

LALEHAM GAP SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body held at 1800 hours on Wednesday, 22 May 2024 face-to-face and via Microsoft Teams

Present: Daniel Chantler (Chair), Vicki Acors, Lesley Collins (via Microsoft Teams), Danielle Dunn, Lesley Game (via Microsoft Teams), Tina May (via Microsoft Teams), Les Milton (Headteacher)

In Attendance: Mrs Val Woodin (Governance Professional)

The meeting was quorate and finished at 1933 hours.

No.	Item	Action
Procedural		
1.	Welcome and Apologies for absence The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Joanna Arnold. The meeting was quorate.	
2.	Declaration of Business Interests Governors confirmed that they had no business interests to declare against any agenda items. Governors were reminded to declare business interests which become relevant during the meeting.	
3.	Minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2024 The minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2024 were approved and signed as an accurate record.	
4.	Matters arising Governors received the action sheet from the last meeting and the following were updates of items not shown on the sheet as completed or not separate items on the agenda. <u>Staff Governor and Parent Governor Election Process</u> This would be discussed under agenda number 5 – Membership. <u>Online Safety Training/Cyber Security</u> The Chair had received a report on online safety training/cyber security and had e-mailed Governors individually about training. <u>Process for Parents Raising Concerns</u> The Headteacher reported that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had discussed whether there was any action required to ensure parents followed the correct process for raising concerns. The school tried to resolve concerns where possible and when parents received a response they sometimes did not feel the school had done enough or listened and did not get the response they were expecting. When	

	that happened the school was more pro-active in asking parents to use the complaints form. <i>A Governor asked whether a visual ladder could be included in the Complaints Policy to aid understanding of the process.</i> <i>This would be included when the policy was reviewed.</i> <u>Governor Monitoring Visit</u> The Chair had given a verbal report of his visit. He had wanted to meet with the School Council, however, that was not possible at the time of his visit. Vicki Acors was following up with a safeguarding visit in June and would be meeting the School Council.	Headteacher
Governance		
5.	Membership There was one Local Authority Governor vacancy. The Chair reported at the last meeting that he had met a prospective Governor and the Headteacher had met with him since the last meeting. He was currently employed in an independent school and was the safeguarding lead at the school and his wife worked in an Academy. The Governing Board had reviewed the skills required from the skills audit and considered that his experience and knowledge would be an asset to the Governing Board. The Headteacher recommended him as a Governor at the school and the Governing Board agreed to his nomination as a Local Authority Governor. He would be invited to the next Governing Board meeting and would be an observer until his nomination is approved by the Local Authority. <i>Staff Governor</i> The Headteacher reported that the Staff Governor election process had been held and Jodie Tomlinson, Assistant Business Manager, had been elected with effect from Tuesday 21 May 2024 for a period of four years finishing on 20 May 2028. Governors noted that there would be a conflict of interest with the Finance Committee and finance items. <i>Parent Governor</i> The term of office of Danielle Dunn (Parent Governor) was due to finish on 22 June 2024. The Chair recorded grateful thanks from the Governing Body for the work she had done both as a Governor and as Vice-Chair of Governors and wished her well for the future. The Headteacher recorded his personal thanks to her for the support she had given throughout the local planning application process.	Clerk
6.	Safeguarding <u>Safeguarding Update</u> The Headteacher gave a safeguarding update and further information is recorded in the confidential minutes.	
7.	Governor Monitoring The Governing Board received and noted the following Governor monitoring report:	

	<u>Governor Monitoring Report – Safeguarding – Vicki Acors – report dated 27 March 2024.</u> The Governing Board received the formal report of the safeguarding visit in March and this had been verbally reported at the last Governing Board meeting. <u>Governor Monitoring – Behaviour and Culture – Daniel Chantler</u> This had been discussed under minute number 4.	
School Improvement		
8.	Headteacher’s Report The Governing Board received the Headteacher’s report in advance of the meeting. The Headteacher highlighted the following: <u>Photograph on front page of Headteacher’s report</u> The photograph is of Kestrel View including the new canopy. <u>Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) Update</u> The STLS service continued to work positively in the area. <u>Pupil Numbers</u> There were currently 224 pupils on roll. The budget had been set on 229 pupils and 227 had confirmed for September. <u>Special Schools Review</u> The Headteacher drew attention to the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee meeting held on 16 May 2024 when the special school review was discussed. He reminded Governors that the purpose of the review was: • To inform planning of special school places over the medium-long-term for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for whom the Local Authority maintains an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and decides to place in a special school. • To inform the designation and admission criteria for special schools so that there is clarity about the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of children and young people for whom the Local Authority has planned special school provision and equity of access for children and young people with severe and complex SEND. • To inform the principles of funding to ensure a financially sustainable approach to funding state-funding special schools, with funding matched to the level of adaptation and resources needed to provide suitable education for the children placed by the Local Authority. • Identify opportunities for strategic system change to improve SEND provision, enhance educational outcomes, and promote inclusivity for children and young people with complex and severe needs in their local communities. • Propose options for the future that foster collaboration towards building a more equitable and effective educational landscape for all children in Kent.	

	He explained that the SEND budget was overspent by £45m (forty-five million pounds) and a total overspend by KCC of £142m (one hundred and forty-two million pounds) and they had entered into an agreement called 'safety valve' with the Department for Education. The costs of placing SEND children in the private was significant and it was planned that a large number of these children would be moved from the private sector into the maintained sector. The cost of transport was also very significant. Support for children with SEND was through mainstream schools, Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in a mainstream school and special schools. The proposal that special schools play a role in supporting children with SEND in mainstream schools through the provision of expertise and the opportunity of outreach and in-reach would form part of the public consultation. It was proposed that special schools in Kent had one of three designations as follows: • Designation: Complex Learning Needs – Profound, Severe, Complex Needs: ○ Admission criteria: learners have a range of needs including profound, multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum condition, communication disorders and social, emotional mental Health. • Designation: Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs: ○ Admission criteria: All pupils have social, emotional, and mental health difficulties with associated challenging behaviour, many have had adverse childhood experiences and/or have additional needs, including autistic spectrum condition, speech, language and communication difficulties, ADHD. • Designation: Neurodiverse with Learning Difficulties: ○ Admission criteria: All pupils have complex special educational needs, they are neurodiverse and may have a diagnosis of autism, ADHD, or other conditions. The pupils have severe social communication difficulties, learning difficulties and may have social, emotional mental health needs associated with neurodiversity, including severe social anxiety. The proposed designation of Laleham Gap School was to become a Neurodiverse with Learning Difficulties school. Proposed changes to designation and admission criteria would apply to the new intake of children and young people with an EHC Plan from 2026/27. Children already attending the special schools affected by the proposed changes would remain on roll. The implications for this were significant. The difference between a child's home and the nearest school would be reduced if there were more generic special schools. It was understood that the vote at the Cabinet meeting about taking these proposals to consultation was six to five in favour of going out to consultation.	
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	There was discussion about the funding model which could potentially be very complex. A Governor asked where there was an SRP for secondary age children in the local area. <i>It was understood the only one in Thanet was for visual impairment at Charles Dickens school, however, other mainstream schools were being asked to open up SRPs.</i> A Governor asked whether there was any thought that independent schools would cut their prices. <i>Independent schools were generally expanding. In addition, if a family went to tribunal presenting their case for an independent school, in the vast majority of tribunals the families would be successful.</i> The Headteacher stated that there was frustration from the special school Heads that nobody who has worked in special schools has been involved and there was no understanding of what special schools currently do. Kent has the highest number of SEND and EHCPs in the country. Mainstream schools have not got the staff resources or training to take this on board. The Vice-Chair thought that the proposal to look at children before they start schools was an excellent idea. The Headteacher stated that Laleham Gap had parents who were insistent that their child went to Laleham Gap regardless and when they go to a tribunal the child does get a place at Laleham Gap. It was also recognised that children in more socially deprived households may not have the fight or knowledge to go to tribunal. Governors agreed that when the consultation paperwork was published they would have a discussion about how best to respond. There was an acceptance of the need for change, however, it was hoped there would be sufficient detail in the proposals. A Governor asked how long the period of consultation would be. <i>This was not yet known.</i> A Governor asked about the reaction of staff. <i>Teachers were positive and had a good debate. There was a clear acknowledgement that systems needed to change. In addition the majority of pupils in special schools were good or outstanding provision.</i> The Teaching Assistants would be informed about the consultation on 23 May.	
9.	School Development Plan (SDP) The Governing Board received the updated SDP in advance of the meeting. A Governor asked whether all teachers' mid-term reviews had been undertaken. <i>The Headteacher confirmed that they had.</i> A Governor asked whether appraisals for Teaching Assistants had been undertaken.	

	<i>The Headteacher confirmed that they had and targets had been set for next year.</i> The Headteacher drew attention to the successful meditation and mindfulness sessions held before school. A Governor asked whether the school had a food bank. <i>The Headteacher reported that there was no food bank but there was a food club for staff. He also pointed out that staff wellbeing books had been successful since their purchase and introduction last term. All 30 books had been loaned out and over two thirds of these were still in use.</i> A Governor asked about feedback from staff about Arbor and the associated training. <i>The Headteacher stated that feedback from the first staff census was fine and he had received no complaints. Arbor was easier to access than SIMS.</i>	
10.	Finance The Governing Board received a verbal report from the Chair of the Finance Committee following their meeting preceding the Governing Board meeting. <u>Outturn 2024/25</u> The Governing Board received the outturn 2023/24 and noted that the school was in a good financial position. The Finance Committee discussed the comparison with other special schools and noted that it was difficult to benchmark against other special educational needs schools as they all had different needs, resources, staff levels and ratios of staff to children. It was noted that the net in-year revenue rollover carried over was £22,672 (twenty-two thousand six hundred and seventy-two pounds). The net in-year capital rollover was £1,367 (one thousand three hundred and sixty-seven pounds). <u>3-year Budget 2024/25 – 2026/27</u> The Governing Board received the proposed three-year budget that had been scrutinised and reviewed by the Finance Committee and recommended approval of the budget by the Governing Board. The budget was set on 229 pupils. The Governing Board noted that in year 3 there was a predicted deficit of £118,000 (One hundred and eighteen thousand pounds). The budget was in surplus in years one and two. It was noted that predicting a deficit budget would result in a 'schools in financial difficulty' meeting which would probably result in the need to amend some assumptions. The Governing Board approved the 3-year budget 2024/25 – 2026/27. <u>Approval of Purchase Orders</u> The Governing Board approved the following purchase orders: Willow Landscapes - £33,650 (thirty-three thousand six hundred and fifty pounds) for the walking mile track. It was noted that the quote was inclusive of VAT and £6,750 (six thousand seven hundred and	

	fifty pounds) would be reimbursed leaving a balance of £26,920 (twenty-six thousand nine hundred and twenty pounds). The Friends had offered to pay £8,000 (eight thousand pounds) leaving a balance of £18,920 (eighteen thousand nine hundred and twenty pounds). • East Kent College – Skills for Independent Living Course – this was for years 10 and 11 at a cost of £14,740 (fourteen thousand seven hundred and forty pounds). • East Kent College – Construction Link course for years 10 and 11 - £17,250 (seventeen thousand two hundred and fifty pounds).	
11.	Policies The Governing Board reviewed the following policy: • LGS18 – Whistleblowing Policy . The Chair suggested an amendment to section 8, Procedure, paragraph 4 to read “.... complaint involves the Headteacher, complaints should be raised with the Chair of Governors.” The Headteacher would obtain advice about this and the Governing Board agreed that the policy could then be approved and signed by the Chair outside of the meeting.	Headteacher Chair
Other		
12.	TEP Governance Monthly Bulletins – March 2024 and May 2024 Governors received and noted the TEP Governance monthly bulletins for March 2024 and May 2024. The Clerk would check whether the presentation from the Governance Conference was available for circulation to Governors. The Chair drew attention to the training detailed in the bulletin including Complaints – what a Governor needs to know on Wednesday 5 June and training for Governors responsible for safeguarding which he suggested all Governors should complete. With regard to Ofsted, the Chair drew attention to the fact that from September Ofsted inspectors would no longer conduct subject deep dives during ungraded inspections.	Clerk
13.	Governor Training Governors were reminded that they should ensure that their training was recorded on their profile on GovernorHub. Lesley Collins had undertaken cyber security training.	
14.	Co-operative Foundation Trust An update was included in the confidential minutes.	
15.	Chair’s Actions/Correspondence There had been no Chair’s action or correspondence since the last meeting.	
16.	Any Other Urgent Business There was no other business to discuss.	

17.	Confidentiality The following were confidential items: • Discussion regarding KSENT • Safeguarding	
18.	Dates of Future Meetings <u>Full Governing Board</u> • Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 6 pm	
19.	Impact of Meeting The impact of the meeting had been: • Election of new Staff Governor • Nomination of new LA Governor who would be invited to attend next Governing Board meeting as an Observer • Governor Monitoring Report • Discussion of Headteacher's report and safeguarding update • Updated SDP • Approval of 3-year budget • Approval of quotations • Whistleblowing Policy • Discussion on Governance bulletin and training available. <i>The meeting closed at 1933 hrs.</i>	

Signed Date
Chair of Governors