

# Five Spires Academy

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Governing Board (LGB) held in the Academy on Monday 6 July, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.

**Present:** Mrs. Winson (Chair), Mrs. Raftery (Executive Headteacher), Mr. Murray, Mr. Agates, Mrs. Barnard

**In attendance:** Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)

### 1 Opening Remarks:

Governors were welcomed to tonight's Summer Term LGB meeting by the Chair. The meeting took place using video conferencing technology and all documentation had been uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of tonight's meeting forum. The focus of the LGB was very much on essential governance matters given the implications of Covid-19 and all members were given ample opportunity to ask questions and seek points of clarification in relation to the meeting agenda.

The meeting was quorate.

### 2 Apologies:

**Resolved:** That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Motorny.

**Resolved:** That an apology for absence not be received and therefore not accepted from Mr. Chambers.

*Governors are reminded that any Governor who does not participate in full Governing Board meetings for more than six months without their apologies being accepted by the Governing Board are automatically disqualified.*

### 3 Governing Board Matters:

#### **Confidentiality**

Governors were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting.

#### **Declaration of Interest Business and Pecuniary**

No declarations of interest were made by Governors in respect of any items appearing on the agenda.

In terms of updating on-going business and pecuniary interests, the Headteacher confirmed there is a facility on the Hub that allows Governors to make these declarations in real-time. Governors were asked to go onto the Hub and record any interests or a nil response. From this return, the online Register of Interests (which is statutory) can be updated.

**Resolved:** That Governors record their declaration in the Hub before the end of the Summer Term. From this an overview can be taken for the online Register.

#### **4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the LGB meeting held on Monday 9 March, 2020 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection.

Due to the focus of tonight's meeting and the need to focus on the Senior Leadership Team's (SLT's) response to Covid-19, there was no requirement to review the action matrix from the July meeting. The Headteacher/Clerk will ensure all listed actions from the March meeting and tonight's meeting forum are closed off by the Autumn Term meeting.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher/Clerk progress this action.

#### **5 Membership Update:**

The membership of the LGB was reviewed and it can be confirmed that Mrs. Barnard has been appointed as the Academy's new Staff Governor. Despite several attempts to contact Mrs. Davies (REAch2-Appointed Governor) with no success, a decision was taken to remove Mrs. Davies from the LGB membership.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk inform Governor Services of these membership changes.

These amendments to the constitution will result in the Academy carrying one REAch2-Appointed Governor vacancy to meet the minimum constitutional requirements of the LGB. It was agreed that the Clerk will contact Mrs. Chester/Mr. Skinner to establish what kind of support is available to fill this one remaining Governor vacancy.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk progress this action.

A membership update will be provided to Governors in the Autumn Term as to how these areas have been progressed.

For the minute record there are no requirements to extend Governors terms of office for the Autumn Term as no terms of office are set to expire in the next twelve months.

#### **6 Headteacher's Report:**

The Headteacher confirmed her update was in a different format to what members might typically be used to. Governors were informed the format reflected the current extra-ordinary times and focused simply on critical strategic updates that needed to be shared with members. The summary that was shared can be reported as follows:

##### **1.1**

The Headteacher confirmed the last few months have undoubtedly been some of the most challenging times in her professional career. Within a very short space of time the SLT with the support of REAch2 had closed the Academy to all pupils other than the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. A distance learning provision was put in place and those vulnerable members of the School community were given additional support through a food distribution service and regular check-ins by the Safeguarding team to ensure on-going

needs are being met. The Headteacher picked out her staff for special mention. They have worked tirelessly throughout the lockdown period and have taken all challenges they have faced in their stride. This resilience and effort on the part of staff has made the last few months more palatable than they would have been and staff should be congratulated for the key strategic role they have played in pulling the Academy through, what to all sense and purposes, has been a national crisis.

## **1.2**

Attendance levels were reported on with 14 pupils at its peak attending the Care Club provision (during full lockdown) and the remaining children continuing their learning at home whilst the Academy was mandated to close. During the extended lockdown period records indicate that at one point in time distance learning was being accessed by 86% of the pupils although over time this figure may have dropped. The SLT confirmed it is required to report attendance levels to both the Department for Education (DfE) and REACh2 on a regular basis with the former being particularly interested in the proportion of vulnerable pupils who are attending the provision that is available. Finally, an update on staff attendance was provided over the lockdown period with a number of staff isolating for medical reasons.

## **1.3**

The context of the wider reopening from 1 June was shared. Reception was welcomed back into the Academy from 15 June with Year 1, only this week, being invited back in on a rota basis. There are currently up to 50 pupils attending each week across Reception, Year 1 and the Key Worker Groups. The Headteacher explained the rationale behind the gradual return that has been based on capacity considerations and also the outcome of a rigorous risk assessment which has put the safety of pupils and staff at the heart of the decision-making process. REACh2 has fully endorsed the position the SLT has taken over returning year groups and the Headteacher thanked the Trust for the on-going support and guidance that it has provided in this area. The Headteacher reassured Governors that if the SLT could have welcomed more pupils back and guaranteed their safety then it would have done. The reality is, however, that all the Academy's teachers and support staff are currently working in classrooms alongside bubbles of children. Classrooms have also been reconfigured to accommodate social distancing protocols with a 2m rule dictating seating arrangements and movement around the learning spaces.

The Headteacher acknowledged that at times the decisions taken by the SLT have tested the relationship between the Academy and local community. This is unfortunate as all the SLT has tried to do is reflect the over-arching guidance that has come out from central government on the pandemic as well as follow the protocols for reopening that comply with a robust scoped out risk assessment and which have been fully endorsed by the Trust.

## **1.4**

Looking ahead to next year, the Headteacher confirmed that the Academy will be fully staffed. The SLT is extremely pleased to have a full complement in place, particularly given the challenges that have been faced with Covid-19. The new additions (detailed in the Report) should complement and strengthen the existing team and the SLT look forward to seeing the positive impact that they will have in the Autumn.

## **1.5**

The Headteacher confirmed how distance learning provision has evolved over the lockdown period. The challenge for staff has been to maintain a robust remote package whilst supporting pupils in the classroom during the day. Whilst the capacity has simply not been there to deliver live online interactive lessons, pupils working at home have received daily maths activities to complete; opportunities to engage with mental Maths via Times Table Rockstars; daily English activities included signposted links to online resources such as Oak National Academy/BBC Bitesize (applies to Maths as well); curriculum projects set each

week which focus on the wider curriculum subjects; phonics support for EYFS and KS1 and, finally, SPAG activities. To begin with, parents welcomed this provision but increasingly, in recent weeks, the call for greater engagement and live online teaching has come through.

The Headteacher confirmed that the SLT will need to plan in the Autumn Term for a blended approach to be deployed should a second national lockdown be required. With this in mind, the Academy's IT infrastructure is being expanded to include Microsoft Teams so that the capacity for greater interactivity in teaching and learning provision can be delivered. Staff will need to be trained around the functionality of this software application but there is no doubt staff will have more flexibility to adapt their teaching practice as a result. Governors were reassured by this update and were happy that the SLT had made sensible, pragmatic decisions in this area based on the finite resources available.

### **1.6**

The update on vulnerable and SEND pupils was particularly impressive with the Safeguarding team needing to be commended for the way families and their children have been supported throughout the lockdown period. Cases have followed the usual escalation protocols and referrals have been made to external agencies in line with standard procedures. Worth noting is that the Academy has drafted its own vulnerable list beyond that formally held by the Local Authority (LA) to ensure no child falls between the gaps during this challenging period. Finally, Mrs. Barnard was picked out for special mention for the way she has managed to secure a charitable donation of i-pads which will go out to the most vulnerable families and provide additional educational support.

Governors were reassured by all the steps that have been taken in this area to keep the most vulnerable cross-section of the pupils cohort safe. The parents of the pupils concerned have been most appreciative of the support that has been provided.

### **1.7**

There has been a requirement to add certain annexes to school-based policies to take account of the pandemic context. Both the Safeguarding and Behaviour policies have been updated in this way and Governors had no issue in endorsing all necessary changes that have been made at tonight's meeting.

### **1.8**

More specific data around the provision for children of key workers was shared. A sense of scale was provided in terms of the numbers accessing the setting and Governors were also informed that the provision has been made available over the Easter holiday and half-term breaks. The SLT is proud that the Academy has been able to offer front line support to key workers in this way and there is no doubt the children accessing the setting over the lockdown period had enjoyed their time at the Academy, albeit under very strange and unfamiliar circumstances.

### **1.9**

A significant number of health and safety considerations have been taken into account by the SLT in recent months. All of the thinking behind these areas is reflected in the risk assessment that has been completed and which has been ratified by the Trust. The Headteacher explained that with the latest government guidance a new, updated risk assessment will need completing for the September reopening. This work will need to be completed in the coming days with formal sign-off from the Trust to follow. Whilst the work around risk assessing is intense, the Headteacher welcomes the additional scrutiny and overall backing that the Trust can bring in this area.

## 2.0

Parental engagement was discussed. A sense of balance does need to be retained with the SLT receiving a series of positive comments from parents alongside the more challenging feedback. The focus of this challenging feedback was provided along with some more important lessons learnt captured by Parent Governor, Mrs. Williams. The SLT knows that in the coming months some bridges will need to be rebuilt with different parts of the parent community and already this has started with all parent complaints responded to and some 1:1 calls scheduled with the Headteacher as well as the Chair of Governors.

Governors whilst understanding that the last few months has been a challenging time for families also wanted to acknowledge the tireless effort of the SLT and staff in responding to a challenging chapter in the Academy's short history. It was felt the community does need to be aware that the SLT has had to react to central government guidance that has been coming out on a regular basis, some of which has been somewhat contradictory and ambiguous in nature. The SLT has kept communication channels open with parents at all times and any key decision taken by the SLT has been fully endorsed by the Trust. The SLT has been compelled to prioritise the children of keyworkers/its vulnerable cohort and has had to manage the finite resources that have been available including managing the implications of staff being off school and shielding for medical reasons. In these extra-ordinary times, Governors felt the SLT and staff should be commended for the provision that the Academy has put in place in the last few months. Whilst there have been frustrating moments and challenges to overcome the SLT is hopeful the Autumn Term will bring some normality to proceedings with the School and parent community pulling together to work towards one united common goal – i.e. ensuring pupils make up for lost time, filling in any gaps in their learning; receiving well-being and emotional support and thriving in the teaching and learning environment that will be created for them.

As a final point, the Headteacher confirmed she would take the feedback provided by Mrs. Williams and share it with her staff. Any feedback is always welcome and the SLT confirmed the Academy will take the time to review and reflect on the last few months to learn important lessons for the future.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher progress this action.

## 2.1

The Headteacher provided Governors with a sense of staff well-being and confirmed that the workforce remains committed and enthusiastic about project restart in September. Everybody understands the efforts the SLT has taken to make the School site as safe as is practically possible and all staff remain committed to overcoming the challenges that next year will bring.

## 2.2

Finally, the Headteacher informed Governors of the emerging priorities for the Academy in 2020-21. They will include the launch of the recovering curriculum; putting time and resources into the PSHE/well-being of pupils and ensuring a blended teaching model can be rolled out should a second spike in the virus materialise. Other secondary priorities will follow and the Headteacher will supply a final draft of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) at the start of the Autumn Term.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher share the SIP with Governors once it has been finalised.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher be thanked for her informative and detailed update.

## **7 Safeguarding Update:**

The Safeguarding update was included as part of the Headteacher's Covid-19 update.

## **8 Finance Update:**

Mrs. Barnard provided Governors with a brief budgetary overview at tonight's meeting which focused on headline data (an approach that has been agreed between the Trust and Chair of Governors) – **see confidential appendix.**

## **9 Any Other Business:**

There were three items of additional business that were discussed at this point in the meeting.

### **1.1**

As Mrs. Williams was not present at tonight's meeting, the item she wished to raise under 'any other business' will be deferred to the Autumn Term meeting.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Williams be given the opportunity to raise her item of 'any other business' in the Autumn Term.

### **1.2**

Mr. Murray confirmed he will need to visit the Academy in the Autumn Term to carry out aspects of his Safeguarding Link Governor role. Arrangements for this visit will be finalised at the start of the Autumn Term to align with Mrs. Motorny's return.

**Resolved:** That the arrangements for this Link Governor visit be finalised in September.

### **1.3**

The Headteacher asked for support from Governors in 2020-21 in relation to building links with the parent community; setting up a range of Link Governor visits and carrying out any CPD as needed to improve/enhance the function and effectiveness of governance at the Academy. Governors welcomed these inputs and will also consider ideas of their own for how the effectiveness of the LGB can be improved in the new academic cycle.

**Resolved:** That Governors share any thoughts/ideas with the SLT around governance and possible future activities to support the Academy and its on-going priorities in 2020-21.

## **10 Confidential Items:**

Governors were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Governors were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

**Resolved:** That the following item be identified as needing to be included in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 8.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

**11 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

It was felt that a date should ideally be agreed for the Autumn Term LGB meeting to secure the Clerk's availability. It was confirmed that this will take place on Monday 9 November, 2020 at 5.00 p.m. A decision will be made nearer the time as to whether this meeting will take place in a face to face setting or within a virtual forum. It was also confirmed that Finance Committee meetings will continue to be scheduled as and when required.

Governors were at this point thanked for their attendance at tonight's meeting and it was brought to a close by the Chair.

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Five Spires Academy

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Governing Board (LGB) held in the Academy  
on Monday 6 July, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.**

### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
3	Governors	Record any declarations in the Hub before the end of the Summer Term.	
4	HT	Make March minutes available as a public record.	
4	Clerk/ HT	Check all actions from March meeting and tonight's meeting are closed off by Autumn Term.	
5	Clerk	Inform Governor Services of membership changes.	
5	Clerk	Contact Mrs. Chester/Mr. Skinner for help in finding a REAch2-Appointed Governor.	
6	HT	Share Mrs. Williams' feedback with staff.	
6	HT	Share SIP with Governors once finalised.	
9	Mrs. Williams	Raise her 'AOB' matter in Autumn Term.	
9	Mr. Murray	Finalise Link Governor visit with Academy in Autumn Term – focus will be Safeguarding.	
9	Governors	Share any thoughts/ideas with SLT around governance and possible future actions to support Academy and on-going priorities in 2020-21.	

**Date of next meeting: Monday 9 November, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.