



Yvonne Hilditch Chancery MAT [85] 16 February 2021

Excalibur FGB Pt 1 Minutes 23/11/2020

▶ Virtual ▶ Monday, November 23, 2020 ▶ 17:30 ▶ Chair: Sarah Sproston ▶ Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending: >Simon Cotterill, Juliet Jones, Jo Bain, Gail Whittingham, Petra Wayman-Zwart, Kate Jepson, Michael Cross, Rachel Hackney, Sarah Sproston

Governors Apologies: >Nikki Ratcliffe, Anna McArdle

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth, Gail Burgess, Yvonne Hilditch

Non Governors Apologies: >

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

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.36.

The Chair welcomed governors especially the prospective new governor Gill Burgess, a former Chair of the LGB. Gill introduced herself to the meeting and gave details of her background, her long connection with Excalibur School and her passion for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Looked After Children (LAC) and school governance.

Supportive feedback from governors had been received prior to the meeting for Gill to re-join the LGB.

MINUTE SC arrived at 17.40.

Governors **agreed** to recommend the appointment of Gill Burgess to the LGB to the Directors and YH would initiate the Disclosure and Barring Service process (DBS).

Apologies received from Nikki Ratcliffe and Anna McArdle were accepted. SS would meet with NR if needed.

No additional items of Part One business were requested

ACTION To process the DBS check for Gill Burgess. (YH)

DECISION Governors agreed to recommend the appointment of Gill Burgess to the LGB to the Directors and YH would initiate the Disclosure and Barring Service process (DBS).

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Conflict of Interests

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 SS, SC, MC and KJ agreed to update their declarations of interest and sign the Code of Conduct on The Trust Governor (TTG) as soon as possible.

The governance section of the website had been updated with governor attendance for the previous year and all changes to Governor details had been advised to YH.

Agenda Item 3 ▶ Part One Minutes, Matters Arising and Actions

MINUTE The Part One minutes of the Autumn 1 LGB meeting on 14th September 2020 were reviewed, **agreed** to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the chair.

There were no matters arising and the Action Log from the Autumn 1 LGB meeting was reviewed and updated on Trust Governor.

DECISION The Part One minutes of the Autumn 1 LGB meeting on 14th September 2020 were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate account

Agenda Item 4 ▶ Chair's Action and Correspondence

MINUTE The Chair reported that no action taken on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting.

Agenda Item 5 ▶ Finance

MINUTE **Finance Report**

Financial Position

A summary of the financial position for the current year was shown in the table split into 3 sections: October, up to October and the original budget set by the LGB and the latest forecast based on that.

The current period showed a surplus of £17k compared with October 2019 surplus of £10k. The year to date showed a surplus of £20k and the cumulative surplus in the previous year had been a surplus of £36k. Latest forecast showed annual income exceeding expenditure by £4262. The original budget was a deficit budget of £16, 655. The school had now managed to get into positive position and increase funds by £20,915.

Appendix A

This was a summary in more detail together with variances (virements).

Virements Under £10k for governors to approve

- £3,690 decrease in SEN (Special Educational Needs) funding as EHCP's (Educational Health Care Plans) planned for in the budget have been delayed.
- £3,380 decrease in teaching staff salaries due to savings made on the recruitment of the Senco from January 2021.
- £2,000 increase in Caretaker supplies due to Covid19 risk assessment requirements
- £4,852 increase in Gas costs due to the expected increased need for the heating in school whilst providing a full ventilated school as per the Covid 19 risk assessment.
- £1,950 decrease in IT Support Services due to a virement to IT Licencing.
- £1,899 increase in IT licencing due to a transfer to IT support services.

Virements to go to Directors over £10k

- £17,120 increase in Other EFA (education Funding Agency) grants for the DFE allocation of Covid19 Catchup funding for the school in 2020/21.
- £13,949 decrease in Educational support staff salaries due to a delay in EHCP's in the school and therefore a reduction in the related welfare staff hours.

Invoices and orders

There were no invoices or orders for this meeting.

However, YH reported that:

- The school had won a capital CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) bid using property contractors Eddisons Ltd for the replacement of the single glazed windows and doors in the main school building. The CIF bid is worth £213,746. No contribution was expected by the school but the Directors and LGB needed to approve the contractor payments to the value of £213,746
- The school was bidding for Capital CIF monies using the property contractor E3 Cubed Limited for the replacement of the school mobile building. Appendix B included a detailed breakdown of the funding of the school's contribution of £50,000. The directors had approved the school contribution in principle but the Local Governing Board needed to now approve this.
- The school was investigating the updating of the wireless and broadband systems in school. The SBM's (School Business Manager) were investigating this as a joint project across the trust and more detailed information would follow.

