

LALEHAM GAP SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body held at 1800 hours on Wednesday, 27 March 2024 face-to-face and via Microsoft Teams

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

In Attendance: Mrs Val Woodin (Governance Professional)

The meeting was quorate and finished at 2013 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, Lesley Game and Tina May. The Governing Board recorded their congratulations to Joanna Arnold on the birth of her baby that morning. 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 24 January 2024 The minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 January 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 Survey Feedback</u> The staff survey feedback had been uploaded on to GovernorHub. The Headteacher reported that there had been in excess of 60 responses. <i>A Governor asked how the survey was carried out.</i> <i>The survey had undertaken the survey via Microsoft forms.</i> The Headteacher reported that the cleaning and kitchen staff were under represented. He stated that they would see whether any adaptations could be made for people to access the survey.	

	<u>Role of the Vice-Chair</u> The Chair had e-mailed Governors about the role of the Vice-Chair but had not yet received any responses. The current Vice-Chair explained that the Chair had been very supportive and encouraged Governors to consider taking on this role. Following discussion at the meeting Vicky Acors was elected as Vice-Chair with effect from 23 June 2024 until the first meeting of the Governing Board in September 2024 when the formal elections for Chair and Vice-Chair for the next academic year would take place. <u>Staff Governor and Parent Governor Election Process</u> The Headteacher reported that the election process for a Staff Governor will have been completed by the next Governing Body meeting and the Parent Governor election process to be effective from 23 June 2024. <u>Online Safety Training/Cyber Security</u> The Headteacher would have the information available for the next Governing Board meeting on what online safety training Governors had accessed.	Headteacher Headteacher
Governance		
5.	Membership There was one Local Authority Governor vacancy. The Chair stated that that he had met a potential Governor who worked in education in the independent sector. Taking into account the Governor skills audit the Governing Board was ideally looking for somebody with HR and/or finance expertise and somebody not employed by the Local Authority, however, it was very hard to recruit Governors. A Governor suggested that a potential Governor could have skills from another part of their life and some of the skills could be developed through training/courses. The Headteacher would invite the potential Governor into school. The Clerk would send a copy of the Local Authority Governor nomination form which included the school governance qualifications and disqualifications to the Headteacher. The term of office of Lisa Dixon (Staff Governor) was due to finish on 12 May 2024 and the term of office of Danielle Dunn (Parent Governor) was due to finish on 22 June 2024.	Clerk
6.	Safeguarding The Chair reported on safeguarding training he had undertaken pointing out that there was emphasis around the Governing Board having strategic oversight of safeguarding and not operational. The Governing Board's role was to hold executive leaders to account for the effective and efficient performance management of staff. If there were low levels of concerns raised there was a need to have an understanding of the numbers and that actions were being followed up and it needed to be clearly documented that these questions were being asked. The Chair also raised the question of cyber security following some training he had undertaken. There were resources that can support schools with cyber security. It was important that school staff were trained and Governors were	

	aware of the process. The Headteacher stated that the school had a visit from the police on 8 March and they had spoken to pupils specifically about cyber security. The Governing Board noted that Daniel Chantler and Vicky Acors were safer recruitment trained. <u>Safeguarding Update</u> The Headteacher reported that there had been no Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals made this academic year. There were a number of children in serious situations but these were less than reported at the last meeting.	
7.	Governor Monitoring The Governing Board received and noted the following Governor monitoring report: Governor Monitoring Report – Curriculum – Joanna Arnold – 5 January 2024. Governors noted the questions raised at the visit noted in the report and the response by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Chair reported that he had undertaken a tour of the school with the Deputy Headteacher where he saw a calm atmosphere and pupils fully engaged. He spoke to a number of pupils about their work and said they were very enthusiastic and showed him some of their projects. He would produce a written report on his visit. Vicki Acors had asked to meet with the school council and she shared safeguarding questions before the meeting. One point raised by pupils at the school council meeting was about their perception of pupils going off site to get drinks and then coming back on site. The Headteacher stated that the question had been raised a few school council meetings previously about pupils going off site as part of their individual programmes or managed dysregulation. The other point they made was their view that the worst behaved children got the most one to one time. It was explained to the school council that it was part of a pupil's learning and some children have to be explicitly taught about empathy. There was a view from entrenched pupils that if a child did something wrong there should be a punishment. Culturally there had been significant progress with restorative approaches and the debate was becoming more refined every year. There were often new children who have wider societal approached to behaviour sanctions. A Governor stated that sometimes families had those opinions and there was a question about how families were educated about restorative approaches. <i>A Governor asked whether pupils were regulated when they were taken off the school site or whether there was a risk that they could dysregulate in a shop.</i> <i>The Headteacher stated that it was part of the risk assessment but Laleham Gap was a communication and interaction school.</i> <i>A Governor asked whether that would be part of their individual support plans.</i> <i>The Headteacher confirmed that it would be part of those plans.</i> The Staff Governor explained that there was at least 3% of pupils that may happen to and there were extenuating circumstances. As a result of the issues	Chair

	they were dealing with they found it difficult to speak about within a school setting. She explained about two pupils who had been to a nearby coffee shop and then came back telling pupils what they had got and it was really positive that they could speak in that manner. In addition, discussions were ongoing with the wellbeing team about better use of the kitchen in Phoenix. The Headteacher commented that young people should be educated and go out into society positively. Vicki Acors reported that on her visit she had met with Rebecca Minter and looked at the physical handling log on CPOMS and shared how positive it was. She talked about the Pro-ACT approach and they also looked at individual support plans. She stated that intervention could be graded up and down and was impressed about how quickly that could happen. They talked about one particular serious incident where an emergency strategy was shared and she asked what support there was for staff wellbeing. Rebecca spoke about how supportive Joshua Payne had been on a daily basis. She also talked about group supervision and that there was a wellbeing counsellor available on site who held group wellbeing supervision once or twice a term. They discussed the positive impact of Pro-ACT and Thrive.	
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>School Context</u> The number of Children in Need had significantly increased in the last 3 months although this was still very low for a special school. <u>Behaviour and Attitudes</u> <i>Attendance</i> – this was an area of change for the school. There were a number of young people who had a high level of anxiety, low mood, deprivation and suicidal ideation which had an impact on school attendance. Post-16 attendance was lower than the whole school average. Before Covid attendance was between 90% and 92% whereas currently it was about 86%. The national average for special schools this year up until 5 March was 87%. Work was ongoing with the school's information management system, which would be Arbor from next term, to look at how to target and support young people's absence sooner by setting up different alerts. There was a lot of work for those below 50% but it was felt there could be more work on those children between 50% and 80% attendance. <i>A Governor asked whether there was any targeting of those with 80% to 90% attendance.</i> <i>The Headteacher stated that there was already a lot of work being undertaken through tutors and if attendance dropped below 50% the wellbeing team was involved.</i> <i>A Governor asked how many pupils were between 50% and 80% attendance.</i> <i>The Headteacher stated that this was in the high 30s and more resources had been targeted to that group as it was felt it would have more impact on their attendance supporting their individual programme.</i>	

	A Governor asked whether it was worth looking at persistent absence. <i>The Headteacher stated that persistent absence was below 90% and severe absence was below 50% and that was not very helpful for the school.</i> A Wellbeing Co-ordinator had been appointed and part of her role was looking at attendance. There were a number of pupils who had not been in education when they came into the school. There were case studies for these pupils and there had been exceptional improvement to bring their attendance up to 30%. A Governor asked what was classified as unauthorised attendance. <i>If a child was not in school because of ill health that was authorised absence but taking pupils out of school for holidays was unauthorised. It was determined by review on an individual basis.</i> Attendance was down in term 3 compared to term 3 last year. Vicky Acors would be undertaking a Governor monitoring visit in term 5/6 and she would look at attendance. It was noted that Ruth Jones, Assistant Headteacher, was the lead in school on attendance. The School Governor stated that there had been an increase of emotional based school avoidance. A Governor asked whether the emotional based school avoidance was because of the pupils' anxieties or those of the parents. <i>The Headteacher stated that there were a lot of young people who have very anxious families, some was because of neuro-diversity, some because of trauma, some because of general anxiety and some were not known.</i> A Governor asked whether there was a support network for those families. <i>The Headteacher responded that the school worked closely with families and with Social Services.</i> A Governor asked whether the school could refer for early help. <i>The Headteacher stated that they did but some families were not interested.</i> <u>Leadership and Management</u> The Governing Board noted the smooth transition into the new structure and the Headteacher gave particular thanks to Katie Reeves and Ruth Jones. <u>KSENT</u> This item was included in the confidential minutes. <u>Specialists Teacher and Learning Service (STLS) Update</u> The STLS Service Level Agreement (SLA) is due to end in August 2025. KCC are currently in the process of exploring options for the future of the service and would like to consult with schools via workshops and a survey. Proposals were due to be considered at a KCC Cabinet meeting on 16 May. The Headteacher would keep the Governing Board informed of any developments.	
--	--	--

9.	School Development Plan (SDP) The Governing Board received the updated SDP in advance of the meeting. Some of the actions were included in the Headteacher's report and formed part of Governor monitoring. The Headteacher reported that there was emphasis on staff cpd and training for the next academic year. There was discussion about The Balanced System. A Parent Governor stated that Jon Deslandes and a Speech Therapist had talked about the Balanced system and how it worked in school. The Headteacher explained how the system worked. The Speech and Language Therapist would train teachers and Teaching Assistants so that they can all support the young people in speech and development. It was targeted and when children need specific interventions it can be led by a trained Teaching Assistant on a one to one or group basis. The targeted intervention was usually for a six-week period. Then specialist level was normally done by a Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Educational Psychologist. They were trying to get all schools and all services involved so that there was a common language about what they were trying to do so that there was more accurate signposting for children and families for the support they need. Laleham Gap was going through an accreditation process to become a Balanced System school. <i>A Governor asked whether there could be a handout on the Balanced system in the office.</i> <i>The Headteacher confirmed that they would do this.</i> <u>GovernorMark</u> The Chair reported that work on putting together the submission for GovernorMark had been ongoing over the last 18 months. He had been in school to review the documentation and when he tried to look at the website that accredits it he discovered that the company went into liquidation three weeks earlier. He referred to the new Governance Handbook, effective from August 2024 which includes information on Governing Body self-review which the Governing Board undertook annually.	Headteacher
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>12-month Budget Monitoring</u> The Committee had reviewed the 12-month budget monitoring in detail. The revenue balance expected outturn showed a surplus of £11,881 (eleven thousand eight hundred and eighty-one pounds). The outturn report would be received at the May meeting. <u>Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</u> The Governing Board had received the draft SFVS in advance of the meeting. This had been discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and the Committee	

	recommended it to the Governing Board for approval. The Governing Board approved the SFVS for signature and submission to the Local Authority. Thanks were recorded to the School Business Manager for her expertise and detailed analysis.	
11.	Policies The Governing Board reviewed and approved the following policies: • LGS67 – Schools Admissions Criteria • LGS07 – Finance Policy including Appendix B – Budget Holders List • LGS05 – Charging and Remissions Policy With regard to the schools admissions criteria, the Headteacher stated that the previous wording left the school at risk of discrimination. He had discussed the wording of this version of the school's admission criteria with other Headteachers to ensure that the language was not discriminatory. A Governor asked whether the Local Authority could force the school to take children. <i>The Headteacher confirmed that they could. He stated that the Governing Board had responsibility for writing the admissions criteria and ensuring it did not run the risk of discrimination, however, the designation of the school was determined by the Department for Education which was always on the advice of the Local Authority. The school is a Communication and Interaction school. The special schools review was talking about the school not just being a communication and interaction school but picking up children with different cognition and emotional difficulties. In addition the legislation around Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) can direct a school to take children in relation to their EHCP.</i> A Governor asked whether it was worth taking legal advice. <i>This could be considered when the outcome of the special schools review was known.</i> With regard to LGS18 – Whistleblowing Policy, the version control stated that this was being approved in May 2024. The Headteacher would ensure the version control was correct and it would be submitted to the next Governing Board meeting for approval.	Headteacher
Other		
12.	TEP Governance Monthly Bulletins – January 2024 and February 2024 Governors received and noted the TEP Governance monthly bulletins for January 2024 and February 2024. With regard to complaints training, the Chair commented that there had been an increase in Kent in the number of parental complaints and some parents were not going through the right channels. The remaining discussion on this item is included in the confidential minutes.	
13.	Governor Training The Chair reported that he had undertaken training for Governors with responsibility for safeguarding.	

	Vicky Acors had also undertaken training for Governors with responsibility for safeguarding and Governor SEND training. She stated that the training was good and recommended the training to Governors. Governors were reminded that they should ensure that their training was recorded on their profile on GovernorHub.	All Governors
14.	Co-operative Foundation Trust The Governing Board received the following documentation: • KSENT newsletter term 3 • KSENT Trust Board minutes – 28 September 2023 • KSENT Trust Board minutes – 7 March 2024 The Governing Board noted that KSENT had approved the change of Laleham Gap's Instrument of Government. KSENT had produced a Governor Handbook and the Chair would send this to the Clerk to upload on to GovernorHub.	Chair/Clerk
15.	Chair's Actions/Correspondence There had been no Chair's action or correspondence apart from the e-mail from a parent referred to in minute number	
16.	Any Other Urgent Business There was no other business to discuss.	
17.	Confidentiality The following were confidential items: • Discussion regarding KSENT • Complaints	
20.	Dates of Future Meetings <u>Finance Committee Meetings 2023/24</u> • Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 5 pm <u>Full Governing Board</u> • Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6 pm • Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 6 pm	
21.	Impact of Meeting The impact of the meeting had been: • Staff Survey which was generally very positive • Discussion of Vice-Chair role • Governor Monitoring Reports • Discussion of Headteacher's report and safeguarding update • Updated SDP • Report from Finance Committee on 12-month budget monitoring, • Approval of Schools Financial Standard (SFVS)	

	• Review and approval of policies • Discussion on Governance bulletin and training available. <i>The meeting closed at 1955 hrs.</i>	
--	---	--

Signed Date
Chair of Governors