



GIRLS' LEARNING TRUST

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting Type	Trust Board
Date:	23 September 2020 at 7.00pm
Venue:	Meeting held via Zoom video conference call
Members:	Hamza Aumeer (HA), Alex Clark (AC), *Robert Etchell (RE), Sandy Gillett (SG, Chair), Marie Grant (MG), Malcolm Munro (MM), Nigel Pepper (NP), Jennifer Smith (JS) and Philip Taylor (PT, Vice-Chair)
Others present:	Richard Booth (RB, Headteacher WHSG), Amy Cavilla (ALC, Headteacher NHSG), Moe Devenney (MD, Headteacher CHSG), Helen Latham (HL, Director of Finance and Operations) and Andrew Horrod (AH, Clerk)

* denotes member absent from meeting

Item	Item Description and Minute	Action
1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest	
	Apologies for lateness were received from HL. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Trust Board and Committee appointments for 2020/21	
2.1	SG and PT were willing to stand again for the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board respectively. There were no other nominations.	
2.2	The GLT Governance Structure document had been circulated so that the Board could consider the membership of its committees including the LGBs. No changes to the Chairs of committees were proposed. There were no membership issues with the LGBs to report apart from the general filling of vacancies and that a new Vice-Chair for Wallington was needed. Board members supported HA in his proposal that Julie Smith be the Vice-Chair of Wallington LGB.	
2.3	Regarding Trust Committees, it was noted that the Governance Structure document needed updating in a few places. Sue Cooke had agreed to be the Nonsuch representative on the HR Committee. LGB representation on the Finance Committee needed to be reviewed. It was agreed that this matter be considered at Trust Governance Committee. The Board acknowledged that the new race advocacy steering group was an important part of the governance structure but it need not be classified as a standing committee.	
2.4	Resolved: (i) To appoint SG and PT as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board for 2020/21.	

	<p>(ii) To appoint the following LGB Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2020/21: Carshalton – MM and Chris Cox Nonsuch - MG and Andrea Cooke Wallington – HA and Julie Smith, subject to Julie agreeing to take the role.</p> <p>(iii) To appoint the following Trust Committee Chairs for 2020/21: Admissions – NP Finance - NP HR – PT Governance - SG</p> <p>(iv) To agree the membership of Trust Committees for 2020/21 as set out in the Governance Structure document subject to some updating, the addition of Sue Cooke as NHSG representative on the HR Committee, and review of membership of the Finance Committee at the next Governance Committee meeting.</p> <p><i>The Headteachers joined the meeting at 7.10pm</i></p>	JS
3	Heads' Briefing for trustees	
3.1	<p>The Headteachers had prepared reports which summarised Summer 2020 exam results, the performance of Priority Departments, help for students needing support, issues related to school reopening and priorities for 2020/21. Heads had been asked what LGBs and the Trust could do to support school development plans this year and their responses were included. SG thanked the Heads for their work over the Summer on exam gradings and asked them in turn to highlight key points from their reports.</p> <p><u>Carshalton</u></p>	
3.2	<p>MD said 2020 had seen the school's best set of exam results. There had been few appeals against gradings. The student who had received a conditional offer of a place from Mansfield College Oxford had been adversely affected by the controversial Ofqual algorithm used to produce calculated grades, in that two A grades had been lowered to C grades. This meant she could not go to Oxford this year but the College had offered her a place for 2021 based on her centre assessed grades. Replying to a question from HA about support to the student during her 'gap year', MD said CHSG was offering her the chance to be a mentor to A Level students.</p>	
3.3	<p>MD said Priority Departments were Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), Science and Geography. His report detailed the concerns surrounding MFL and Biology. CHSG was making efforts to improve student subject knowledge and intervention measures included classes after school and at lunchtime. There had been some re-jigging of timetable periods, leading to increased teaching time. Replying to a question from MG about Maths, a priority subject in recent years, MD said there had been a significant improvement; the concern now was around entry requirements for A Level and further thought was being given to this matter.</p>	
3.4	<p>Regarding attendance, there were peaks and troughs. Approximately 150 students had been absent today, 60 of these Covid-related. Parents were being very conscientious in not sending their daughters to school if they had any signs of symptoms. Covid-related absenteeism amongst staff was causing a strain, typically 3-6 members of staff were off school at any one time.</p>	

Nonsuch

3.5

ALC's report detailed the issues outlined at the beginning of this minute and so she started by inviting questions. The following points were covered in replies to questions from HA, AC, MG and NP.

- ALC said intervention measures in English for Years 9 and 10 had started already. Diagnostic teaching was being used to identify curriculum gaps, supplemented by extra remote support, which was being tracked. Additional support for Pupil Premium students in English and Maths was due to start soon, again outside lesson time. The costs of extra support are being met by the Covid-19 premium fund. Year 13 had just done mini-mock exams and she would be discussing results with staff tomorrow.
- There were two other priority groups: Sixth Formers with average lowest scores at GCSE; and approximately 40 students in each of Years 11 and 13 who struggled emotionally during Coronavirus lockdown. The Summer did not throw up anything different in terms of students who are new to the school, they will continue to be monitored.
- ALC said a lot of work had gone into dealing with appeals against exam grades. Whilst the situation had calmed down, the school was putting a cap on the issue. Three families had still been dissatisfied following her review of grades on appeal, so these cases had been looked at by JS. JS endorsed what ALC said about the additional work for staff, approximately 70 appeals had been lodged at NHSG.
- Further Maths was a Priority Department. ALC felt the centre assessed grades in this subject had been fair and whilst a score of ALPS 4 had been predicted, it had come out as ALPS 3.
- The new Year 12 students had a wide range of ability. Careful transition work had been carried out over the Summer and there had been an assessment last week. 10 students were struggling to the point of changing their A Level options.
- ALC said staff had responded very well to the introduction of the Covid-19 timetable but they were getting tired. Some departments were more advanced than others in terms of their staff being able to take over anything at any time, and also make a switch to blended learning. Replying to a question on whether there was anything the Trust could do to e.g. accelerate the effective use of FROG, ALC asked the Board to leave the matter with her; finding the time to embed FROG at NHSG, to the level found at WHSG, was the main challenge.

Wallington

3.6

RB started by inviting questions on his report. Replying to one from NP, RB gave his thoughts on the progress of priority departments: Biology and Economics & Business. The Board noted that most of the changes put in place in Biology had been driven by the Department (as opposed to the SLT, in the case of Economics & Business). Both Computing and Economics & Business had been allocated a link member of SLT, to provide support in identifying priorities for this year. Further work would be done with the English Department to raise the percentage of GCSE Grade 9s in English Language. Replying to a question about introducing a Key Performance Indicator for Grade 9 English, RB said he was open to this possibility – and for Maths as well.

3.7	RB said SLT members were positive about exam results next year. The 2020 GCSE year group was a good one, producing the school's best set of results. Having 10 rather than 11 GCSEs had helped. The new Year 11 are strong and students worked well during lockdown. This also applied to Year 13.	
3.8	RB said the new regime brought about by Covid-19 had placed considerable demands on staff and members of the Trust/LGB could support them by visiting the school. JS said she could act as a conduit regarding visits to schools by trustees/governors and it was agreed that the matter be discussed at Executive Team. SG, MG and NP expressed interest in visiting. HA said he would highlight the matter at the next Wallington LGB meeting.	JS
3.9	MD commented on CHSG's school values, subject of a matter arising from the minutes. The school's motto "Excellence: Everywhere, Every Day" had been introduced last year. He intended to review CHSG's other school values. Following brief discussion it was agreed that SG and JS look at what was already in place across the GLT schools as regards school values and report back.	SG/JS
4	Key Performance Indicators 2020/21	
4.1	The Board was asked to consider a set of proposed exam targets or KPIs. Responding to a point from NP about KPIs in the GLT Governance Handbook, JS said the circulated targets were specific to 2021 exams and supplemented what was in the Handbook. She highlighted the great uncertainty surrounding this year's exam results and consequent difficulty in using them as a guide for 2021. Therefore 2019 targets and actuals had been included alongside the proposed 2021 targets. NP picked up the point made earlier in the meeting about including targets for GCSE Grade 9s. ALC answered a question from PT about 2021 targets being higher than actuals for 2019; higher attainment grades were needed to achieve the ALPS targets.	
4.2	The Board agreed JS's suggestion that there be a focus on 2019 academic targets when setting the KPIs for this coming year and targets for GCSE Grade 9s be included. The Grade 9 targets can be confirmed at Trust Board in December. <i>RB, ALC and MD left the meeting at the end of this item. HL joined the meeting. AH lost internet connection towards the end of this item, for about 10 minutes, and rejoined the meeting at 8.30pm.</i>	JS
5	Appointment of trustees to oversee safeguarding and governor/trustee induction	
	AC confirmed that he would continue as safeguarding trustee. SG and PT would discuss the role of the trustee responsible for overseeing induction and agree who should carry it out.	SG/PT
6	Minutes of previous Trust Board meetings	
6.1	Regarding the minutes of the meeting held on 24 August, PT said he was not satisfied with the amendment to paragraph 4.1, which had been circulated prior to this meeting. This was because it still implied that centre assessed grades had been changed. JS explained the process whereby some A Level centre assessed grades had been superseded by grades produced by Ofqual's algorithm. Due to the outcry following	

	<p>the issue of A level results, the decision to impose algorithm (calculated) grades had then been reversed. The centre assessed grades had not in themselves been changed. The percentages which she had quoted on 24 August reflected the number of instances where centre assessed grades had been superseded by the algorithm grades, expressed as a percentage for each school. As AH was temporarily absent, it was agreed that JS work with AH to produce a suitable amendment to paragraph 4.1; subject to this, the minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.</p>	JS/AH
6.2	<p>AH had offered to re-edit the minutes of the 8 July meeting so that more content could be included in the Part One (matters arising item 2.2 refers). The Board approved the re-edited Parts One and Two, thereby releasing the Part One for publication on the GLT websites.</p>	JS
7	Matters arising from the minutes	
7.1	<p>A matters arising sheet had been circulated and SG took the Board down the listed items for the July and August meetings. All of the items had either been discussed earlier in this meeting or would be covered later on. Item 9.2 from the July meeting, regarding a draft protocol for the recruitment of Appointed Governors, was listed as a later agenda item but SG took it now. The Board noted input from NP and JS regarding diversity and a required standard for attending formal meetings, for governors and trustees. SG noted that the sub-section headed 'Responsibilities' should begin "Members of the Trust Board...". These points would be taken into account and SG asked that if trustees had any further amendments to the draft protocol, please could they email them to her and JS.</p>	JS
7.2	<p>On item 10.3 from the July meeting, SG confirmed that the first meeting of the race advocacy steering group was being held tomorrow and she, JS and HA would be attending.</p>	
8	Ratification of recent appointments	
8.1	<p>There was brief reference to one of the new NHSG governors being a Sutton Councillor. HL said this sort of interest would be picked up during completion of the register of business interests, which was an annual requirement. Nicky Owen would be in touch shortly with everyone who was required to register their interests for 2020/21.</p>	
8.2	<p>MM advised the Board that Lorna Stanley had been re-elected as a CHSG Staff Governor. He also reported back from the interviews of two people who had applied to be Appointed Governors. MM summarised their relevant experience and the Board welcomed his recommendation that their appointments be ratified. This left CHSG with one Appointed Governor vacancy.</p>	
8.3	<p>Resolved: To ratify the re-election of Lorna Stanley as a Staff Governor and the appointment of Fiona Johnston and Sharon Major as CHSG Appointed Governors, all of these for a four year term.</p>	
9	Review of the Governance Handbook and Terms of Reference for the Trust Board	
9.1	<p>The GLT Governance Handbook had been circulated with some proposed changes highlighted. The Handbook included terms of reference for the Board and its committees. The most substantial</p>	

<p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p>change to the Handbook was a revision of Appendix H, the Induction Protocol for new governors and trustees. Smaller changes were proposed for other sections relating to Parent Governors, GLT policies and the LGBs' terms of reference, together with some updating of postholders' names.</p> <p>In addition, the following suggestions were made by Board members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Trust Board's terms of reference it no longer needs to say that Chairs of LGBs will be in attendance at meetings. • Regarding the Finance Committee's terms of reference (page 27) membership should include 3 not 4 governors. • The proposed track changes amendment to the LGB's terms of reference be shortened to read "Trustees may attend LGB meetings"; the same approach be adopted for all the other committees; and that trustees notify the relevant Chair if they wish to attend a meeting. The point about too many trustees attending LGB meetings in particular still holds. • To have one Admissions Committee covering all three schools - in which case the paragraph on page 25 relating to CHSG only should be omitted. This will be discussed at the next Governance Committee meeting. • Two other changes to the Board's terms of reference – under attendance at meetings and Chair's Action, alter the text to say "telephone or video conference call". Also, have consistency between pages 3 and 20 in terms of the minimum number of Board meetings there should be per year; it is suggested there be at least three. • Following a query from MG, it is evident that clarification is needed about the trustees who chair the LGBs. Notwithstanding that role, they are not classified as governors and each LGB should have 5 Appointed Governors. <p>The tracked changes shown in the Handbook and trustees' suggestions were agreed, with necessary modification. SG asked that if anyone had further suggested changes, please could they let her know. In view of the issues raised and that AH had been absent for some of the item, JS said that she, AH and Nicky Owen would liaise via email and work towards the presentation of a revised version of the Handbook to the Board's next meeting, as proposed by SG.</p>	<p>JS/AH/ NO</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>CEO's report</p>	
<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>JS introduced her report which began with an executive summary of the issues arising from the Summer exam crisis and the return of staff and students to school. The occasional shortage of staff due to the requirements for self-isolation, plus problems with Coronavirus testing, were highlighted. Other sections of the report covered Sixth Form numbers, university entry, safeguarding, and staff development including SLT changes. The membership of the race equality steering group was listed. An appendix to the report set out in full exam results by department (plus BTEC results at CHSG) and comparative information regarding targets and algorithm/calculated grades.</p> <p>JS's report was noted. Points raised during the discussion included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problems affecting A Level exams have had a knock-on effect on university admissions and students can submit a late 	

	<p>application to UCAS, up to 19 October. Approximately 10% of students in the GLT's selective schools declined their offer of a university place and some are taking exams in October. JS provided an update to the second table on page 3 of her report: 90% of Nonsuch applicants had obtained their 1st or 2nd choice of university (64% 1st choice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteachers were being stretched as they dealt with operational issues. Additional staff were being recruited to carry out lunchtime supervision, to free up SLT members from this duty. Replying to a point from PT about staff wellbeing and trustee involvement, JS said trustees could support staff by visiting the schools. • JS reported that the Government is allocating Covid-19 'catch-up premium' to schools totalling £650million. The GLT's share of this is being divided as follows: CHSG - £95k; NHSG and WHSG - £84k each. • PT felt that the presentation of the BTEC results was unclear and JS agreed to have the information clarified and recirculated. 	JS
11	Operations/ Health and Safety update	
11.1	<p>HL gave a verbal update. She said the Risk Register followed this item and her aim here was to outline for trustees some of the measures being taken to minimise risks, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Premium funded laptops have been supplied to Year 7 students, some are also available for staff. Visualiser webcams have been installed in classrooms. • Staff and student absence is being actively monitored and is not a cause for concern at the moment. There is 90-95% student attendance generally across the three schools. On average 5 members of staff are absent each day at each school. Some teachers are giving lessons online from home. The planned INSET days went ahead. • The schools' health and safety forums are meeting this week and next. Staff are giving feedback, the most frequent comments around the new rules have been regarding face masks. • Money was spent over the Summer on e.g. extra furniture, visualisers and Perspex screens to maintain social distancing, plus consumables such as wet wipes. Additional cleaning is being carried out by the GLT's contractor, four members of their staff are in each school each day. • One area of uncertainty is the cost of additional staff cover. If staff levels fall too low then the Trust will need to close off year groups coming into school. Additional allowance to fund the use of agency staff has been put into the approved budget. • There has not been a great take-up by students of Autumn GCSE/A Level exams. Due to the cancelled Summer programme, the Trust is receiving 23-25% rebates from exam boards. • The Trust's catering contractor is facing challenges now that GLT financial support provided during lockdown has ended. • Steps are being taken to restart lettings to external hirers, involving detailed risk assessments. Carshalton opened first for lettings, using the external letting management company Schools Plus. Lettings at Nonsuch are the easiest to arrange as most involve outdoor activity. • Positive developments include the Government's catch-up premium allocations, which the schools are managing 	

	themselves, and increased income derived from Sixth Form expansion.	
11.2	Replying to a question from MM about IT capacity and capability, HL said various measures had been brought in, e.g. new laptops for disadvantaged students in particular. Classrooms were now set up to common standard with webcam visualisers. If there is another lockdown involving school closure, the best case scenario for the GLT would be teachers being allowed to come into school, to give online lessons from there. The IT team are reasonably confident that the infrastructure will allow for dozens of classes across the three schools to be conducted at the same time but further tests are to be carried out. Otherwise there is the potential problem of teachers having to run lessons from home, which may be interrupted by poor internet connection.	
11.3	SG thanked HL for the update.	
12	Risk Register	
12.1	The latest version of the Risk Register had been circulated, including the dedicated section for risks posed by Covid-19. NP observed that in general very few of the LGBs' entries were classified as being of higher risk, in contrast to those of the Board and its other committees. So there was a question of consistency. HL thought there could be a timing issue (the LGBs had not yet met this term) but the LGBs were responsible for their sections of the Register and they could amend them.	
12.2	NP suggested there was a risk associated with SLT members being unable to work and the need for cover arrangements. Board members agreed so they asked that a suitable addition be made to the Covid-19 part of the Register.	HL
13	Any other business and date of next meeting	
13.1	AC referred to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document, revised annually by the DfE. All trustees, governors and staff were required to read Part 1, however AC said that trustees and governors should also read Part 2. JS said she would ask Nicky Owen to circulate it accordingly.	
13.2	HA said he would be joining next week's Finance Committee meeting around 8pm. SG thanked everyone for their contributions to this evening's meeting. The next Board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 8 December at 7pm.	

The meeting ended at 9.22pm

Signed:

Dated:

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