

**DRAFT MINUTES
LINK PRIMARY AND LINK SECONDARY SCHOOLS
JOINT LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING ON
18 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6 PM VIA GOTOMEETING**

Present: Julia James (Chair)
Sandy Turner (Executive Principal)
Anita Clay (Staff Governor)
Dilma de Araujo
Jane Gibbs
Karen Hayward (Staff Governor)
Jan Loughborough
Lesley Nicolas
Sameera Saleem (Parent Governor)
Jenny Sutcliffe

In Attendance: Nic Andrews (Assistant Principal, Link Primary)
Sue Denman (Deputy Headteacher, Link Primary)
Amanda Griffiths (Deputy Headteacher, Link Secondary)
Hannah Wallwark (Deputy Headteacher, Link Secondary)
Sarah Brooks-Watson (OHCAT Management Accountant)
Susanne Wicks (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. As it was the first meeting of the new joint LGB, all present introduced themselves. JJ welcomed the opportunity for all Governors to meet as a new LGB for the benefit of both schools.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Governors noted the requirement to complete and return an annual declaration of interest form. The clerk undertook to contact those who had not done so already.

There were no declarations of interest.

4. SKILLS AUDIT

Governors noted the requirement to complete and return a skills audit form. The clerk undertook to contact those who had not done so already.

5. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

- i The clerk took the chair for this item. The LGB agreed to recommend that the Board of Trustees appoint Julia James as Chair for the academic year 2020-21.
- ii Two Governors expressed an interest in the Vice-Chair role and the clerk undertook to share further information outside of the meeting. Governors agreed to receive nominations via email and make a recommendation to the Board in December.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- i The LGB approved the minutes of the meeting of Link Primary School's LGB held on 9 June 2020. A hard copy would be signed at the earliest opportunity.
- ii The LGB approved the minutes of the meeting of Link Secondary School's LGB held on 16 June 2020. A hard copy would be signed at the earliest opportunity.

7. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

ST presented her report, highlighting any priority areas, and welcomed comments and questions. Matters discussed are detailed below.

Pupil Matters

Primary School: The school has started to offer an outreach programme to support children with a diagnosis of ASD and PDA, which is informed by their expertise gained over the last couple of years whilst supporting learners and their families in school. As the school has limited space for admissions, five children will be supported via outreach, with two already on the programme and one more to join in January. ST welcomed the chance to support young people's needs and positively impact on them and their family.

Secondary School: ST noted that there are approximately 14 students seeking to transition from Link Primary to Link Secondary next year but there is insufficient space for them all, so parental expectation must be carefully managed. She explained that there is no automatic transition from Primary to Secondary as the school must, first and foremost, be the right setting to meet each child's EHCP. Preference is given to children resident in LB Sutton first, then those in the Primary School, then out of borough children. ST confirmed that staff will work closely with families of those children not allocated a place at Link Secondary School to help them to find the right provision. Although there is not sufficient space in school to expand currently, ST outlined plans to reorganise classes which could provide up to 14 spaces rather than the 5 spaces that will become available due to 6th form leavers in 2021.

In response to questions, ST advised that approximately six children will be unable to move to Secondary School and gave details of other options that may be offered to them, such as the new Addington Valley Academy in nearby Croydon. Whilst ST acknowledged that she would like as many children as possible to progress from the Primary to the Secondary School in future, she reiterated that the provision must be appropriate to meet the needs of the child, and currently, children in the Primary School have a wider range of needs than the cohort in the Secondary School, so the latter must adapt appropriately over time.

Staff and Personnel

Primary School: ST gave further detail of the impact of Covid-19 upon the operation of the school and in particular the health and wellbeing of staff. She commended the efforts of the Assistant Principal and Deputy Headteacher to support colleagues and boost morale in the face of the strict measures in place to minimise risk of infection. ST reported that at a staff meeting directly prior to this meeting, staff were asked to think about what had gone well in their class this term and they were all able to give positive feedback.

Secondary School: ST advised that colleagues at the Secondary School were not so adversely affected by the pandemic, partially because the pupils have adapted better to the measures in place.

ST noted how pleased she was to report the predicted increase in the TES average score to 2A and reported that recent lesson observations saw good work, enthusiastic staff and a high quality of dialogue during feedback. It is clear that staff are keen to continue improving.

ST gave further details of the plan to move to a flatter model of leadership and advised that senior leaders and teachers are undertaking CPD appropriately. The aim is for all teachers to undertake responsibility for a lead area in school, taking ownership of what that will look like and how it will be done. Staff have risen to the challenge and ST expressed confidence that the structure would be flatter within a year.

In response to questions, ST described the changes that have taken place to ensure leadership of both schools is unaffected since her move to Executive Principal of both schools. Governors sought reassurance that the workload for ST and the SLT at both schools remains manageable and ST confirmed that it was, with staff supporting each other and confidently taking on extra responsibilities, which have increased due to the pandemic. SD added that the second lockdown had a negative effect on staff, but everyone continues to work hard to minimise any impact on the children.

On behalf of all Governors, the Chair thanked all staff for pulling together and working so hard in such challenging circumstances and asked that ST pass on those thanks to colleagues.

Continuing Professional Development

Secondary School: ST advised that the introduction of weekly staff training has already had a positive impact. Sessions are linked to priorities in the School Development Plan, the personalised curriculum and assessment of pupils' needs. HW confirmed that the training has been well received and successful, and her comments were echoed by AG, who reassured Governors that staff at Link Secondary have always undertaken regular CPD, but were not always able to do so as a staff team on a weekly basis.

Safeguarding, Premises and Health & Safety

ST confirmed that both schools were receiving support from colleagues in OHCAT to ensure that all appropriate measures were in place to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

Behaviour

Primary School: ST gave further details of the behaviour of the child who was excluded for four days and noted that staff are working closely with his family and the local authority, which has allocated funding for one member of staff to work with him on three days per week. The school has asked for an additional day, with a view to reducing this ratio over time. The school is committed to supporting the child to remain in school.

Secondary School: ST gave further details of the support in place for the new Year 7 pupil who has found the transition challenging. The school is funding one to one support for him in the short-term and if deemed necessary for that to continue, the funding will be reviewed. ST particularly commended the approach of staff involved in supporting this young man as they have tried very hard to support him appropriately.

School Improvement

ST reminded Governors of the revised Ofsted Framework's emphasis on the curriculum and in particular its Intent, Implementation and Impact. She noted that the Secondary School is in the 'window' for an inspection and it is important for the LGB to be able to speak to the curriculum in the school if interviewed.

HW presented a detailed summary of Link Secondary School's curriculum which had been shared with the LGB prior to the meeting. Governors welcomed the informative presentation and the one-page summary.

ST advised that the Ofsted Inspection Team will choose a number of areas into which to conduct a deep dive. She presented a scenario to the LGB, that inspectors had chosen to look into pupils' personal development (including RSE), the English curriculum and the Gatsby Benchmarks and preparation for work. She asked Governors to point out where these three areas might be taught within the curriculum, how the vision of the school would contribute to the three areas, and to identify where further information could be found if needed. Governors considered those questions and responded appropriately.

ST encouraged Governors to consult the files in her office, in particular the 'Inspections Essentials' file which includes information that they might need in the event of an inspection. She also highlighted the file for each area of the SDP, each of which includes details of all relevant activity. LN confirmed she had consulted the files before the Primary School's inspection and found it very useful.

Report received.

9. FINANCE AND FUNDING

Link Primary School – Final Accounts

SBW presented the unaudited final accounts for 2019-20 noting that the year ended with a surplus of £199K with £244K added to the reserves. She attributed this to the decreased expenditure due to the pandemic in many areas such as staffing, operating costs and planned activities not taking place. However, since the school opened in September there have been additional costs due to Covid-19, such as increased cleaning, PPE and agency staff covering sickness absence.

SBW confirmed that ST was considering how some of the reserves would be spent to improve pupil outcomes and their school experience.

Link Primary School – Management Accounts September 2020

SBW presented the September management accounts, explaining that she worked closely with ST to build the budget for the school, and had gained an understanding of the needs of the school, now and in the future. She confirmed that the school was on budget, other than with regard to agency costs, and that she and ST would continue to meet on a monthly basis to monitor the budget and make adjustments as and when needed.

Link Secondary School – Final Accounts

SBW reported that the year ended in a £128K operating surplus, with savings made in many areas including staffing. Whilst the level of reserves is lower than at Link Primary School, they are heading the right direction and the budget has improved greatly over the last few years due to increased pupil numbers and better financial management.

Link Secondary School – Management Accounts September 2020

SBW reported that this school faces similar challenges with regard to agency staff spend, although there have been some savings made due to planned activities not being able to go ahead. She confirmed that there are no issues causing concern at this stage.

SBW gave details of IT work which is almost complete at Link Secondary but has not started at Link Primary School which should result in both schools having fully operational WiFi and network connectivity. She also outlined planned works to the Link Secondary

School playground, at a cost of £80K which would support pupils' self-regulation. JJ asked if the project is included in the Trust's Estates Strategy and SBW confirmed it is.

JJ asked about the Post-16 Bursary and SBW advised that Lynn Barratt, part of the Trust's senior leadership, would be discussing it with the School Business Manager.

Reports received.

10. GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

A Portfolio Management

Governors received the reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting. JJ asked if there were any questions. JJ thanked everyone for conducting a visit during this very challenging time.

B Other Visit Reports

None.

C Governor training and development

The Chair welcomed updates from colleagues on any training available and asked that the clerk share any relevant training opportunities.

11. PAY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Governors received the report from the Finance Portfolio holder on the annual meeting of the Pay Committee. JG advised that her report was necessarily brief due to the highly confidential nature of the meeting, and reassured Governors that detailed minutes were taken. She confirmed that the Committee agreed that the process was robust and thorough and approved the Principal's recommendations with a few agreed amendments which emerged through discussion.

12. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 3 July 2020.

13. KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2020

Governors noted that that 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' has been updated with effect from September 2020. The latest version is available on GovernorHub along with summary of changes.

14. GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK OCTOBER 2020

Governors noted that the Governance Handbook has been updated with effect from October 2020. The latest version is available on GovernorHub along with a summary of changes from the previous version.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 10 March 2021
- 23 June 2021.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Signed: _____ **Julia James, Chair**

Date: _____

Summary of Actions

Clerk to contact those Governors who have not completed an annual declaration of interest and / or skills audit form.	SW
Clerk to provide further information on the role of Vice-Chair to those who express an interest.	SW
ST to pass on thanks to staff from all Governors for their continued hard work and commitment during the pandemic.	ST
Clerk to share appropriate training opportunities as and when they arise.	SW