the Head and Chair. • Following investigation, the LGB had been advised that an Acceptable Use of IT Policy for Parents and Children was not required.
19.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business to discuss.</p>
20.	<p>Date of Next meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting of the LGB was confirmed as 25th November 2024.</p> <p>The remaining meeting dates for 2024/25 were as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd February 2025 • 24th March 2025 • 19th May 2025 • 7th July 2025

Simon Varo, Amanda Mellor, Yvonne Hilditch and Kay Griffin left, and the Part One meeting closed at 18.11.