

**MINUTES OF THE OAKFIELD LODGE SCHOOL
LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
3RD MAY 2023**

Members Present: John Edmonstone JE Chair
 Claire Howarth CH
 Neil Cochrane NC
 Mike Taylor MC

Also Present: Sue Lambeth SL Clerk to the Governors
 Sian Nixon SN Bursar

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting was quorate and commenced at 15.33.

Item	
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>All governors were present.</p> <p>Other items of business requested: latest SIP report</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest All governor declarations of interest on GovernorHub were confirmed to be up to date.</p> <p>There were no conflicts of interest with the business to be discussed at this meeting.</p>
3.	<p>Membership The Manor Hall Local Advisory Board (LAB) Terms of Reference state that the number of people who shall sit on the LAB shall be not less than seven but not be subject to a maximum but must be of such number that the board remains efficient and effective.</p> <p>The LAB shall have the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 staff member (NC) • Minimum of 2 elected parent members • The Headteacher (GB) • Co-opted members (JE, MT, CH) <p>Governors confirmed the membership.</p> <p>Currently Link Governors were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour and attendance – CH • Quality of Education (inc Pupil Premium) – MT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & Management – JE • Personal Development (Inc Careers / SEND and Cared for Children) – vacant pending further governor recruitment • Safeguarding (inc H&S) - JE <p>Further governors were still sought.</p>
4.	<p>Chair’s Action The Chair reported no actions on behalf of the LAB since the previous meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Standards <u>Spring data presentation</u> (ET) Data Report Summer 1 As Emma Thompson was unable to join the meeting, governors were requested to post questions on the report to GovernorHub.</p> <p>ACTION: To post comments on the data report on GovernorHub for ET response. (all)</p> <p><u>Pupil Premium Report</u> (AS) As Andy Souter was not able to attend the meeting this item was carried forward to the Summer 2 meeting.</p> <p><u>Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Cared for Children presentation / discussion</u> (TC) SEND Chart Report April 2023 SEND Report for Governors Summer 1 2023 Reports had been uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting and governors had no questions.</p> <p>Tracy Chambers reported that it had been another busy year for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) with a transient cohort (see charts), some of whom had remained from the previous year as no placements had been found for them.</p> <p>MT joined the meeting at 15.34.</p> <p>Governors learnt that there had been 9 applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which required submissions for needs assessments. 8 related to 8 male students and one female which reflected the national trend. 7 of the students were eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) funding also. Of the 9 applications, the main category of need was Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) which was also reflective of the current times and a backlash from Covid and unmet needs over lockdown.</p> <p>Eight students on EHCPs had moved to permanent provisions including Peak Education in Audlem, Birchwood School, Lavender Fields, Crewe and Glebedale School in Stoke-On-Trent. As a result the SEND team had to consult with teams outside the Cheshire East (CE) area. One student had moved to Adelaide School early in the year and one had moved to Compass school in Middlewich, a new provision. Of those moving to permanent provision, one</p>

student only had returned to mainstream with an EHCP.

Q: Are these numbers higher than previously? What is the impact on the school?

A: Numbers are higher. However, the numbers moving to permanent provision are fewer due to the SEND places in school being full to capacity and therefore OL retains students longer than the school would like. The purpose of the school is a Pupil Referral Unit to accommodate permanently excluded pupils. The situation is such that pupils with EHCPs and who require SEND provision are blocking places. The majority of the school cohort have SEND needs and have and EHCPs. 24% of the school population has a EHCP which has an impact in the classroom.

Governors agreed that this bottle-neck situation was frustrating for the school since it was reliant on the SEND team and the availability of school places. The key worker at the Local Authority (LA), Lisa Taylor, worked very hard with consultations to the local schools, most of which were returned indicating student needs could not be met.

NC joined the meeting at 15.40.

Q: What happens to those students who cannot come to Oakfield Lodge (OL)?

A: They remain with the Anne Vaughn-Griffiths team at the LA. There are many waiting to come to the school for whom paperwork is often unavailable thereby precluding admission to the school.

The majority of children with EHCPs on the school roll are educated on site, with 2 educated off site with the tuition team. One Year 11 pupil with severe anxiety issues who had been unable to get into school previously, was now made good progress with the tuition team. One pupil in Year 10 with anxiety issues and difficulties getting into school, was currently also working with the tuition team with the aim of coming back on site. One Looked After Child (LAC) Year 11 pupil with an EHCP was educated through an external provider, the decision for which had been made by children's social care and was now flourishing. The pupil wished to continue this social care placement post-16 with study at an equine centre, although this placement was not approved. The Head confirmed it had been made very clear that this was an illegal placement as the provision was not an Ofsted-registered school. The school position had been minuted in meetings with children's social care and with the SEND team. School did not approve it or fund it and was not supportive of it. Responsibility for and the checking of the provision lay with the virtual school and children's social care, although welfare visits to check on the safety and wellbeing of the pupil took place each week.

Currently 7 students with EHCPs were awaiting a placement at a permanent school, one of whom was a Looked After Child (LAC). It was hoped that the virtual school would assist in finding a placement. The virtual schools had also agreed to fund one-to-one Teaching Assistant (TA) support for the child to reduce the number of exclusions and regulate and de-escalate behaviour.

Additionally, 2 students had been put forward for a needs assessment which was ongoing.

Going into the next academic year, it was likely that the school would be in same position with pupils awaiting assessments

5 Year 11 students with EHCPs had referrals to the Youth Support Service, and a worker had been allocated to support them with applications for post-16 education, with the intention that no pupils with EHCPs would fall into the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) category.

The Head reported that nationally 25% of pupils in PRUs have EHCPs, and that she had met with the LA to challenge the school's current position. The stance of the LA was that if a child with an EHCP had a failed placement in Cheshire East i.e. permanent exclusion, they should go to the PRU. Laura Rogerson, the Director of SEND, had advised the CE would seek to name OL in the plans rather than a type of provision. Should this happen, a child would be required to remain at the school to the end of Year 11 and the school would be required to deliver everything detailed in the EHCP. Conversations had taken place with Richard Redgate (RR), MHAT CEO, who had advised that the MHAT Alternative Provisions should be short stay schools and a short term solution, as they would be unlikely to be able to meet pupils' needs in the long term. Whilst provisions could be named an EHCP must give details of why only the PRU could meet the needs. The curriculum at OL was very traditional rather than bespoke or specific. Whilst willing to work with the LAs to support these vulnerable young people, RR was willing to challenge decisions and refer to the Secretary of State it was believed they were not made in best interests of children.

Q: Does the LA have to justify why OL is named?

A: The LA would name the school as it has a place and the child has had a permanent exclusion. The LA is to seek further legal advice around the appropriateness of the naming of OL in EHCPs. Challenge and difficult conversations are ahead and battle with the Secretary of State is likely over the coming months. The impact of inappropriately placed pupils is significant on the school. Ideally a type of provision should be named rather than a specific school.

Governors agreed the situation was extremely concerning but they were pleased to hear of MHAT support. The impact and toll on the staff was great since the school was not set up to be an SEMH setting. Teachers at the school were mainstream rather than SEND teacher, which could have contractual implications. Governors accepted that the situation was greatly hindering school improvement greatly, particularly in light of the excellent SIP review and positive comments on maths and technology. RR was to write to the lead commissioning bodies in Staffordshire and Cheshire East to request a formal meeting to discuss where LAs felt the PRUs fitted into the new White Paper, and the Chair agreed to join the meetings at this strategic level.

