

MINUTES

THE LINK PRIMARY SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING ON THURSDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT THE LINK PRIMARY AT 6 PM

Attendees:	Julia James	JJ	Chair
	Lesley Nicolas	LN	Vice Chair
	Sandy Turner	ST	Principal
	Lily Nwosu	LN	Parent Governor
	John Reilly	JR	Governor
	Anita Clay	AC	Staff Governor
	Jan Loughborough	JL	Governor
Also present:	Nic Andrews	NA	Assistant Headteacher
	Sue Denman	SD	Deputy Headteacher
	Sarah Brookes – Watson	SB	OHCAT Management Accountant
	Sarah Farncombe	SF	Clerk
Absent:	Lily Nwosu	LN	Parent Governor
	Dilma de Araujo	DA	Observer

	Item	Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Apologies were received from Dilma de Araujo (Observer pending appointment) and from Lily Nwosu. The absences were consented and the meeting was noted to be quorate.	
2.	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	
	Julia James was welcomed to the meeting as the new Chair appointed by the Trust Board and introductions were made. Julia then gave Governors an overview of her considerable experience of special needs in both her personal and professional life. As well as being the Head Teacher of Bedelsford School (which is a Trust school) for the last 12 years and having been deeply involved in the Complex Needs Research Project which lead to the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans, Julia is a Trustee of two charities. One offers respite care for children with disabilities and the other is involved in research into communication through music and hydrotherapy.	

	<i>Governors very much welcome the appointment and were agreed that her experience and skills will strengthen the Governing Body.</i>	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	Governors were invited to declare any interest, pecuniary or otherwise in the agenda. There were none made.	
	Governors present confirmed they had completed the annual declaration of interest forms. Those that had not already done so will return them to the Principal. ACTION POINT: Lily Nwosu to complete annual declaration of interest form.	LN
4.	SKILLS AUDIT ANALYSIS	
	Governors present confirmed they had completed the annual skills audit analysis. Those that had not already done so will return them to the Principal. ACTION POINT: Lily Nwosu to complete annual skills audit and return to the principal	LN
5.	CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS	
	To recommend the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB for 2019-20 to the OHCAT Board. The appointment of JJ has already been confirmed by the Trust Board. Governors welcome and agree the appointment for 2019-2020. LN accepted the nomination for the post of Vice Chair for another year and the nomination was seconded by JL. Governors unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment to the Trust Board. RESOLUTION: Governors recommend the reappointment of LN as Vice Chair for a further year and confirm their approval of the appointment of JJ as Chair.	
6.	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The Part A and Confidential Part B minutes of the meeting were agreed to be an accurate record and copies were signed by the Chair for filing.	
7.	MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA	
	The action to circulate a summary of the changes to the EIF (Education Inspection Framework) has been circulated by the principal. An update on the matter recorded in the confidential minutes is recorded in Part B.	

8.	PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (To include an activity on the New Linked Curriculum)	
	<p>The Principal's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Governors confirmed they had read the report and questions were invited.</p> <p>Pupil Matters: <i>Governors asked about the impact of the increase in numbers on role on the learning environment and the possible correlation with the increased number of behaviour incidents for the students.</i></p> <p>In the discussions which followed points of particular note made by the Principal included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pan is 51 and there are currently 56 on role. This is set to increase to 58 shortly • Some of the children with complex needs would be unable to access learning in the smaller rooms and others need to be able to access additional space to prevent or reduce the severity of a meltdown. Consequently there are weekly checks to make sure the appropriate systems and mitigation are in place • A H&S Risk Assessment is due to be carried out by the Trust • The majority of behaviour incidents are not related to the physical environment or the amount of space available • The number and severity of behaviour incidents has declined despite the increase in numbers • The school is at absolute capacity now for the size of the building (notwithstanding the new classroom which will be operational by Christmas) • Exceeding 58 on role could reasonably be expected to have a detrimental impact on staff, the children and outcomes <p><i>Governors asked if the school can cope with 58 students without impacting on learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal explained that to balance the books there was an imperative to have at least 56 on role and reduce staff costs. In order to spread the increased work load, in consultation with staff it had been agreed unanimously that (rather than lose a therapist), each class (except Hazel which is too small) would take one additional child and TA support would be reduced • The Principal was particularly pleased that despite a very tricky year (with the logistical challenges of having to keep a number of students physically apart) progress had been better than in previous years and in some instances had been outstanding. Some of the students with the most challenging behaviour have moved on to other provision which has released capacity to better meet the needs of others 	

- The increase in class size does present a challenge to staff and the impact on staff wellbeing must be monitored. Staff feel that everyone is stretched. Classes are noisier and busier but not chaotic. They are missing the extra staff. Teaching practice is adapting and there are more 'holding activities'
- The Principal felt that apart from one case there was currently no impact on learning

Staff and Personnel

Governors challenged the Principal on the approach to management of staff wellbeing noting in particular there had been an increase in stress related staff sick absence

In the discussion which followed points of particular note included:

- Against the backdrop of national and local statistics showing that teachers are struggling with stress there is a school focus on supporting staff with their emotional and mental health needs. An area for development in the leadership and management section of the SDP is to provide a structured pro-active mental wellbeing programme for all staff to help them better manage the rigours and challenges of life at home and work
- The DHT talked to Governors about the regular wellbeing breakfast meetings which have already been taking place as part of the action plan. There have been 5 so far since September. The sessions have looked at identifying stresses, strategies to manage and reduce stress, mental health awareness, mindfulness and quality relationships. Future sessions will cover physical health and exercise, healthy eating, life focus, emotional and spiritual health. The sessions have been well received. They appear to have had a positive impact particularly in opening up channels of communication
- The DHT has undertaken the two day Mental Health First Aider's Course
- The DHT does the majority of the return to work interviews which provides an opportunity to talk about strategies and signpost staff to further support
- In response to a question it was confirmed the wellbeing breakfast meetings are roughly half an hour long
- Sick absence has been reducing since the summer term

Health and Safety – Safeguarding and Behaviour

The Principal noted that H&S and behaviour are intertwined.

Governors asked about the playground and whether any grants had been applied for.

- The Principal confirmed they would be looked at and that part of the project is likely to be funded by the Sports Premium Grant. The playground gives opportunities for exercise and as such would be an effective use of the grant. The School Council is very involved with the planning and generation of ideas. They will be visiting Sherwood Park next week and parents are also being invited to submit photos of the equipment their child enjoys using. It is clearly important the investment meets the needs and interests of the children
- The PTA funds have already been earmarked for the sensory room so additional funds will need to be secured from elsewhere
- The decrease in the number of high level behaviour incidents was welcomed. Notably there have been no incidents resulting in injury since September

Governors asked what the reduction in high level incidents had been attributed to.

- The Principal confirmed it was due partly to the change in cohort and partly the capacity which was released to manage the needs of others when some children went to other provisions

Governors noted there had been 3 moderate behaviour incidents connected to race or prejudice and questioned whether there was a problem across the school

They were reassured that all the incidents had been related to one child and it was not clear whether they were actually just intended to provoke a reaction. The child has been given a lot of support through their PHSE programme. John Prior (CEO) has also worked with staff to look at their support and their reactions so they are consistent.

It was acknowledged that low self-esteem and issues out of school could be part of the problem. The issues can be complex but the Principal assured Governors neither prejudice nor racism were an issue across the school.

Budget

The Principal handed over the OHCAT Management Accountant (see agenda item 10 below)

School Improvement

Governors were reminded that of the 7 targets in the SDP the main new one is in relation to the Curriculum. With the new EIF very much in mind it is very important Governors can articulate how they know the curriculum is right for the children at the Link.

The Assistant Head gave Governors a presentation on the new curriculum which explained how it had been developed and the rationale behind it. A copy of the presentation is annexed to the minutes.

Governors questioned whether the names of the category of learner were arrived at in house or derived from another source (such as Ofsted).

- It was confirmed they are personal to the school and were chosen based on the dictionary definition

Governors queried whether there was an even spread of children falling into each group

- The short answer was no. A child may fall into one group for one subject such as science but a different one for another area – such as sociability
- There are probably only a few at the ‘Engager’ and ‘Inquisitor’ levels. The majority fall in between

Governors acknowledged that launching a new curriculum is a significant step. They questioned how it will be possible to show impact in the short term if and when challenged.

- There will shortly be data available from the first term
- Despite the old curriculum not meeting the needs of the children (and teachers finding it limiting), they were still making progress. Therefore there is every expectation that the new curriculum, which is bespoke to the needs of Link, should deliver even better progress
- There is close monitoring from baselines

Governors asked whether all the children been given new baseline assessments

- The principal confirmed they had and all staff had been given the time and opportunity to do so

Governors asked how the new curriculum had been received by teachers and whether it was impacting on their workload

Staff present reported:

- Feedback had been positive and it has been well received
- It will take time to build up a bank of resources which does impact on workloads in the near term but the staff members present felt it is worth while
- Staff have been able to implement the curriculum quickly and articulate the intention as they have been so involved in developing the vision and planning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Risk Management Meeting with John Prior (CEO) he confirmed that he could see the new curriculum was being implemented and the differentiated levels the children were working at <p><i>Governors asked how long it would be before the whole curriculum would be worked through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years for EYFS and 5 years for KS1 (to avoid repetition) <p>School Tour To help Governors better understand and articulate how the curriculum works in practice they were taken round the classrooms in pairs by members of SLT.</p> <p><i>Governors thanked the Principal and SLT for the presentation and tour of the school which they had found very helpful.</i></p> <p>Compliments The Principal shared with Governors some of the handwritten thank you cards which had been received from parents.</p> <p><i>Governors felt they reflected well on the hard work of staff and their achievements. They were particularly struck by the fact that the families had clearly taken over writing the cards and how they often referred to the specific impact the school had made on their children.</i></p> <p>School Events Governors were invited to attend school events which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christmas fair to be held at the Link Secondary School on Saturday 7th December 12-3pm • Festive feast of entertainment and food to be held in the school hall on Monday 9th December at 2.00pm • Peter Pan pantomime to be held in the school hall on Tuesday 10th December at 1.30pm • The joint Primary and Secondary carol service to be held at Wallington URC church on Monday 16th December at 1.30 pm 	
	DASHBOARD	
	<p>Governors received the dashboard in advance of the meeting and confirmed they had no further questions.</p> <p>It was noted that staff absence had been discussed earlier and the trend had been heading downwards towards the end of last term. It was hoped that trajectory will continue.</p>	
9	GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING	

a.	Portfolio management To receive the following portfolio reports	
i.	Ethos, Vision and Strategy The Chair will take on the portfolio and arrange a visit as soon as possible	
ii.	Teaching and Learning The report from LN on her visit on the 16th October was circulated in advance of the meeting and taken as read.	
iii.	Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding The report by AC was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting and taken as read.	
iv.	Finance and Resources The report will be circulated to all Governors by the first week in December.	
v.	HR and Organisational Development JL will make a visit and the reports will be circulated to all Governors by the first week in December.	
vi.	Business Development and Marketing DA made a visit after the Governor Strategy Meeting.	
	ACTION POINT: All outstanding portfolio reports to be circulated by the first week in December.	JJ/JR JL/DA
b.	Other visit reports	
	None to report	
c.	Governor training and development	
	Training reported since the last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Governors attended the OHCAT open day at Sandown Park in October • Governors had also attended the training by David Scott on the EIF at the Secondary School • The Clerk has attended training on the new framework as well • Complex Needs Safeguarding 	
10	FINANCE AND FUNDING	
	For approval	
	There were no contracts or SLAs in excess of set limit	
	For information	

i.	<p>Final accounts 2018-19</p> <p>The final accounts had been shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The OHCAT Management Accountant drew Governors attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The depreciation on buildings had been reduced • More was spent on staffing than expected (due to the higher level of support required for new recruits) • Reserves have gone up by £49k • Provision has been made for the risk of an EFSA clawback. Negotiations with the EFSA are continuing • The finances have been well managed in challenging circumstances <p><i>Governors questioned what would happen to the clawback contingency if it was not required.</i></p> <p>They were advised it will go back into reserves. There are discussions in hand at Trust Board level as what the appropriate levels of reserves for the schools should be and what might be released.</p>	
ii.	<p>Management accounts report</p> <p>The Management Accounts Report with supporting notes was circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no questions arising.</p>	
11	<p>PAY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	
	<p>Governors received a verbal report from JR on the annual meeting of the Pay Committee.</p> <p>Points of note included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee membership was the same as last year which was good for consistency • The committee received an explanation of the internal policies and how it is applied to the appraisal process • The appraisal process is rigorous. It looks at performance against national teaching standards and the OHCAT evaluation schedule • The committee looked at anonymised evidence for each member of staff in turn. It had been good to see the progression against targets over the year • The HT had explained whether she felt a target had been met, partially met, not met or exceeded and the basis of the recommendation • The questions from the committee challenging the Principal had been answered with robust evidence • The process had been fair, transparent and accountable • Internal and national policies had been applied fairly and consistently 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee agreed with the recommendations <p><i>Governors wished to record their thanks to the staff and teachers for their hard work over the last year.</i></p>	
11	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
i)	<p>Governors noted the following policies and procedures had been approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 28 June 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions Policy Equality & Diversity Policy Family Friendly Policies and Procedures Flexible Working Policy Health & Safety Policy Pay Policy Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure SEND Policy Staff Code of Conduct Staff Development Policy (OHC) Staff Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy Anti-Radicalisation Policy Assessment & Examinations Policy First Aid Policy LGPS Employer Discretions Policy Safeguarding Supervision Policy Shelter in Buildings Procedure (<i>appended to Critical Incident Business Continuity Plan</i>) Student Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy Substance Misuse Policy 	
ii)	<p>To receive and review any local policies and procedures for final approval</p> <p>Governors were invited to review and approve the following which had been circulated in advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence Procedures Assessment Policy British Values Statement Fire Procedures <p>Governors confirmed they had not questions.</p> <p>RESOLUTION: Governors approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence Procedures Assessment Policy British Values Statement Fire Procedures 	

13	KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2019	
	<p>Governors noted the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' has been updated with effect from September 2019.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2</p> <p>Governors noted that all relevant OHC&AT policies have been amended to reflect the changes.</p> <p>A summary of the changes has been circulated to the Safeguarding Portfolio Governor. There is new information on serious violence and up skirting (which is now a criminal offence) has been added to the list of Peer of Peer abuse.</p> <p>Almost all staff have now signed to say they have read at least part one. The remainder are being followed up.</p>	
14	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	None.	
15	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
	<p>12th March 2020 at 6pm 17th June 2020 at 6 pm</p>	
16	CONFIDENTIALITY	
	The discussion in agenda item 7 regarding the Part B minutes from the last meeting were declared confidential and recorded in Part B.	
	The meeting closed at 8.05 pm	

Signed.....2020
Chair of Local Governing Board