



## Excalibur FGB Pt 1 Minutes 14/09/2020

▶ Virtual ▶ Monday, September 14, 2020 ▶ 17:30 ▶ Chair: Sarah Sproston ▶ Clerk: Sue Lambeth

**FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.**

Governors Attending: >Jo Bain, Gail Whittingham, Juliet Jones, Petra Wayman-Zwart, Anna McArdle, Rachel Hackney, Michael Cross, Sarah Sproston

Governors Apologies: >Kate Jepson, Simon Cotterill

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth, Yvonne Hilditch

Non Governors Apologies: >

### Agenda Item 1 ▶ Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business Items

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.33.

#### MINUTE

Apologies received from Kate Jepson were accepted. Simon Cotterill would be joining the meeting later if possible. Nikki Ratcliffe (Director) was not present.

Additional items of Part One business requested:

- Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP) and allocation of responsibilities with reference to improving governing board effectiveness.

### Agenda Item 2 ▶ Conflict/Declarations of Interest and Code of Conduct

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.

#### MINUTE

The Clerk requested that governors update Declarations of Interest and sign the Code of Conduct on Trust Governor. Governors would complete the Cheshire East declarations of interest document when this became possible.

The governance section of the website was to be updated with governor attendance for the previous year and governors were requested to advise YH of any changes required.

#### ACTION

To update Declarations of Interest, sign the Code of Conduct on Trust Governor and advise YH of changes to details for the website. (All)

### Agenda Item 3 ▶ Election of Chair & Vice Chair

#### MINUTE

Sarah Sproston, nominated by JB and seconded by MC, was duly elected as Chair of Excalibur LGB for the academic year 2020-21.

Jo Bain, nominated by SS and seconded by PW, was duly elected as Vice Chair of Excalibur LGB for the academic year 2020-21.

### Agenda Item 4 ▶ Chairs Power to Act

The LGB **agreed** to delegate the Power to Act on behalf of the LGB to the Chair, and in the Chair's absence to the Vice Chair.

#### MINUTE

The Chair reported the following action taken on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting:

A week before the start of term the Cheshire East admissions team had received an appeal around the place of residence of one applicant. It had been ascertained that the family had had to move house and there was a discrepancy about the timing of application submission. Due to an error the house move had not been identified. After consultation with the school the Chair had concluded that the child's place was not to be withdrawn in view of the time scale and it was felt there was no intention to mislead.

Governors **agreed** the admission decision was the correct one. JJ had no further comments and thanked JB and SS for their support.

#### DECISION

The LGB agreed to delegate the Power to Act on behalf of the LGB to the Chair, and in the Chair's absence to the Vice Chair. Governors agreed the admission decision was the correct one

### Agenda Item 5 ▶ Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and actions

#### MINUTE

The Part One minutes of the Summer 2 LGB meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were reviewed, **agreed** to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the chair.

There were no matters arising and LGB developments points would be addressed in this meeting.

The Action Log from the Summer 2 LGB meeting was reviewed and updated on Trust Governor.

JB and SS advised they would prepare the Governance Statement for the two previous years.

#### DECISION

The Part One minutes of the Summer 2 LGB meeting on 13th July 2020 were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the chair.

### Agenda Item 6 ▶ Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference

#### MINUTE

YH advised that there were no changes to the Scheme of Delegation which would be confirmed at the forthcoming Chancery Directors' meeting and the document would be presented to the next LGB meeting.

### Agenda Item 7 ▶ Finance

#### MINUTE

Changes in the Academies Financial Handbook 2020 had been identified in the document available on Trust Governor and the Letter from the CEO of the ESFA to Accounting Officers had also been uploaded.

Three year forecast return

The Budget Forecast Return (BFR) would be sent to the DfE as a trust document before the end of September deadline.

The budget for this year had been approved. Details of the teachers' pay increases were now known and included. Budget papers would be available for the next meeting.

Financial Report

Due to the timing of the meeting there was no financial report at this meeting. YH advised she would endeavour to upload management accounts on a monthly basis. Governors could then contact YH with questions which would be evidenced in meeting minutes.

#### Agenda Item 8 ► Health and Safety

Two Health & Safety audits had taken place remotely and reports had been uploaded to Trust Governor which were for review by governors at this meeting.

