

**DRAFT MINUTES
LINK PRIMARY AND LINK SECONDARY SCHOOLS
JOINT LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING ON
17 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 6 PM**

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

In Attendance: David Murphy (Parent Governor, Primary Designate)
Nic Andrews (Assistant Principal, Link Primary)
Amanda Griffiths (Deputy Headteacher, Link Secondary)
Hannah Wallwark (Deputy Headteacher, Link Secondary)
Susanne Wicks (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Vice-Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. Everyone present introduced themselves.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dilma de Araujo and Sue Denman (Deputy Headteacher, Link Primary School).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest. The clerk undertook to contact those who had not completed an annual return this year.

4. SKILLS AUDIT

The clerk undertook to contact those who had not completed an annual return this year

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 2021-22.
- ii The LGB agreed to recommend that the Board of Trustees appoint Jane Gibbs as Vice-Chair for the academic year 2021-22.
- iii DM gave some details of his background, skills and experience and the Chair thanked him for volunteering for the parent governor vacancy. The LGB agreed to recommend the appointment of David Murphy as Parent Governor to the OHCAT Board.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The LGB approved the minutes of the meeting of Link Primary School's LGB held on 23 June 2021.

7. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

None.

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

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

Pupil Matters

ST set out the purpose and process for LB Sutton's SEND Commissioning review, which aims to review SEND practice and provision in the borough to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all children. The review is a three-year process and last year focussed on identifying the support on offer from all settings, any overlap and where there is potential for change. That piece of work is complete and the next stage will focus on funding agreements to ensure clarity and equality for all young people in the borough. ST noted that, on paper, the fees at both Link Primary and Secondary appear higher than some others as they include the in-house therapy costs. LB Sutton are working towards a funding agreement for all special schools and SEND bases, and have issued a template form for the schools to complete to inform this process. ST reassured Governors that the OHCAT Finance Team are supporting her to ensure that the process is fair and that the best possible outcome is reached for Link Primary and Secondary Schools, as there is no wish to lose the current financial stability, having experienced a tenuous financial situation in the past. LB Sutton should make a decision about the funding agreements in December and will consult with all schools.

LN asked if there will be any input from central government and ST advised that there will not and although they have awarded local authorities some additional SEN funding, it's unlikely to cover the cost of meeting the needs of all children in the borough, particularly in the context of rapidly increasing numbers of children with SEND and a challenging financial landscape.

ST expressed the view that the review has been rigorous and positive and was pleased to report that OHCAT has been invited to be part of the conversation which is promising, but there is no doubt that the financial element will be a challenge. Sutton will be keen to keep children in-borough and have also seen the benefits of the in-house therapy provision which not only saves time and money on travelling but means that therapy is part of the whole-school culture. ST would report further at future meetings.

ST reassured Governors that staff in the Primary School have made every effort to manage the expectations of families of those children for whom transition to the Secondary School would not be appropriate and to support them to find a suitable school for their child. This work starts as early as possible and, as part of Sutton's Commissioning review, both schools have had to formally identify different pathways, which now form part of the Local Offer. This has been helpful in identifying early when a child may not transition from Link Primary to Link Secondary.

Governors noted that the PDA provision for ten children across the two schools is going well, with all making good progress, some of whom have been out of school for some time. ST commended the hard work of the team in offering an education to those children who could not access it elsewhere and outlined her plans to submit an

application for some capital funding in order to install some additional classrooms on land not yet identified, similar to those at the Primary and Secondary School. The bid will be submitted to LB Sutton in December with a decision made in January.

At Link Secondary School, ST continues to receive high numbers of consultations despite being over number, which take up a lot of time. However, Governors were pleased to hear that the school is in high demand.

Staff and Personnel

ST flagged the reduced impact of Covid-19, with no staff cases at all in the first half of term, which is not the case in schools locally. Two members of staff at the Primary School have tested positive this week, which has impacted on those who are unvaccinated as they have had to self-isolate if they've been in contact with those two people. Although there are low numbers of staff who have refused the vaccine, it is their choice whether or not to have it.

ST noted the need to align all SSA contracts which will affect 12 of them in the Primary School. Meetings with all affected staff are scheduled for the end of November, during which their options will be clearly set out, and it's assumed that most will choose to move to the new contract.

There are quite a few new staff at the Secondary School for a variety of reasons, including new roles to support the sixth form curriculum and a medical SSA to support children needing medical care. A high quality induction programme is in place to get them on board quickly and HW has worked hard to ensure new staff are settling in well.

SS asked if there is still a school nurse in either school and ST advised that the role was no longer needed with so few children with high level medical needs and the nursing support provided by OHCAT.

Governors noted that CPD is back on track for both schools with weekly, in person, training back on the timetable.

Pre-pandemic levels of monitoring have resumed at the Secondary School where they were able to deliver the curriculum during the lockdown, albeit virtually. Due to the cohort at the Primary School this wasn't possible and although things are getting back to normal, this will take some time. ST explained that she normally tries to increase the average TES score but has not done so this year due to the fact that monitoring will now cover all areas of the TES again, rather than just those related to the recovery curriculum. She is comfortable that the children are subject to high quality teaching in both schools. HW expressed confidence in the event of an Ofsted inspection which may well be imminent for the Secondary School and ST advised that David Scott will be conducting a Health Check. She has not told staff that this will be happening as it's evident from monitoring that they are prepared for such scrutiny. She also noted how those visiting the schools as part of open events remark on the pupils' high levels of engagement and good behaviour.

ST set out the options available to those staff nearing completion of their teacher training and acknowledged that there may not be a vacancy in either school for which they may apply. She confirmed that those teachers are aware of that.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

ST advised that the playground works at the Primary School could not be completed as planned in the summer due to a range of issues. The lack of play space for the children this term has been a challenge but there has been some progress. The project

should be completed in the spring and will cost around £30K more than originally planned, which will be covered from the reserves.

In the Secondary School, one new classroom is up and running, with the other to follow. After that, work will commence to the front of the school and playground project. The pupils are very engaged and interested in the works to the playground.

ST detailed some of the key changes to the September 2021 version of KCSIE and asked all Governors to read the document. The clerk undertook to share the slides from the training that the Director of Safeguarding delivered at this year's Governor Conference.

AG gave some brief details about a safeguarding incident in the Secondary School and set out the actions taken by the school.

JJ gave some details of the Everyone's Invited website and the [Ofsted review](#) earlier this year into sexual abuse in schools. She encouraged Governors to have a look at the report and undertook to share some useful information from the local Safeguarding Partnership with ST.

Behaviour

NA gave further details of the work underway at Link Primary School to develop a more holistic approach to behaviour. Staff are building a language focussing on 'wellbeing' rather than 'behaviour' and behaviour is being seen as a form of communication rather than something with more negative connotations. Relevant policy and procedure is being amended appropriately and wellbeing clinics are being carried out in classes to look at all children, not just those causing concern. In addition a new risk assessment with a wellbeing plan has been introduced. Consequently, physical intervention has reduced dramatically with staff using de-escalation techniques instead.

AG reported that the changing nature of the cohort at the Secondary School has impacted on behaviour and gave details of the work done to address high level incidents displayed by one student in school. She reported that staff have been Team Teach trained which gives them additional confidence when working with children displaying high level behaviours.

School Improvement

ST noted that Governors should be aware of the key targets in the School Development Plan which cover literacy, quality assessment for learning, and wellbeing plans for all learners in the Primary School.

With regard to the Secondary School, HW gave a short presentation to remind Governors of the curriculum in place. After that, all Governors were invited to visit the classrooms to look at some work left out by teachers and to see evidence of the differentiated curriculum in practice for themselves. The intention of this activity was to enable Governors to see the difference between the different learning groups in the school – supported, guided and independent learners so that they could make clear connections between the reports, portfolio visits and work going on in the classrooms.

JJ thanked ST for her comprehensive report.

Reports received.

9 DASHBOARDS

The clerk undertook to share updated Dashboards as soon as possible.

10. PORTFOLIO GOVERNOR VISITS

Governors received the reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting. JJ thanked everyone for their reports and asked if there were any comments or questions.

Ethos, Vision & Strategy

JJ undertook to share a written report and gave detailed verbal feedback of the two portfolio visits she has undertaken since the last LGB meeting. She noted that this is a very exciting time for both schools as they further align and amalgamate.

JJ gave details of discussions around consultation with stakeholders, specialist work and innovations, contributions to national publications and potential outreach models, working with LB Sutton to provide pathways of need.

JJ explained that ST is part of an Education Leadership Group which provides opportunities for partnership working, which will enable the Link to be cognisant of and able to contribute to future LA plans.

The other aspect discussed was embedding therapeutic approaches across both schools through joint training, SALT and OT champions and training for staff teams. In addition both schools will be part of OHCAT's wider review into therapy provision which will be key as they move forwards.

There were no comments on the other portfolio reports. JJ thanked everyone for their report and for taking the time to visit the schools. She reminded Governors that the Secondary School is in the Ofsted window and that they are likely to focus on the curriculum, student mental health and wellbeing and staff wellbeing. She encouraged Governors to watch the [webinars](#) offered by Ofsted and ST invited Governors to peruse the 'Inspection Essentials' folder in her office which outlines evidence of key areas in the OFSTED framework and demonstrates evidence of work towards each target in the SDP.

Reports noted.

11. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

SS and JJ and LN attended the OHCAT Conference on 8th October 2021.

JJ advised that she has undertaken an Ofsted seminar and KCSIE Level 3 training.

12. FINANCE AND FUNDING

Primary School

ST reported that the Primary School's financial year ended with a £53K surplus and reserves of just over £1M. Although it's very early days, the September report shows a forecast year-end surplus of £32K.

Secondary School

ST reported that the Secondary School's financial year ended with a £256K surplus and reserves of £735K. The September report shows a forecast year-end surplus of £18K.

ST set out plans for the Covid Catch-Up funding and school-led tutoring funding and described some plans for the use of reserves.

DM asked about the potential negative impact of the current Commissioning review and ST advised that she would seek support from colleagues in OHCAT in the event that LB Sutton try to decrease the schools' baseline fee. She explained that she could, as the schools are academies, refuse to agree to reduced funding arrangements.

However, she would wish to maintain a good partnership and working relationship with LB Sutton if possible, especially as they are now the main commissioning LA and have priority according to the school admissions criteria. She and JJ noted that funding can be extremely complicated and negotiation will always be needed, especially for children requiring higher levels of support such as the PDA cohort, but ST felt confident in the support and knowledge of OHCAT Finance colleagues.

Reports received.

13. PAY COMMITTEE

JJ reported that she, JG and ST met in October and went through ST's recommendations for teacher pay 2021-22. She thanked ST for her detailed report and the very fair way in which she considered the pay awards. JG added that the process was both fair and transparent process, even in the light of the current teacher pay freeze.

JJ and JG agreed that all recommendations were made in accordance with policy and procedure and were able to approve them all.

14. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

i Governors noted the updated policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 2 July 2021 which can be viewed on [GovernorHub](#).

ii Governors approved the following local policies:

- a) Curriculum Policy Primary
- b) Student Complaints Procedure Primary
- c) Wellbeing (Behaviour) Procedure
- d) Curriculum Policy Secondary
- e) Teaching and Learning Policy Secondary
- f) Student Complaints Procedure Secondary.

15 KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2021

Governors noted the updates to KCSIE and subsequent amendments to OHC&AT policies and procedures, all of which are available on [GovernorHub](#). All Governors were asked to read the document in its entirety and confirm to the clerk when they have done so.

16 ACADEMY TRUST HANDBOOK

Governors noted the updates to the Academy Trust Handbook which is available on [GovernorHub](#).

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i ST highlighted some events in her report, to which all Governors were invited. They were asked to RSVP to Karen Hayward.

ii ST sought a volunteer to act as Careers and Work Experience link. Governors were asked to inform Karen Hayward if they were interested in the role.

18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 9th March 2022
- 22nd June 2022.

19. CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were deemed confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Signed: _____ **Julia James, Chair**

Date: _____

Summary of Actions

Clerk to contact those Governors who have not yet completed a skills audit and/or declaration of interest form.	SW
Chair to share useful resources from the Local Safeguarding Partnership with ST.	JJ
Chair to share her portfolio report with the clerk to be uploaded to GovernorHub.	JJ
Clerk to share the slides from the Safeguarding presentation delivered to the Governor Conference on 08.10.21.	SW
All Governors to read KCSIE 2021 and confirm to the clerk that they have read it.	ALL
Governors to advise Karen Hayward of any school events they plan to attend.	ALL
Any Governor interested in the Careers / Work Experience link role to let Karen Hayward know.	ALL