Governors discussed the length of the plan and the return to be made in 10 years. The difference in the level repayments would make the 10 years a better choice for the school.

Governors had no further concerns or questions and felt that the image of the school would be enhanced by the work.

YH reported that investigation was underway on the updating of the wireless and broadband system (see above). Although there would be a cost implication, capital monies were available.

Forward projections

This section looked at the three-year forecast and currently showed a balance of £97k at the end of 2023/24. However, it was thought that the pension grant might be put into national funding formula from next year, although advice was that schools would not miss out on funding.

Ratio analysis and academies benchmarking data was included in section 4.5.

Section 4.6 referred to the increases in teaching pay which went through in August and non-teaching pay had been backdated to April.

Section 4.7 detailed the potential movement of payment of the pension grant from 2021/22 from a separate grant to through the National Funding Formula

The top slice as shown in Section 4.8 Point 1 was currently 4.8% but could be reduced to 4.5% in the next year. Point 2 detailed pupil numbers and YH confirmed that the rate of Pupil Premium would be amended for the next report.

Section 4.9 detailed the staffing plan.

Section 5 - Other Activities

Some movement was reported in out of hours with the departure of one member of staff who had not been replaced. Where there were over 32 children, staffing gaps were being covered. £6700 profit was reported so far this year and £30k on Treetops if the current rate of attendance continued. The provision made a loss in the previous year.

Holiday Club would only run when out-of-hours staff were available e.g. three days over October half term. Parents had been advised well in advance and no negative comments had been received and there was no extra cost to the school. If numbers increased the situation would be reviewed.

Business risks for the school

A refund of £600 (out of £2000) for Covid expenses had been received.

Financial procedures and risk

YH confirmed that the Trust Risk listing went to Directors once a term.

Summary and Conclusions

This included information on the arrival at the projections and on balance sheet.

Cash flow was now based on the latest projection rather than on the budget and reflected the latest forecast and included the CIF income and expenditure.

Governors **agreed** the following recommendations:

- The noting and approval of the virements presented.
- The noting of the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value.
- The noting of the profit from other activities.
- The noting of the business risks listed.
- The noting of the going concern of the school.

Self-assessment Dashboard Tool

This pleasing report would be referred to Directors on 2nd December and was based on 2108/19 data. The high risk area included other staff and the medium risk was the balance as a percentage of total income.

DfE Benchmarking Report Card

This showed Excalibur and other similar schools and enabled comparison. Governors felt this was extremely useful. Latest forecast figures would be added to the benchmarking data for Governors going forwards.

Governors commented positively on the 2023/24 budget forecast and had no further questions

YH was thanked for her comprehensive report.

Governors agreed the following recommendations:

The noting and approval of the virements presented.
The noting of the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value.
The noting of the profit from other activities.
The noting of the business risks listed.
The noting of the going concern of the school.

DECISION

CHALLENGE

Q: Is the project on the replacement of the mobile building to be handled by a sole contractor?
A: The school is working with E3 Cubed who will control the bid and run the project, getting suppliers to do the work.

Q: Why does the replacement building have to be like for like and why does it have to be a mobile?
A: It is a replacement project and that is the DfE stance.

Q: Will the replacement mobile go into the same position?
A: Discussions have taken place with contractors. Relocation might be negotiable but the retention of both constructions will not be possible

Q: Will the replacement be another mobile or a permanent building?

A: It has to be like for like, therefore a mobile.

Q: What is the qualitative life expectancy of a mobile?

A: It is superior to the current one which is 25 / 30 years old. Life expectancy would not be less than 50 years and the loan has a low rate of interest.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ **Scheme of Delegation and LGB 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.

The LGB Terms of Reference (on TTG) approved in September 2019 remain unchanged.

Agenda Item 7 ▶ **Health and Safety**

MINUTE

YH reported that there had been no visits since the previous meeting, at which the Cheshire East meeting had been discussed.

The DfE RPA insurance Health and Safety risk assessment had been carried out at the start of the summer and YH had reported back to the DfE on progress on items identified. It was envisaged that all actions would be closed by the January meeting.

Action points from the Fire Risk assessment were being cleared.

A sports equipment risk assessment had also taken place. Mats must be removed and not used inside and would be replaced when required.

Two struts in the fort area would require replacement and a lottery bid was being explored to replace the fort and the area behind it. Details would come back to LGB in January. Currently the area was cordoned off. As repairs for the current year would amount to £2k, it was felt that this amount could be put towards a replacement and new play equipment. Pupils would be involved in the design.

Agenda Item 8 ▶ **Membership**

MINUTE

Changes in Membership

The Chair proposed that Gill Burgess be appointed as a Co-Opted Governor. Governors **approved** this decision which would become a recommendation to the Directors for consideration at their December meeting.

Current Vacancies

There were no governor terms of office due to expire before the next LGB meeting on 11th January 2021.

DECISION

The Chair proposed that Gill Burgess be appointed as a Co-Opted Governor. Governors approved this decision which would become a recommendation to the Directors for consideration at their December meeting.

Agenda Item 9 ▶ **Headteacher Report**

MINUTE

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

Section 1 Key Information

- The 215 pupils on roll were shown with a breakdown per year and other groups.
- The total attendance of pupils of 97.68% was shown including a breakdown by category. Since the return of pupils attendance had been carefully monitored and compared favourably with the 98% attendance at the same point last year. Of the two Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) pupils with attendance of less than 90%, one was due to injury. However, since their return to school there had been no further absences and the other pupil was on part time access to school and part remote which formed a structured and staggered return to school. Two Pupil Premium pupils had attendance less than 90% due to one requiring to self-isolate following a holiday. However, since return there had been no further absence. One child was suffering anxieties around being dropped off for school which had resulted in attendance of 68% and regular parental conversations were taking place. One child's attendance was 19% and regular conversations with the parent, school nurse and with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) had taken place. The child back was in school currently and the situation was being carefully monitored.
- Some children had had to isolate due to parental Covid issues. There had been no positive cases of coronavirus in school. Some staff had been absent due to self-isolation. All teaching was covered in school and no supply cover had been required. Some absences had been Teaching Assistants (TAs) and activities had been adjusted, whilst the one teacher day absence had been covered by a TA. Remote learning had been made available.
- There had been no exclusions, bullying incidents, no CAFs and no pupils subject to a child in need or child protection plan.

Section 2 Staffing and Staff Development

- The Staffing and Staff Development section detailed staff in classes and subject leadership teams.

A short discussion ensued on the number of job shares in place and their impact. It was felt that the current situation was the maximum which could be envisaged.

- Details of staff development was included, and JJ confirmed that considerable virtual training had been undertaken during lockdown. Webinars were being attended particularly by the staff involved in the change in SEND staffing.
- Details adaptations made to ensure staff wellbeing were highlighted in the report, and JJ confirmed that the aim was to ensure staff were supported but the highest standard was continued.
- The Marking Policy had been streamlined.
- After school clubs were run by sports coaches. However, no sports after school clubs would take place for the period of lockdown and had been moved to curriculum time.
- Coaching had been offered to all staff and one person would take up the Learn to Coach training opportunity.
- Appraisals following a coaching approach were all in place.
- Time-limited weekly virtual staff meetings were scheduled.
- Subject leadership time had been maintained, with subject leaders getting a morning every half term.
- A programme of writing support was taking place in two year groups.
- Adult support was in all classrooms.
- Staff comments had been positive on JJ's weekly conversations and felt well supported.

Section 3 Re-opening of school

- The Risk Assessment was in place and constantly updated.
- Additional cleaning was taking place and a midday assistant was with each bubble for an hour.

Remote learning

- In order to ensure the robustness of remote learning provision a new Chancery Trust strategy was introduced in September and a list of high quality practice was included in the report.
- Positive feedback had been received on the use of Seesaw for Reception and Year 1.
- Remote provision was accessed by self-isolating pupils from the day after notifying the school and was regularly monitored by the teacher on Seesaw.
- LA sessions through Edtech would take place to give staff a better understanding of Microsoft Teams should it be required for class self-isolation.

It was thought that Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) were unlikely to have capacity to become involved in remote learning attendance issues.

Governors were supportive of the actions of the school in terms of potential remote learning and safeguarding.

Section 4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

- The School Strategic Development Plan (SSDP) had been RAG rated.
- All children completed baseline assessments in reading, writing and Maths and staff had completed question level analysis to identify gaps in learning and had planned accordingly. Subject leaders were monitoring this closely. In Year 1 issues around phonics and reading and writing had been identified, and higher up the school Maths data had highlighted issues.
- Autumn term assessments were currently underway and further feedback would be provided in the spring term.
- To address Year 1 reading, a Chancery Year 1 group had been established with additional Read Write Inc sessions for pupils. Year 2 phonics had required support. Phonics interventions were in place for Year 1 and 2.
- Phonics assessments would take place for the current Year 2 during the first week in December.

Section 5 Behaviour and attitudes

- After the pupils had adapted well on their return to school a curriculum pupil voice survey had been carried out resulting in 149 responses. A number of areas had stood out :
 - o Challenge - 20% were not sure whether they were being challenged.
 - o Next steps in learning, particularly writing– some confusion over the question had now been resolved.
 - o Behaviour - 84% agreed or were not sure that the behaviour was good and 88% felt that the behaviour around school was not good.
- Lesson observations had been carried out in the current week focussing on behaviour in lessons and challenge. The conclusions were that behaviour for learning in classrooms was good. However, challenge was felt to be an ongoing focus. In order to address behaviour around school concerns, the two weekly assemblies were used to embed core values and celebrate examples of good behaviour.
- Challenge had been identified as an issue in the book scrutiny also and JJ felt there was a need to give pupils greater ownership of learning and encourage them to take more risks.

Governors felt the pupil voice in its new format was very helpful, and JJ confirmed that pupil comment boxes could be included in further surveys. The survey would be repeated towards the end of the year to identify any differences.

Catch up Funding

Some funding was being used on academic strategies and some on wellbeing. The nurture group had been extended to three times per week using existing staff. Structured lunchtime play and play therapy had been introduced using additional staff. One Teaching Assistant had been trained in Lego therapy and would be in place in the spring term. The Art of Brilliance had also been engaged and three days had been spent working on positivity with Years 3, 4 and 5.

Section 6 Personal Development

The introduction of Relationship and Health Education was now due to start later in the year, although parental consultation had taken place and all responses had been positive with request for greater emphasis on the dangers of social media.

Section 7 EYFS update

The weaker areas identified from the baselining process were Maths shape and space, personal, social and emotional development, literacy and physical development. Areas of weakness were being targeted.

Section 8 Parents and Carers

The outcome of the parental survey was very positive.

Section 9 Leadership and Development

- A link to the CEO report on the weekly visits was included
- Catch up action plans for individual areas were in place.
- Chancery Headteachers continued to work together
- Highly commended transition work continued based on the successful work of the previous year.

Section 10 Safeguarding

- A successful fire alarm had taken place.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education had been signed by all staff and one teacher still needed to attend safeguarding training.
- The wording of the question/statement on the Pupil Voice safeguarding survey relating to bullying was discussed, particularly in view of the results, the focus on anti-bullying which had taken place, and the increased level of supervision at lunch. A safeguarding action plan had been prepared and safeguarding officers from Year 6 would be put in place. Suggestions were made on obtaining information on safeguarding.

Governors felt that the pictures included in the report added a flavour of the lovely things going on in school.

The number of parents participating in parent voice had increased over previous paper versions and the turnout was felt to be good. The school Facebook page was recommended to other governors and it was agreed that the newsletter could be shared on the school Facebook page.

Q: How does the attendance data compare regionally?

A: It compares favourably. Significant absences are with a few pupils and structured conversations with parents and external agencies are ongoing and daily monitoring is taking place.

Q: Has the possibility of mental health first aiders been explored?

A: A designated senior lead for mental health, Anna McArdle, was in post and was focussing on mental health. Training had been undertaken with Visyon which was felt to be key for staff and children. Resources have been explored and training from the local authority has taken place.

Q: Could a data base of available support be created for signposting to parents?

A: Yes, this has been started.

Q: Is there a strategy for ensuring attendance at remote sessions when required?

CHALLENGE

A: There had been low numbers on the practice run but all pupils have now tested it and can use it.

Q: Is there any opportunity to access live lessons as a recording?

A: The facility will be available and flexibility with the resources uploaded.

Q: Is attendance at remote lessons tracked?

A: If a child is self-isolating at home there is access to remote learning, not a teacher led lesson. If the whole class were to be out of school, the class teacher could teach live or via a recording and work would be provided. Teacher would ensure that materials online were in accordance with that which would have been delivered in class. Engagement would be assessed and absences followed up by phone calls.

Q: Are additional staff being used for interventions?

A: The additional Read Write Inc sessions are for half an hour per day using teaching hours above and beyond. In Years 5 and 6 reading and Maths daily interventions involve additional hours. Both were using catch up funding.

Q: Is there a similar behaviour and attitude survey for staff also?

A: One will be carried out.

Agenda Item 10 Staff and Pupil Wellbeing

MINUTE This was covered in Item 9 the Headteacher report.