##### RPA Audit

An RPA audit had taken place on 29<sup>th</sup> June. The report had gone to Chancery Directors who would require evidence of the discussion at this meeting.

The Chair advised that that vast majority of ratings demonstrated best practice. It was felt to be a great report with only four out of thirteen recommendations (green) to be noted. The recommendations concerned:

- Risk assessments
- Stress
- Security
- Employment Law

MINUTE

YH advised that the recommendation around risk assessments was due to the slightly different basis used. In the future risks would be analysed as they were before mitigation and then judged again after mitigation. This practice would be put in place over the next year and as policies came up they would be amended as required. In terms of stress, a Wellbeing Policy was being drafted by Cooks Lawyers at the moment for Chancery Trust, which would be signed off by the trust and adopted by the school. The security survey was now in place. The audit felt that stronger Employment Law was required. However, as Chancery Trust uses the services of Cooks Lawyers, YH had queried this.

##### Cheshire East (CE) Audit

The CE audit identified only the point relating to the Stress Policy and the tying down of the refuse bins, which YH advised would not be possible as they are collected early in the morning.

The Chair thanked YH and the Site Manager for an excellent report. Two Health & Safety audits had taken place remotely and reports had been uploaded to Trust Governor which were for review by governors at this meeting.

##### Cheshire East (CE) Audit

The CE audit identified only the point relating to the Stress Policy and the tying down of the refuse bins, which YH advised would not be possible as they are collected early in the morning.

The Chair thanked YH and the Site Manager for an excellent report

CHALLENGE **Q: Does the outcome of the audit have any impact on RPA insurance costs?**  
**A: No, it is a reinsurance to the DfE that everything is in place.**

#### Agenda Item 9 ► Membership

##### Changes in Membership

MINUTE

There had been no changes to the membership of the LGB since the previous meeting. There were no vacancies currently and no governor terms of office were due to expire before the next LGB meeting.

#### Agenda Item 10 ► Headteacher Report

The Headteacher report had previously been available on Trust Governor and JJ highlighted the following points:

- It was not usual to have a Headteacher report in the Autumn 1 LGB meeting but one had been provided in view of the unusual situation.
- The pupils were very ready to return to school and had settled well into learning with staggered starts working well.
- There had been no further changes to the Risk Assessment other than the period of isolation changing from 7 to 10 days.
- Quiet singing was now allowed in class.
- Attendance had been good in the first week at 98.1% on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- There had been an increase in the number of pupils absent on 14<sup>th</sup> September. As a result a letter reminding parents of symptoms had been sent out.
- The curriculum had a focus on re-establishing practices, rules and boundaries. Work with Visyon had taken place over the summer and their "Mental Well-being Pathways" adopted. This gave a clear structure for identifying a concern, implementing targeted support, monitoring impact and making appropriate referrals, in order to improve the mental wellbeing of the pupils. Anna McArdle had been appointed designated lead for emotional health and well-being.
- A significant amount of catchup would be required and consideration was being given to assessment of gaps appropriate to each class after discussion with staff and subject leaders. A carefully selected set of tests was available for teachers to administer as they felt most appropriate. Question level analysis would then identify gaps to be filled using government funding for catch up programmes. Pupils of all ability levels would be considered.
- Governors learnt that pupils had shown vast amounts of resilience and had fitted back into school well, as was clearly seen at the start of the school day. Governors thanked JJ and her team for their work.
- Ofsted could visit at any point to review remote learning and how pupils had returned to school and JJ confirmed that a rigorous structure for remote learning had been put in place, including procedures and policies. Teacher workload had been considered and JJ was meeting with staff formally and informally to monitor this. The emphasis was that remote learning should not be onerous as it reflected what is going on in the classroom. Many resources were available and organising remote learning was not felt to be particularly onerous.
- Positive responses had been received from parents through email and personal comments; both pupils and parents were happy to be back.

**Q: What is the position with the seven pupils absent due to COVID?**

**A: Either they are displaying symptoms or other family members are. 6 had been tested and were negative.**

**Q: Have any parents expressed concerns about sending pupils into school?**

**A: No. All pupils have returned.**

**Q: What would happen regarding remote learning in the event of a teacher not being in school?**

**A: This could be more onerous but the staff have been very supportive. Other staff will rally round if staff have to be off for two weeks. There is also capacity in terms of teaching assistants.**

CHALLENGE **Q: What is the impact of staggered times for pupil arrival and departure on the time required of staff?**

**A: The staggered starts have been reduced as far as possible, but have necessarily made the days longer for the staff in order to provide the pupils with the correct number of hours. The marking policy has been revised and much marking has been reduced. Verbal feedback is now a focus. Marking nevertheless remains purposeful, insightful and meant to move learners on and has had a positive impact on teacher time.**

**Q: Is absence due to Covid isolation or Covid being tracked separately?**

**A: Different absence codes have been added to the SIMS attendance monitoring system on a scale from 1 - 9 which enables tracking.**

**Q: Is there a back-up plan to cover staff if they need to be off longer?**

**A: Not at the current time. There is no limit on the length of time a member of staff would need to recover, and further plans would have to be put in place. A longer absence would be classed as illness and would be covered by insurance.**

#### Agenda Item 11 ► Reports from Governors with Specific Responsibilities

MINUTE It was agreed that this topic would be revisited at the next meeting.

**Agenda Item 12** ► Safeguarding

MINUTE JJ reported that there were no safeguarding issues.  
Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) training had been booked, with whole school basic awareness training on 21<sup>st</sup> September virtually. Staff had completed Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and Prevent training.

**Agenda Item 13** ► Governor Development

MINUTE The Training Liaison Governor reminded the meeting that online training was available via Modern Governor and the Clerk advised that the booking of CE inset would now be via GovernorHub. Governor training and development would be re-visited by SS and PW after the allocation of areas of responsibility.

**Agenda Item 14** ► SIP/External Adviser

MINUTE This year the School Improvement Partner (SIP) role would be assumed by the CEO, with a visit by an external adviser in the summer term.  
Performance management for the Headteacher would be discussed in Part 2 of the meeting.

**Agenda Item 15** ► School Policies

Policies for review and approval

The following policies had been made available to governors on Trust Governor prior to the meeting:

- Assessment Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

MINUTE Governors had no questions and the Assessment Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy, Exclusion Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Remote Learning Policy were **agreed**.

There were no approved MAT Policies specific to Excalibur LGB.

MAT approved policies are available via the minutes, although there were none from the summer term. The Teachers' Pay Policy, the Stress Policy and the Internal Financial Procedures Policy would be presented to Chancery Directors this term and would be referred back to the Autumn 2 LGB meeting.

DECISION Governors had no questions and the Assessment Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy, Exclusion Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Remote Learning Policy were agreed.

**Agenda Item 16** ► Director of Children's Services Report Autumn 2020

MINUTE The report was not yet available.

**Agenda Item 17** ► Educational Visits

MINUTE No bus trips or overnight residential trips would be made at this time. However, workshops were taking place in school and a walking trip was planned.

**Agenda Item 18** ► Meetings

The date of the second Excalibur LGB meeting of the autumn term was confirmed as **Monday 23rd November**.

MINUTE After discussion around the need for governor awareness of the effectiveness in pupil assessment and the filling of gaps, JJ agreed that an update was reasonable and would provide one to governors at the end of the first half term.

Governors confirmed their complete confidence in the headteacher and her team.

**Agenda Item 19** ► Any Other Business

It was agreed that JJ and SS would work further on the SSDP before sharing with Governors.

MINUTE Governors were asked to comment and indicate areas of interest to SS.

JJ confirmed that Governor visits were possible with masks at times when pupils were not in school.

ACTION To comment on the SSDP and indicate areas of interest to SS. (All).

**Agenda Item 20** ► Impact Statement

Impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School

- Governors felt comfortable that processes were in place to support children families and staff.
- The Headteacher was questioned in depth on her report and agreed to provide an interim update on the progress of assessing and catch up before the next meeting.
- Governors discussed the policies in place for remote learning and staff and pupil wellbeing. Governors have a clear understanding of the functioning of the school at the current time.
- Governors identified questions which were being dealt with on a daily basis by the HT and her team.
- Governors confirmed their commitment to support for HT if and when required.
- Governors were assured of the safe environment of the school as demonstrated by the Health and Safety audits.

MINUTE

MC left the meeting at 18.42.

The Staff Governor left and the Part One meeting closed at 18.43.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

Excalibur LGB Autumn 1 2020 Pt 1 dated: 14/09/2020

Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch