



Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds



Here, Children Thrive

**PART ONE MINUTES
OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING – MEETING 3**

Date	Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 6.30pm
Venue:	Meeting Room, Boughton Heath Academy

Invited to Attend (Governors):	
Kate Lee (KL) Jon Lenton (JL) Rob Herd (RH) Andrew Vaughan (AW) Muriel Breugelmans James Ferguson (JF) Tyler McPherson-Hill (TMH) Mark Loughnane (ML)	Co-opted governor/Chair of Governors Principal Co-opted governor Parent governor Parent governor Co-opted Governor Staff Governor Parent Governor
Apologies:	
Rob Herd (RH) Elaine Hall (EH) Sally Sumnall (SS)	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Staff Governor
Also in Attendance:	
Charlotte Jones (CJ) – in part Anne Lyons (AL) – in part Debbie Tomkinson (DT)	Teacher Academy Business Manager Governance Director

Strategic Statement of Intent

To impart an exceptional educational offer to all children at Boughton Heath Academy.

By:

- consistently improving teaching & learning in a safe and enabling environment*
- seeing all children as individuals with a focus on equality and inclusion*
- creating a sought-after place to work and learn*
- promoting school values within all we do and all who come here*

Governor monitoring priorities for 2023-24:

To monitor the SQM with particular focus on writing, SEND and EYFS.

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Statutory) AND CONFIRMATION WHETHER MEETING IS QUORATE
Discussion:	KL welcomed all to the meeting. The apologies of RH, EH and SS were accepted.

AGENDA ITEM 2	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL & PECUNIARY/BUSINESS INTEREST (Statutory)
Discussion:	There were no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the agenda items. No new interests were declared.

AGENDA ITEM 3	HR/FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
	<p>Business Manager's Report</p> <p>AL and CC were welcomed to the meeting. The Finance and Business report was circulated in advance of the meeting and AL provided an overview of the Executive Summary.</p> <p>Final Outturn 2022/23</p> <p>The final outturn pre-audit was £74850 and details were contained within the Executive Summary on why there was a surplus. Following the audit this figure has been adjusted downwards. The reason for this is that an auditing error was identified across the trust which inflated reserves. The school has not lost money but the post-audit reserve is now £51k.</p> <p>Reserves Analysis</p> <p>The total reserves (revenue and capital) are £151k which could be used to address any unforeseen financial expenditure over the next few years.</p> <p>Q: There were discussions at a previous meeting about clawing back reserves, is there still a concern over this? A: That has abated. The concern was because schools were asked to inform the DfE of the level of reserves they had and were required to identify plans to spend them. Boughton Heath did have plans for spending reserves.</p> <p>Budget Projection for 2023-24</p> <p>The budget projection for 2023-24 shows a surplus of £5k.</p> <p>HR Update</p> <p>The finance and business report included a HR update and benchmarking data.</p> <p>Financial Policies and CAT Finance Handbook</p> <p>Governors were informed that the policies and handbook have been revised in line with the updated Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations</p> <p>The school's financial performance shows there has been prudent and careful management of funds.</p> <p>Governors were invited to ask questions.</p> <p>Q: What can be done to help the kitchen break even?</p>

A: The cost of a school meal at Boughton Heath is not the highest across the trust. The Universal Free School meals uptake is high and there has been a review of suppliers to ensure that ingredients are a good quality at a good price.

Q: There has been a 40% increase in the cost of the Heath Club which appears to be propping up the deficit in the kitchen and the main school. Is it appropriate for there to be such an increase in prices when some families may be struggling?

A: The price increase has been effective from 1st September and there has been no impact on numbers. There has been an improved offer and an additional member of CEPD has had to be paid for because of the increase in numbers.

Q: Should parents be informed that the cost of the club is being used to support other areas of the school?

It is not necessary to inform parents as there is an expectation that all schools should provide such an offer and whilst it might look as though it is propping up other areas it is part of the school budget and the income is reinvested in the school.

MB joined the meeting.

Q: Why is the pupil-teacher ratio at Boughton Heath different from some of the other schools and do other schools have bespoke teachers for specific areas?

A: There is a high ration at Bexton Primary school but they have a resource provision so their staff numbers have to be higher. Other schools may be full whereas Boughton Heath is oversubscribed. One school has a forest school teacher.

Q: What are indirect staffing costs?

A: These are costs for staff training, DBS checks and the apprenticeship levy. Included within this is £10k which is set aside to offset against staff absence costs.

Q: How much did the extension go over budget?

A: It was slightly under budget.

Q: Why have premises increased since last year?

Additional funding has been allocated to the premises budget to cover any costs in energy increases and so there is contingency within this budget line. £15k has been allocated for supplies and services to include expenditure but the actual costs may be lower than the amount allocated.

Q: What is driving the increase in supplies and services?

A: £2k for playground equipment that was ordered and not delivered has gone back into the budget.

Q: Why are the kitchen costs down year on year?

A: The position will improve this year. The cost of a meal has increased and the offer has been reduced to a two-week menu. There has been a renegotiation with the suppliers and the provision will be kept under review.

Q: Is this price increase in line with other schools?

A: The costs of meals at other schools is not known. There is a possibility that the provider may increase their prices in January as they will have increased costs.

Q: How confident are you that Heath Club will grow 10% year on year?

A: There are no concerns about the club.

Q: Boughton Heath has a lot of female staff, how does this compare to the national average?

A: There are more female staff in education than males. The national average in the workforce census was that 15% of education staff were male. Recruitment decisions are always made based on how is the best candidate.

To approve expenditure under the Scheme of Delegation

	<p>There were no items of expenditure requiring approval under the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Governors thanked AL for her report and she and CC left the meeting.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 4	PART ONE MINUTES OF MEETING – OCTOBER 2023
Discussion:	The Part One minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2023 were approved by governors.
	RESOLVED: That the Part One Minutes – 18th October 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

AGENDA ITEM 5	REVIEW OUTSTANDING ACTIONS
Discussion:	<p>Photographs of governors to be taken at the next LGB meeting. ONGOING</p> <p>Governors to complete Safeguarding training and to confirm they have read the Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) guidance. ONGOING</p> <p>To update website to remove photograph of building from the home page ONGOING</p> <p>JL to update curriculum documents to remove references to boyfriend and girlfriend relationships. COMPLETE</p> <p>Information on whole trust attendance for pupil premium children to be included as a request in the Compliance Handbook. COMPLETE</p> <p>RH to write an article for the December newsletter. COMPLETE</p> <p>School priorities to be included at the top of each LGB agenda. COMPLETE</p> <p>Governors to advise KL of their availability for a one-to-one meeting with her in January. ONGOING</p>

AGENDA ITEM 6	EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE
	<p>EYFS Presentation – Charlotte Jones</p> <p>This was taken after agenda item 2.</p> <p>KL welcomed CJ to provide an update on the Early Years provision.</p> <p>CJ talked about the importance of linking the curriculum to the school vision. The reception year is the first experience that children will have of school and so and they should have the best start so that they are able to thrive academically, physically, socially and emotionally.</p> <p>The curriculum links to the overarching principles of the early years:</p> <p>A unique child – one of the main priorities is to ensure children settle and that they are happy in school.</p> <p>Positive relationships – it is important that children are able to develop peer relationships and relationships with staff so that they feel safe and secure as this will have a positive effect on a child’s confidence.</p> <p>Enabling environments – the environment needs to be stimulating and inviting.</p> <p>Learning and development – the importance of a well-structured curriculum with access to resources and focused activities.</p> <p>The early years is organised across seven key areas but these do link to the national curriculum eg past and present links to history.</p> <p>Q: How many early learning goals do children need to achieve a good level of development?</p>

A: There are 17 specific goals which children are assessed against but to achieve a good level of development a child needs to meet the early learning goals in the prime areas and literacy and maths.

CJ has been working at Boughton Heath for a year and has identified and prioritised areas for development which has included a review of the indoor and outdoor learning environments. She has visited other schools and has made changes to the weekly timetable. As an example, there was, previously, continuous snack time but now a focused snack time has been introduced which can be used for an extra story or talk time and is a good opportunity to develop relationships. She has also undertaken professional development, networking across the trust and has changed the long-term map for reception.

CJ shared some photographs of the learning environment including a block area and a construction area which children have access to all of the time. There are a number of resources available in the maths area to support number and shape. The topic area is an interactive space which includes relevant resources and further elements are added based on what children know and what they would like to find out about. Some new topic subjects have been introduced and there will also be a focus on different celebrations eg Diwali.

Children always have access to a dough area and this is important to aid fine motor development.

Sand and sensory areas have been introduced this year and these are linked to zones of regulation which is one of the school's priorities.

The current topic is farm and food and 'What the Ladybird Heard' is the key text. Children created their own farms and during this project teachers were able to hear how children's language was developing. Other linked texts are also used to help language development.

The focus for the year is on continuing to develop the environment based on the Reggio Emilia approach where real resources are used to develop independence, creativity and curiosity.

83% of children achieved a good level of development last year and the target is to increase this this year. Writing was the lowest area and further activities will be provided such as pen disco to support letter formation.

A lot of activities are linked to fine motor skills. The drawing club uses certain texts to encourage children to draw and label and this has been planned into the continuous provision.

CJ advised that she had also started her national professional qualification in early years leadership.

Q: How has your (CJ) experience been since you joined the school?

A: It has been very positive and CJ said that she had felt welcomed into the school.

Q: What is the target for children achieving a good level of development?

A: It is hard to set a percentage target at this stage in the early years because of children's different starting points. There will be a first round of assessment and, after this, a target will be set.

Q: Is the buddies system working well?

A: Yes, there are lots of activities for the children and it is also a great responsibility for the year six children.

Governors thanked CJ for her very informative presentation and she left the meeting.

Data Dashboards

The IDSR and FFT data dashboards were included with the papers for the meeting and governors were invited to ask questions.

Q: Why are targets lower than the FFT estimates?

A: The estimates do not reflect the cohort and context and because of the pandemic some statutory tests do not take place and so some of the targets are based on early years

	<p>assessments. The targets for Y2 children are all above national and it is important that the targets are realistic and achievable.</p> <p>Q: Is it realistic that 100% of children will meet the targets? A: Teachers set the targets based on baseline data. It is unlikely that all children will achieve this because of situations that may develop over the year but this will be reviewed.</p> <p>Q: Is the target of 55% of children achieving greater depth in reading achievable? A: The cohort are strong readers but this will be looked at once the autumn term data has been reviewed.</p> <p>Q: Why are individual targets not shared with parents? A: Some specific targets will be shared where, for example, a child has special educational needs but children’s progress is not linear and so the individual targets are generally not shared as it could put children under pressure.</p> <p>Governors noted the extremely strong progress scores which places Boughton Heath in the 98th percentile which were very positive particularly given the impact of the Covid pandemic. Progress scores were +5 for reading, +4 for writing and +3 for maths.</p> <p>Q: Should there be a target for the school to be in the 92nd percentile next year with a stretch target of the 98th percentile? A: This is a difficult metric to measure as it would be dependent on how other schools perform. Boughton Heath could be performing well but be in the 90th percentile depending on results from other schools and this could then be seen as a failure of the school. The target should be to achieve above the national average.</p> <p>Q: If Boughton Heath achieved just above average could that be considered to be a failure? A: To put this into context, two years ago the Boughton Heath data was average and so it would not be a failure.</p> <p>Q: Would it be useful to have an overview of targets across the trust? A: Different schools have different cohorts, some schools are not full and some have different sized cohorts and so the best measure is to measure against the national average where anything above 0 is good.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 7	VISION AND STRATEGY
Discussion	<p>Governors received an update on the progress against the SQM Strategic Projects. All projects were well under way and where they are expected to be. One project is blocked due to staff absence but it is anticipated that this will be unblocked.</p> <p>It was noted that it had previously been identified that JL would include raising parental engagement as an element within the SQM document.</p> <p>Q: How will the project in relation to the school’s carbon footprint be achieved? A: The school eco-council will work on this.</p> <p>Q: As EYFS has been evaluated as ‘good’ should that be included in the ‘raise’ section of the SQM document? A: The EYFS is in the development plan but it could also be included in the ‘raise’ section of the SQM.</p> <p>It was agreed that a statement to be included in the SQM document stating how pleased governors were with the school’s results.</p>

AGENDA	COMPLIANCE AND SAFEGUARDING
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ITEM 8	
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>8.a Chair's Action</p> <p>The Chair had not taken any urgent action on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting.</p> <p>8.b Principal's Action</p> <p>The Principal had not taken any urgent action on behalf of the LGB since the previous meeting.</p> <p>8.c Safeguarding</p> <p>The safeguarding record of visit was not available at the time of the meeting and will be shared with governors when it has been received.</p> <p>8.d Health and Safety</p> <p>The annual health and safety audit report was circulated in advance of the meeting. The audit was very thorough and the school scored 92%. Governors were invited to ask questions.</p> <p>Q: How often does the educational visits coordinator (EVC) complete training? A: Evolve is used to risk assess all trips but the local authority are only notified of the residential visits. JL advised that he has sourced some training for the EVC.</p> <p>Q: Are the timelines for some of the red actions realistic? A: Some of the actions are complete but it was not possible to evidence this during the audit but all timelines are achievable.</p> <p>Q: What is the position in relation to risk assessments of staff and return to work interviews? A: Staff are given a form to complete as a record of their return to work and a mini risk assessment is undertaken.</p> <p>It was noted that the red actions are what the health and safety company have categorised as being red. The critical actions would be those relating to legal requirements such as fire and legionella and the school is compliant in the critical areas. The school would not be held liable for failure to comply with the findings in the audit as they are recommendations.</p> <p>Q: Why is there an amber action for lone working in relation to safeguarding? A: There is a system in place for any staff who are lone working which is very secure but JL advised that he is looking at further ways of bridging any gaps.</p> <p>Q: Is there a lone worker policy? A: There is a lone worker place but the school will adopt the policy recommended by the health and safety auditor.</p> <p>Q: Is there a Critical Incident Plan? A: Yes, and it is published on the school website.</p> <p>8.e Attendance</p> <p>The Fischer Family Trust (FFT) attendance report was circulated in advance of the meeting. Attendance is strong and is regularly monitored. 15 letters have been sent to parents whose attendance is lower than would be liked.</p>

There were a number of children who have had Covid and there is a five-day absence rule in place for staff with children and three-days for children. At the start of the year, a small level of non-attendance can easily tip into the persistently absent category. A review of the attendance of children who were deemed to be persistently absent and the non-attendance was due to bouts of illness.

Where families may take term-time holidays, a recommendation will be made to the local authority that a fine be issued but many parents will say the fine is cheaper than taking children away during the school holidays.

Q: Is this a cultural issue?

A: It is not so much at Boughton Heath but it is a national issue and a recent study indicates that post-Covid parental attitudes to attendance have changed and this is a real struggle for schools nationally.

Q: Why does the local authority issue the fine?

A: They are the body that are legal responsible for issuing fixed penalty notices.

**8.f
Risk**

The completed Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan (RAMP) was circulated in advance of the meeting. JL advised that the trust have begun using Power BI which creates data dashboards. As a result, the risk assessment has been changed so it is more linear and easier to pinpoint individual risk.

The highest risk is 12 and that relates to exceptional expenditure as there is always the possibility of unforeseen expenditure.

It was confirmed that the leadership risk was six and not nine. A six is categorised as unlikely and would have an intermediate effect.

8.g

LGB Compliance Document

The completed LGB Compliance document was circulated with the papers for the meeting. It was noted that there were a small number of governors who have yet to complete the NGA safeguarding training for 2023 and it was agreed that DT would send a chaser to the governors requesting that they complete this as soon as possible.

The Compliance document was approved by governors.

**8.h
Website Compliance**

It was agreed that JF and DT would complete a review of the school website.

**8.i
Policies**

JL provided a verbal report on operation of the following policies:

GDPR Policy

Bespoke training was provided in September. MB and KL have been informed of any breaches of the policy. Where there have been any breaches these were the result of human error rather than due to lack of training. There have been no breaches this academic year. Staff do not use memory sticks or flash drives and there is two-factor authentication in place on devices. All staff understand their responsibility to report any potential breaches.

Attendance Policy

	<p>The Attendance Policy was re-drafted last year and is in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance. There are very clear stages for action and it is a robust policy and is working well.</p> <p>8.j Complaints</p> <p>There have been no complaints in the autumn term.</p> <p>8.k Suspensions/Exclusions</p> <p>There have been no fixed-term suspensions or exclusions.</p>
	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Safeguarding record of visit to be circulated to governors</p> <p>Governors to note within the Compliance document how pleased they were with the school's results.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED: That the LGB Compliance Document be approved by governors</p>

AGENDA ITEM 9	GOVERNANCE
Discussion	<p>9.a Governor Visits</p> <p>No governor visits had taken place since the autumn term.</p> <p>9.b Governor Vacancies</p> <p>It was noted that the term of office of AV as parent governor comes to an end in February 2023. There have been two nominations for the role of parent governor and governors discussed the possibility of co-opting AV. Under the Scheme of Delegation, there is an option for governors to co-opt one parent without the approval of the trust board and it was agreed that it would be appropriate to appoint AV as a co-opted governor from the date of the January meeting. This would create two parent governor vacancies which could be filled by the two parents who had applied for the role with their term of office beginning from the January meeting. This proposal was approved by the LGB.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED: That AV be appointed as a co-opted governor from the January meeting.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Discussion:	Wednesday 10th January 2023 at 6.30pm

Further discussions took place under the Part Two agenda