Agenda Item 11 Reports from Governors with Specific Responsibilities

MINUTE Cohort/Subject Governor Reports

JB reported positive conversations with Dan Hancock, JJ and other staff. Areas discussed had been pupil writing, remote learning and the reduction in pupil fitness since March 2020. JB had been impressed with how quickly the staff had reacted to the challenge of remote learning and reported that progress was being made in all areas.

LGB effectiveness (SSDP Priority)

One governor was now allocated to each area of the SSDP and a curriculum area in order to increase governors' understanding of work in school and it was felt important for governors to ask questions and to be involved, preferably face to face once this was possible.

SSDP Roles

PW – Effective approaches to remote teaching and learning
 JB - Under achievement due to Covid for SEN and vulnerable learners
 SS - Education with a focus on Art, DT, MFL and Humanities
 SC – Raising standards at GDS
 GW- Physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of staff and pupils following Covid
 MC – Embedding of core values and vision
 RH – development and implementation of PSHE and RE curriculum
 KJ/GB – continuing to develop the effectiveness of middle leadership

External reviewer – Continuing to develop the effectiveness of the LGB

Governors confirmed they were in agreement to meeting with their link person and advising them of areas for discussion.

Curriculum areas were established:

English – JB
 Maths - SC
 Science, Technology and Engineering - PW
 History, Geography and RE – RH
 PSHCE – GW
 PE- MC
 MFL – PW
 Art, Design, Music and Drama – SS
 Computing - KJ

GB agreed to carry out an audit on the effectiveness of the LGB.

Discussion ensued on the need for the preparedness of governors to engage in discussions with the school links and the training necessary.

ACTION
 To send the SSDP to all Governors. (SS)
 To send details of link governors to YH for the website. (SS)
 To carry out an audit on the effectiveness of the LGB. (GB)
 To make contact to arrange a short discussion with school links before the end of term. (All governors)
 To report back to the governors on discussions with school links next term. (All governors)

CHALLENGE
Q: Have disadvantaged children become more disadvantaged since March?
A: No.

Agenda Item 12 ▶ **Safeguarding**

MINUTE JJ reported that there were no safeguarding issues.

Agenda Item 13 ▶ **Governor Development**

MINUTE A strategy for governor training formed part of the discussion on LGB effectiveness in the previous item.

Agenda Item 14 ▶ **School Policies**

MINUTE There were no policies for review at this meeting.

Agenda Item 15 ▶ **Educational Visits**

MINUTE No residential trips were possible at the current time.

Agenda Item 16 ▶ **Meetings**

MINUTE The dates of the spring term Excalibur LGB meetings were confirmed as:
 · Monday 11th January 2021
 · Monday 1st March 2021

Agenda Item 17 ▶ **Any Other Business**

MINUTE Governor Communications Protocol
 This item was carried forwards to the next meeting.

SSDP
 Then RAG rated SSDP had been circulated by JJ and Governors had no further questions.

ACTION To include discussion of the Governor Communication Protocol on the agenda of the Spring 1 LGB meeting. (Clerk)

Agenda Item 18 ▶ **Impact Statement**

MINUTE Impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School

- The proposed appointment of Gill Burgess to the LGB would further diversify the skills and experience of the group and add to its effectiveness.
- The CFO's financial report assured the LGB of the sound financial position of the school over the next 5 years.
- The proposed replacement of the mobile building would enhance the environment of the school and the desirability for parents to enrol their children.
- The use of the benchmarking tools available to compare the school with other similar schools re-assured the Governors of the position of the school nationally.
- The update on Health and Safety actions assured Governors of the safe environment.
- The comprehensive Headteacher report gave Governors a full insight into the work of the school whilst Governor visits were not currently possible.
- Governors were re-assured of the wellbeing of staff and pupils.
- The agreed allocation of Governors to SSDP and curriculum areas would increase understanding and enable focussed monitoring going forwards.

KB left and the meeting closed at 19.36.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 5

▶ To send the SSDP to all Governors.

For: asap

By: Sarah Sproston

- ▶ To carry out an audit on the effectiveness of the LGB. (SS/GB)

For: asap

By: Sarah Sproston

- ▶ To make contact to arrange a short discussion with school links before the end of term and report back to the governors on discussions with school links next term.

For: asap

By: Rachel Hackney

- ▶ To make contact to arrange a short discussion with school links before the end of term and report back to the governors on discussions with school links next term.

For: asap

By: Kate Jepson

- ▶ To make contact to arrange a short discussion with school links before the end of term and report back to the governors on discussions with school links next term.

For: asap

By: Sarah Sproston

Excalibur LGB Autumn 2 2020 Pt 1 *dated:* 23/11/2020
Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch