



TADCASTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (LGB)

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th September 2020 at 5pm via Google Meet

Present: Philip Turnpenny (Chair), Andrew Parkinson (Headteacher), David Gluck, Heather Smith, Chris Burt, Jess Ryan, Jeremy Airey, Liz Wilson

In attendance: Iain Tessier (Clerk, Governance Advisor)

1.0 Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Mike Dunphy. Jon Bliss was absent. There were no declarations of interest.

1.2 The Clerk had requested that governors complete their annual business interest declaration forms as soon as possible. The register of interests to be drawn up as soon as possible thereafter and published on the school's website.

Jeremy Airey joined the meeting.

1.3 The Chair wished to place on record governors' thanks for what had been done by staff to get the school ready for September. Particular thanks were given to the Headteacher for his hard work and commitment during the holidays. It had been a very difficult and challenging time for all those working in schools. The Headteacher thanked the Chair, adding that his team had gone over and above in their duties.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 7th July 2020

2.1 Resolved:

Governors agreed that the minutes of the last meeting, held on 7th July 2020, were a correct record of that meeting. The Chair was duly authorised to sign the minutes.

3.0 Action Points and Matters Arising

3.1

1.	Complete online safeguarding training. Complete exclusions training	All governors, except Mr Bliss had completed the training. The Chair and Vice Chair were completing exclusions training on 12 th October.
3.	Pass on comments about using actual numbers in the health and safety report	Completed.
4.	Feedback to governors on progress with completing individual aspects of Disaster Recovery Plan	The school was prioritising strategic IT and working with the Trust on aspects of that. All curriculum delivery could end up back in online mode. Disaster recovery was a very important area to look at. Responding to a query from the Chair, the Headteacher indicated that they were not recruiting to Mrs Northrop-Clay's post until such time as the support staff review

ACTION

**ALL
Clerk**

**JB
PT, JA**



		exercise had been completed. There would be a further update on these matters at the November meeting.
5.	Write to all staff to thank them for their contribution	Completed. Staff had welcomed the communication.
6.	Pass on comments re: CSF as an escalation to the MAT Board	Completed. The Chair had reiterated the same points at the Chairs' forum. The Chair hoped that the COO would deliver a response ahead of the next meeting.
11.	Pass on comments re: Child Protection policy	Completed.
12.	Arrange governor immersion sessions	Update under item 7.
14.	Parent governor election guidance to Headteacher	On agenda
15.	Amend local version of LGB procedures	Completed.

AP

MB

Chris Burt joined the meeting.

4.0 MAT Update

4.1 Governors had received the revised Scheme of Delegation from the Board of Trustees.

5.0 Chair's Actions

5.1 The Chair had agreed to a course of action as a result of a Covid-19 case being identified in Y7. The Headteacher gave a brief update on the scenario the school had faced. The recommendation to the Chair was for the Y7 cohort to be asked to stay home for one day until close contacts of the affected student had been identified. It was likely that this school would face this, or similar scenarios, at some point again given the current position.

6.0 Headteacher's Report

Prior to the meeting, governors had received a revised School Improvement Plan, student destination and outcome data and an update on numbers on roll. The Headteacher immediately invited any questions on these documents.

6.1 How many of the results received were higher or lower than the centre assessed grades? This would help governors to understand the accuracy of predictions and to know whether students were disadvantaged by centre assessed grades. The Headteacher said that the school was not going to go into the data in great detail due to capacity needs elsewhere and the priorities the school currently faced.

6.2 With regards GCSE results, only 15 appeals were lodged and all were rejected. Could the Headteacher comment on this? The original DfE algorithm had wildly impacted the school, more so than the national picture indicated. The school had provided quality customer service to parents to explain the decisions made around centre assessed grades. Parents could lodge a complaint against the outcome of their appeal but the Headteacher was confident that the internal processes on centre assessment were very solid and that any complaints would not get passed stage 1 of the STAR MAT complaints procedure.



- 6.3 The Chair noted that students accessed their results face-to-face and the school should be commended for making this possible. The decision was exemplary and had served students very well. The Headteacher thanked the Chair for his comments. Parents were overwhelmingly pleased and supportive of the steps taken by the school.
- 6.4 In response to a query from the Chair, 80 students had entered university this year, broadly in line with previous years. Some students had deferred, however, for obvious reasons. Y12 numbers were smaller this year and this might well be due to a move to more vocational courses and vocational pathways, such as apprenticeships. Places like York College could attract such students with their course offering and facilities. Students could see the attraction of training for a job, whilst still accessing higher level training and education. *(Post meeting note: As at 2nd October, numbers in the sixth form are: Year 12: 97 and Year 13: 110 - update on the NOR paper presented at the meeting).*
- 6.5 What had happened to the drive to get more students into the 6th form? The Headteacher accepted this as a valid challenge. Unfortunately, the simple fact was that the school did not yet offer that wide range of vocational courses that were now proving popular with young people. Also, some students just wanted a change of scenery – the opportunity to make new friends etc. In the view of the Headteacher, school 6th forms were an ‘endangered species’. How endangered? The Headteacher candidly responded that if the school were probed about its 6th form finances, there would be a line of enquiry to follow. The Chair said that viability was a big issue to resolve as part of the 6th form strategy. Given the current priorities, this was probably not something that would be comprehensively progressed.
- 6.6 Referring to numbers on roll, the Headteacher said that there had been enquiries from families about filling some of the vacant places in various year groups.
- 6.7 The research exercise by OFSTED (involving a pilot visit) to talk about a number of matters that would help refine their question sets ahead of future national inspections had been a worthwhile experience.
- 6.8 Since lockdown, there had been an extensive support network for staff and students. This was picked up positively by OFSTED. The Headteacher did wish to raise concerns over staff welfare. Staff were incredibly resilient and committed but the mental effort required to navigate such a challenging situation could very well take its toll at some point. Staff carried a lot of weight on their shoulders and had to plan or prepare for some very challenging scenarios. The school was having to be reactive to operational matters due to constantly changing guidance and expectations from central government and this was not helping. The Headteacher said he was concerned about his team – they were clearly physically and mentally tired. The sustainability of the current workload did have to be considered. The school had worked incredibly hard to navigate its way through the ever changing landscape and keep the school functioning effectively. Going forward, leadership had to be prepared to manage and mitigate significant teacher absence – one had to be realistic based on what schools were seeing already up and down the country. Schools elsewhere in the region, for example, were facing having to close year group bubbles due to staffing shortages. The Headteacher said that he was not sure from one day to the next who might be absent due to their personal circumstances. The school was doing ok for now but the winter season was approaching and this was something to be mindful of. Pushing the big strategic agenda items was always the SLTs goal but the sustainable capacity to achieve these was a challenge right now. For now it was about getting the basics right; making sure high quality lessons were being taught, students were learning and that staff and students felt safe and supported.



- 6.9 Responding to a question about attendance, the Headteacher said that attendance had started at around 96% but now the school was seeing some illness and even parentally condoned absence. Parents were taking the decision to keep their children out of school due to personal concerns around Covid-19. The attendance monitoring systems were superb though. How many condoned absences were they talking about? Around 10 students per year group, although this figure altered every day. The school was pouring considerable resources trying to reassure certain parents. What action could be taken if this persisted? The school could issue fines but that was viewed as a last resort option. Headteachers might well be challenged on this nationally. However, fining was a contentious issue and, in the Headteacher's experience, was counter-productive. The Headteacher noted of more importance was safeguarding absent students as far as possible.
- 6.10 The DfE had mandated that schools needed to finalise their Contingency planning action plans this week. The Headteacher recapped the tiering system, for which the contingency planning had to be built around. The Headteacher said that everyone had to be realistic about the fact that at least tier two would likely be reached at some point this term. Operational planning for all four tiers had been finished but had taken up a great deal of leadership time and resource. Maintaining the integrity of the classroom was the absolute priority. The Headteacher added that the school had done well to adjust to the changing situation and that they were learning from each experience. The Chair noted that this preparation was testament to the leadership of the school, alluded to earlier in the meeting. The Headteacher reflected upon how students were adjusting to the 'new normal' – the students were genuinely happy to be back and were overwhelmingly behaving in a manner that was very supportive. They had been superb.
- 6.11 What was the plan for online learning? Was it more of what happened in the summer term or expanded to include things like live lessons? Did vulnerable students have sufficient access to technology to access online learning? The Headteacher assured governors that the school had taken steps to address this, albeit not as a result of the promised support from central government, which had largely not materialised. Students would have access online to lesson content that they had not been present for. The school was looking at sustainable models for live lessons or commentary supported lessons. There were challenges to address and these were touched upon. The school was doing well with its planning but of course everyone wanted to avoid ending up supporting learning through tiers three and four. The Headteacher reassured governors that his team was completely aware of the importance of getting this right as and when required. Governors had to be mindful though that school budgets remained tight and thus very large scale investment in hardware was never going to be possible at local level.

7.0 School Improvement Plan 2020/21

- 7.1 The Chair wanted a steer on how best to monitor against the SIP and how best to fulfil the actions assigned to governors. Especially as visits to school were either not going to be possible or extremely limited? The Headteacher reiterated his belief that the SIP was the best tool for governors to use to hold SLT to account for progress and therefore it should be front and centre on every agenda. Yes, the Headteacher's report was good for information but it did not necessarily help governors to hold leaders to account.
- 7.2 The SIP had been written for a school operating in a normal way. Teacher appraisal targets would be closely linked to the six main priorities. There were clear milestones in place for each priority. SLT would welcome challenge from governors against those milestones. The resulting SIP would be informed by the SEF. The SIP was to be discussed with the improvement partner



and CEO shortly and the Headteacher's objectives would be drawn from it. The Headteacher proposed bringing a cut down version of the SIP to each meeting so that governors could question about progress in a manageable way. If the school went beyond tier two, then the SLT would need to revisit the document and assess what was possible. In advance of LGB meetings, the Headteacher would update LGB on progress (reds/greens) against priorities and milestones within them. Governors welcomed the proposal to look at the SIP in manageable chunks at each meeting and looked forward to regular updates.

AP

7.3 **Resolved:**

Governors approved the SIP as presented to the meeting.

7.4 The Chair, referring back to his previous remark about how to deliver effective monitoring, asked about the reality of holding governor immersion sessions given the current situation. The Headteacher said that he had to balance the capacity of the team against the need for governance oversight. Governor immersion sessions, valid as they were, simply could not be viewed as a priority at this time. The Chair was supportive of the Headteacher's view. A governor agreed with the points made but added that they would be happy to support any 'visit' (virtual if necessary) that staff felt would be beneficial. The Headteacher thanked the governor for their support and no doubt certain oversight requirements would come up. The Clerk noted that governors should think creatively about how to plan for virtual visits, whilst being mindful of the Headteacher's observations about capacity and the need to run the school in challenging circumstances. The Chair said that the LGB needed to give these matters some thought.

ALL

8.0 **Safeguarding Update**

8.1 The Clerk highlighted the need for governors to read the latest version of KCSIE. Governors to report to the Clerk once they had read it.

9.0 **Policy Review**

9.1 The Clerk highlighted that a revised version of the MATs Child Protection policy would be available shortly (*this document is now on the MAT website for governors to refer to*).

10.0 **Governance**

10.1 Parent Governor election

There was a brief discussion. It was agreed that the Chair, Headteacher and Clerk would meet shortly before half term, with a view to a process being run immediately after the mid-term break.

Clerk
AP, PT

10.2 The Chair wished to formally record the resignation of Georgina Wright, communicated to governors previously.

10.3 Governors noted the Code of Conduct, which the LGB had previously agreed to adhere to.

10.4 The Clerk highlighted that governors could gain access to York Education, an online governance resource tool with further links to the SchoolBus, by simply emailing the Clerk.

10.5 The governor training programme was highlighted and governors could still make use of online training via the NGA Learning Link. The full training record for the year had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair commented on a healthy level of engagement with training. The Clerk concurred but suggested that several governors might want to complete training on handling



complaints as this was an important area to be able to navigate and knowledge of these matters would be very useful in support of the school. The Vice Chair highlighted an opportunity for governors to do some training around STEM. Governors could contact the Vice Chair for details.

ALL

11.0 Matters for Escalation to the MAT Board

11.1 None.

12.0 Any Other Business

12.1 A governor raised the issue of how to receive meeting papers in person. The Headteacher said that he would clarify this with his PA, whilst reiterating the message that, both for the purposes of ensuring data security and being Covid secure, everyone was encouraged to avoid handling hard copy papers.

AP

12.2 A governor was under the impression that the Tadcaster school fund had closed, however, it was still showing as live on the Charities Commission website. The Chair indicated that he would pick this up with the MAT COO ahead of the next meeting.

PT

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting to take place on Tuesday 17th November at 5pm.

The meeting closed at 7pm

Action Plan from the 28th September meeting:

	Action	Agenda Item	Person(s) Responsible	Date for Delivery
1.	Complete Business Interest forms and prepare the Register of Interests	1.2	All Clerk	As soon as possible
1.	Completion of various training modules	3.1	JB, PT, JA	By November meeting
2.	Update on progress with elements of disaster recovery plan and filling the vacant operations post	3.1	AP	November meeting
3.	Formal response to the LGB on the points raised about the CSF and central services review process	3.1	MB	November meeting
4.	SIP update – progress with priorities and milestones	7.2	AP	Every meeting
5.	Governors to read the new iteration of KCSIE	8.1	ALL	As soon as possible
6.	Discussion on how best to run parent governor election process	10.1	Clerk PT, AP	Before half term
7.	Explore various governor training opportunities	10.5	ALL	Various dates
8.	Clarify how hard copy meeting papers would be made available to governors	12.1	AP	Ahead of Nov meeting
9.	Raise the issue of the closure of the school fund	12.2	PT	Ahead of Nov meeting