Governors were very concerned as the school was being left vulnerable in the

	<p>area of school development.</p> <p>Tracy was thanked and left the meeting at 16.00.</p>
6.	<p>Spring 2 Pt1 minutes/matters arising and actions</p> <p>OL LAB Spring 2 Pt1 mins OL LAB Spring 2 actions</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 8th March 2023 were agreed to be a true and accurate account and would be signed by the Chair on GovernorHub.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> <p>The action log was reviewed and updated, and the following points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT had visited the school and a report had been made available on GovernorHub. • Training on the compilation of the School Risk Register had been undertaken by the Head in the previous two weeks and SN (Bursar) would attend training on 15th May, with a draft to be submitted to governors in Summer 2 meeting. • All governors had completed and logged Prevent and Safeguarding training on GovernorHub. • The LAB continued to actively recruit additional governors. • The link safeguarding governor had visited and discussed the CPOMS reporting format with the DSL. It had been agreed that the trust template for the reporting of safeguarding information (uploaded to GovernorHub) would be used. • A report including details of the budget, actual figures and variances, the end of year forecast plus commentary had been made available to the Chair in advance of the meeting. • A breakdown of pupils by ethnicity and an explanation of the learning characteristics would be included on the Headteacher report for the next meeting. Currently the report was not extracting information from the Arbor system. The Head would investigate with Paul Spreadbury (MHAT) or Arbor. • In order to identify a good vehicle for feedback on staff wellbeing, a 'Meet the Governors' session would be arranged towards the end of the summer term for staff to be able to be aware of the purpose and the audience of the feedback. Following the meeting, a staff survey using Survey Monkey would be carried out. MHAT was funding a member of staff in an apprenticeship in staff wellbeing who would take on responsibility for staff wellbeing across the school. • The format of the Headteacher's report was to change for the current term. <p>ACTION: To devise a School Risk Register and present to governors at the Summer 2 LAB meeting. (SN)</p> <p>ACTION: To investigate why the current Headteacher report was not extracting information on pupil ethnicity and learning characteristics from Arbor with Paul</p>

	Spreadbury (MHAT) or Arbor. (GB)
7.	<p>Financial Matters Management Accounts April 2023 <u>Finance Report</u></p> <p>A finance report had been uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting with information requested by the Chair. The document gave an overview of the financial position of the school, despite some confusion over the terminology used e.g. working budget.</p> <p>Q: How does the working and the actual budget differ? And is this important?</p> <p>A: The year-to-date budget shows what the school is expected to have spent up to end of March. The working budget refers to what the trust think the position will be at the end of the year. Expenditure in some categories e.g. maintenance and vehicle expenditure will be different each month. The documents are greatly different from the previous CE documents the Bursar had worked with.</p> <p>SN reported that work was starting on the budget for 23/24, and that after one year with MHAT, a better idea over cost lines and income would be possible.</p> <p>Q: What is the red figure of £60k at the end of the report? And what is its importance?</p> <p>A: The spending habits of the school have not changed. However, the change of accounting period from a financial year to an academic year has had an impact. Currently there is a lack of clarity around the inclusion of capital, Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) and capital reserves. Many of the red figures relate to salary increases, and the trust are mindful of this. There is a difference of £100k in the cost of staffing from the previous year.</p> <p>Q: Will the school be able to adjust the budgeting to account for the increase or will a deficit be run?</p> <p>A: This depends on whether the government funds the pay increases.</p> <p>SN reported that the costs of glass replacement were high, and the school was anticipating grants and support for supply costs for the one-to-one support for pupils. SN would advise governors further; however, there was no overspending other than that relating to staffing and agency costs.</p> <p>Governors agreed that non-staffing costs were balanced overall and learnt that the impact of the cost of supply, due to being unable to claim through staff absence insurance, was significant. Vacancies had been difficult to fill and there had been long-term absences this year. In those circumstances the school was effectively paying the salary of the absent member of staff and the cost of purchasing supply. School was actively considering whether to continue with the purchase of staff sickness insurance for 2023/24. Staff wellbeing continued to be a priority and school was working with the trust on absence management, and the use of the Bradford Scale had been adopted. This enabled absence to be challenged, and support was received from Insight HR. Pay rises for support staff had impacted the budget greatly. There was currently no indication of the</p>

	<p>level pay rise for teachers, but the increase would be anticipated.</p> <p><u>School Risk Register update</u> A draft Risk Register would be presented to the Summer 2 meeting.</p> <p><u>Confirmation of the format of financial reports</u> In view of the amount of additional work for the Bursar to produce finance reports for each meeting, the LAB agreed a quarterly budget was sufficient and discussion of finance would take place in the second meeting of each term, together with the Headteacher report. Staff updates would be received in the first meeting of each term.</p> <p>Governors thanked SN who left the meeting at 16.19.</p>
8.	<p>Safeguarding Update SIP Safeguarding Report 15.02.2023 Designated adviser safeguarding meeting report The above reports were a follow up to the safeguarding audit carried out by Jayne Lowe, and a record of her visit for discussions with the DSL.</p>
9.	<p>Headteacher's Pt 1 Update The Headteacher report would be presented to the Summer 2 meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Health & Safety (H&S) Report The H&S audit had been carried out by the Staffordshire County Council team and a report was due in two weeks' time. Whilst there was some work to be done, there were no glaring omissions or actions. Termly inspections also took place.</p>
11.	<p>Policies Governors approved the Health & Safety Policy (refreshed and minor amendments), the Marking Policy (refreshed and minor amendments) and the First Aid Policy.</p> <p>Q: Is there a defibrillator in place? A: School was notified approximately 4 months previously that funding would be provided and a defibrillator was expected by the end of the academic year. Discussion of the best location was underway with Cornerstones Academy. The defibrillator would be fitted by a specialist and training would be provided</p>
12.	<p>Cheshire East Director of Children's Services Report Summer 2023 The Summer 2023 Report had not yet been received and discussion would be added to the Summer 2 meeting agenda.</p>
13.	<p>Governor Training and professional development <u>Training completed since the last meeting</u> Governor training completed since the previous meeting had been recorded on GovernorHub.</p> <p>ACTION: To investigate the need for Cyber Security Training and forward a link</p>

	<p>to governors. (SN)</p> <p><u>Training opportunities</u> CH, JE, MT and NC were to attend the MHAT Preparing for Ofsted training on 18th May.</p> <p>Governors were reminded to record all training on GovernorHub.</p> <p>Governors queried the possibility of CPOMS training, based on redacted examples, and the Head agreed to investigate a demo session with CPOMS.</p> <p>ACTION: To arrange a training session on CPOMS or an explanation for governors for the Summer 2 meeting. (GB)</p>
14.	<p>Governor training slot There was no training for this meeting</p>
15.	<p>Link Governor visit reports The Quality of Education Visit Report (including Pupil Premium) and the Behaviour and attitudes link governor report had been discussed at the previous meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: To contact AS to ask request a Pupil Premium update in the Summer 2 meeting. (MT)</p> <p>The report from the Chair's latest visit was also available on GovernorHub and there were no questions.</p>
16.	<p>Meetings The date of the final meeting for 2022-23 was agreed to be 28th June 2023 in person.</p> <p>Meeting dates for 2023/24 were confirmed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 1 - Tuesday 3rd October • Autumn 2 - Tuesday 5th December • Spring 1 - Tuesday 30th January • Spring 2 - Tuesday 6th March • Summer 1 - Tuesday 30th April • Summer 2 - Tuesday 25th June
17.	<p>Any Other Business <u>SIP Report</u> The latest SIP report would be referenced in the Headteacher's report at the Summer 2 meeting. Governors agreed the report was excellent and a credit to the school.</p> <p>Q: What is the meaning of re-engagement prompts? A: This is the support to a pupil to re-engage with learning or lesson they have left.</p>

18. **Impact Statement**

What is the impact of the discussions, decisions and actions of this meeting on the pupils of Oakfield Lodge School?

- Discussion around the SEND situation and its great impact on the school gave governors considerable cause for concern. Nevertheless the LAB was re-assured by the actions and developments in this area driven by the HT and the CEO.
- The SIP report re-assured governors of the strong progress made in areas of the curriculum.
- The Bursar's report gave governors confidence that the finances of the school were under control. The LAB acknowledged that staffing costs were out of school's control, and they welcomed the support for the Bursar from MHAT.

NC left and the Pt 1 meeting closed at 16.46.

Signed.....

Date