

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FERMAIN
ACADEMY HELD ON 4th DECEMBER 2018 AT 4.10PM**

Governors Present: Stephen Armstrong (SA) Chair
Nic Brindle (NB) Principal
Jo Burrows (JB)
Emma Colley (EC)
Rob Halsall (RH)
Tim Haselwood (TH)
Martin Howlett (MH)
Ruth Roberts (RR)
Tony Smith (TS)

Also in attendance: Claire Leslie Clerk to the Governors
Lee Cambray (LC) Headteacher The Fermain
Damian Sweeney (DS) Headteacher Cornerstone

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

		Actions
1	APOLOGIES & ADDITIONAL AOB ITEMS There were no apologies to be received. There was no additional business to be considered.	
2	CONFLICT OF INTEREST TH is Business Manager at Tytherington School. TS is a member of the CE Schools Forum, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Yes Academy Trust and interim CEO of The Collaborative Educational Trust of Wilmslow (TCET). NB is a trustee at the UTC. RR is a Senior Teacher at the King's School Macclesfield. There is no expected conflict at today's meeting.	
3	ELECTION OF CHAIR Governors agreed that the term of office for the Chair of Governors would be 1 year and until the autumn term 2019 FGB meeting.	

	<p>The following nomination was received at the meeting: Stephen Armstrong.</p> <p>SA accepted the nomination and was duly appointed as Chair of Governors until the autumn term 2019 FGB meeting.</p>	
4	<p>ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR</p> <p>Governors agreed that the term of office for the Vice Chair of Governors would be 1 year and until the autumn term 2019 FGB meeting.</p> <p>The following nomination was received at the meeting: Martin Howlett.</p> <p>MA accepted the nomination and was duly appointed as Chair of Governors until the autumn term 2019 FGB meeting.</p>	
5	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>It was noted that satisfactory DBR references had been received in respect of Jo Burrows and Ruth Roberts.</p> <p>JB was confirmed as a governor with effect from 18th October 2018. RR was appointed a governor with effect from 4th December 2018. The resignation of Toby Seth as governor was noted and accepted with thanks for his service to the governing board.</p> <p>It was noted that the profile of pupils in the school and the transitory nature of their time on the roll made the election of a Parent Governor impractical. RH confirmed that he had school aged children. He agreed to take on the role of parent governor and to look to represent the interests of students and their parents at governing board meetings.</p> <p>New governors confirmed their signature of the Acceptable Use Policy.</p> <p>It was noted that at least 3 more governors and 10 trustees were required. Given the development of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) it would be important to look at possible candidates to see where they might have most impact as between schools and the Trust board.</p> <p>Action: TS to consider this in relation to each identified candidate.</p> <p>It was noted that there were existing action points for Sam Finch and the Clerk to look at ways of finding new governors and that TH had agreed to contact Astra Xeneca to see if any employees might be interested.</p> <p>Action: RH agreed to contact other supermarket corporate responsibility teams. Sam Finch to be asked to organise posters to be sent out to supermarkets in 2019. All governors were asked to network to look for additional governors.</p>	<p>TS</p> <p>RH and Sam Finch All governors</p>

	<p>It was noted that a clear induction plan for new governors was needed. New governors without experience of education would need this before they would be able to make an effective impact.</p> <p>Action: In early January 2019 RH would make notes of his thoughts about what was required and how it might be provided. These to be forwarded to SA for consideration and action.</p> <p>Q: Would it not be useful to look at the skills gaps in the existing governor team as a starting point?</p> <p>A: SA would complete the skills audit which would be useful but the need for more governors was acute and given the range of positions needing to be filled some skills overlap was not a problem at this stage.</p> <p>Action: SA to complete the skills audit and sent it to the Clerk to place on the GVO.</p>	<p>RH and SA</p> <p>SA</p>
6	<p>PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>4.1 The part one minutes of the summer term full governing board meeting on 5th July 2018 were agreed as an accurate record, signed by the Chair and retained by FA.</p> <p>4.2 The action log was reviewed and the following matters arising addressed from the Part One minutes. These will not be covered elsewhere in the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • c/f MH would offer Leadership and Management training to governors at 2.30pm on 2nd July 2019 immediately before the planned FGB meeting. • As part of new governors induction TH would offer one to one support sessions on the use of the GVO if required. This training was also available to existing governors finding the platform difficult. Governors wishing to take up the offer should contact TH directly. • c/f. RR to complete action for Toby Seth to share The King’s School Macclesfield Governors’ handbook with governors. • SA had produced a work plan for governors by reference to the School Development plan. This was shared with governors. 	
7	<p>CHAIR’S ACTION</p> <p>The Chair had authorised the purchase from Cheshire East School Services (ChESS) of the governor training package.</p>	
8	<p>FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE</p>	

	<p>8.1 Publication of audited financial statements for period ending on 31st August 2018. It was confirmed that the financial statements had been discussed in detail at Resources and Audit committee. Governors on that committee had been given the opportunity to direct questions at a representative of the auditors and had been happy to approve the statements. The accounts showed an end of year surplus of around £20,000. Governors approved the statements for publication.</p> <p>8.2 Auditors' Management letter This was due for submission by end December 2018 and had to be lodged at Companies House by end May 2019. The letter reported no concerns. Governors approved the letter for signature by the Chair and noted that the signed letter needed then to be returned to the auditors and placed on the school website.</p> <p>8.3 Noting the 2017/18 accounts These had been considered in detail at Resources and Audit committee. They were duly noted.</p> <p>8.4 Pupil Premium report The school does not receive any Pupil Premium; this is retained by pupils' home schools. There was no report to be made.</p> <p>8.5 Ratify External auditors It was felt that Murray Smith had provided a good service and conducted a rigorous audit. Governors approved them as auditors for the financial year 2018/19.</p> <p>8.6 Receive and approve scheme of delegation This will be placed on the GVO for governors' comment and approval. Action: NB and SA to agree draft scheme and return it to the Clerk for uploading on the GVO.</p>	<p>NB and SA</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>COMMITTEES AND NOMINATED GOVERNORS</p> <p>The membership of committees was updated as follows:</p>	

	<p>Standards Committee Martin Howlett (Chair) Ruth Roberts (Vice Chair) Stephen Armstrong Nic Brindle Jo Burrows</p>	<p>Resource and Audit Committee Tim Haselwood (Chair) Tony Smith (Vice Chair) Nic Brindle Rob Halsall Stephen Armstrong</p>	
	<p>Strategy Committee Stephen Armstrong (Chair) Martin Howlett Tony Smith</p>	<p>Pay Committee Tim Haselwood (Chair) Rob Halsall Tony Smith</p>	
	<p>HT Performance Committee Stephen Armstrong Tony Smith</p>	<p>Admissions Stephen Armstrong</p>	
	<p>Training Governor Stephen Armstrong</p>	<p>Safeguarding and cared for Children Martin Howlett</p>	
	<p>Health and Safety Governor Rob Halsall</p>	<p>GDPR Governor Tim Haselwood</p>	
	<p>SEND Governors Stephen Armstrong Ruth Roberts</p>	<p>Discipline Committee (Three of the below depending on the nature of the disciplinary matter) Names to be allocated by SA</p>	
	<p>Appeals Committee (Three of the below depending on the nature of the disciplinary matter) Names to be allocated by SA</p>	<p>Complaints Committee (Three of the below depending on the nature of the disciplinary matter) Names to be allocated by SA</p>	
10	<p>GOVERNORS' CODE OF PRACTICE/ GOVERNORS' CHARTER</p> <p>Governors noted the Code of Practice and signed the Governors' Charter.</p>		
11	<p>PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND EPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>11.1 Resources and Audit Committee This had focused on the accounts for 2017/18 and the budget for 2018/19.</p> <p>11.2 Standards Committee This had looked in detail at data relating to attendance and academic outcomes.</p>		

	<p>11.3 Strategy Committee The minutes had now been approved and were available on the GVO.</p> <p>11.4 Special Responsibility Reports. A Safeguarding visit had been carried out. The central record was thorough and detailed. Written records had been tested and were correct. Safeguarding files had been scrutinised and found to be detailed and up to date. It was noted that at least one governor should have “Safer Recruitment” training. This had been undertaken by TH, RH and MH.</p> <p>Action: It was agreed that governors should refresh the Educare training in Safeguarding and Prevent.</p> <p>Action: LC to attend next FGB and give a short tutorial on safeguarding.</p> <p>A monthly financial meeting took place each month between TH and Sam Finch when the monthly management accounts were scrutinised. TH confirmed that these were accurate and thorough.</p> <p>11.5 Purchase of ChESS buybacks from local authority. These had been purchased.</p> <p>11.6 Confirmation of completion of land and building collection tool. This had been completed by NB.</p> <p>11.7 Application to Condition Improvement Fund Application had been made. There was no news on the outcome of the application.</p> <p>11.7 Annual Contracts There were no new contracts for approval.</p> <p>11.8 Accounts of the Unofficial School Fund There was no unofficial school fund.</p>	<p>All governors except RR and JB LC</p>
12	<p>PART ONE CEO AND PRINCIPAL’S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>12.1 CEO Report It was noted that the CEO’s report had been circulated at Trust level and was on the GVO. NB drew governors’ attention to a blog post in the appendix to the report which summed up the work of FA. NB explained, for the benefit of new governors, that it was planned that a MAT should be set up including FA, a new primary provision, Cornerstone, to be run in the short term as part of FA and a new SEN free school in Crewe to be called Axis.</p> <p>12.2 Headteacher of FA report LC noted that the number of EHCPs had increased from 1 in the year</p>	

2017/18 to 9 in the current 2018/19 academic year. This was partly as a result of painstaking work by EC in assessing children and applying for EHCPs. FA had also been supported in this by the Ofsted report which had noted that there seemed to be a lack of diagnosis of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Cheshire East Council (CEC) had also been more forthcoming in the grant of EHCPs as a result of its own Ofsted inspection which had found failings in the process of awarding EHCPs.

12.3 Headteacher of Cornerstone Report

DS was introduced as the Headteacher of Cornerstone and asked to talk about the provision.

In summer 2015 DS had started to run an Alternative Provision (AP) primary school called the Crescent supporting primary aged children at serious risk of permanent exclusion or those who had already been permanently excluded.

Children were brought into the provision and staff worked with the child to understand blocks to mainstream education. The Crescent worked on 6 week cycles although most placements there lasted for around a term. Originally referrals had come through the Local Authority but gradually this developed to direct referrals by schools to The Crescent. There was no requirement for a placement to be sanctioned by an Educational Psychologist. The Crescent was based in Crewe, a high needs area. When children were referred to The Crescent then DS would attempt to work with the referring school in the first instance to see if there were alternative available strategies the home school could employ before sending a child to The Crescent. DS worked regularly with a range of other agencies, including Family Support and Social Care.

When The Crescent was set up it had no budget, it operated by requiring referring schools to send a Teaching Assistant with a referred child to work with that child during the placement at The Crescent. This was not an ideal arrangement as schools could often ill afford to send a teaching assistant and had no incentive to send one of their better members of staff. The cost of this provision to the referring school was around £6,100 for each child per term.

Cornerstone would run in a different way. The school would be fully staffed and all staff would be properly trained to assess and support children. The cost to the referring school was estimated at around £3,200 per term. At the end of a child's placement the base school would be invited to send a teaching assistant in to learn the support strategies which had been put in place. There would be considerably more incentive for schools to send a good teaching assistant for this shorter period of time. The school would have made a considerable investment in the child and since the child would be returning to school there was a clear incentive on the school to make the transition back successful.

It was envisaged that in the longer term Cornerstone would become a

separate school but in the pilot phase it would come under FA.

Q: How many children did The Crescent take at one time?

A: 10. Sometimes this could flex to 12/13 as the timetable was flexible.

Q: How many children transition back to school?

A: Over 3 years, 76 children had used the provision and all had returned to full time education, some to their home school, some to another school and some to a different provision.

Q: How does the funding of this affect FA?

A: Separate funding of £400,000 annually for each Cornerstone provision had been agreed. The cost of each site had been calculated at £386,000 so there is a small surplus. NB's time spent on Cornerstone would be paid by it and there would be no cost to FA.

Q: Where will the units be based?

A: The first at Marfields School in Congleton would open on 7th January 2019. Discussions are ongoing to find a second site in Crewe for a start around Easter 2109.

Q: Is there a gap between the provision at Cornerstone finishing at Year 6 and that of FA starting at Year 9.

A: Yes, and this is important. If FA were to take Year 7 children there would be considerable pressure for children to move directly from Cornerstone to FA and secondary schools would not wish to offer places to children from Cornerstone.

FA did trial taking children younger than Year 9 and while the experiment was quite successful for the younger children it did not quite fit the ethos of FA. FA is run like a "young college". There are big differences in behaviour between teenagers in Years 9-11 and younger children in Year 7; the younger children were quite disruptive at FA. FA does however do some bespoke work with individual children in Year 8.

Q: Was there any experience of tracking children who attended The Crescent through to their future attendance at FA?

A: The schools have not been running long enough for this to have occurred.

At the Congleton Cornerstone provision there would be ready access to an Educational Psychologist . It would be possible to call her in when a child were at risk of permanent exclusion and an assessment report would then be available. It was important that Headteachers did not see Cornerstone as a last resort but engaged with the support available before exclusion became imminent. The lower cost as compared to The Crescent could facilitate that.

Q: Did children just have one chance at Cornerstone or could they come back several times?

A: In the event that they were referred a second time then it would be likely that a managed move to a new school would be part of the intervention.

DS had brought with him the offer to the local authority as Cornerstone.

Action: DS to send this to the Clerk electronically so that it could be

	<p>placed on the GVO.</p> <p>Governors thanked DS for his attendance and helpful presentation.</p>	
13	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</p> <p>This had been discussed in detail as part of the reports given at agenda item 12 above.</p>	
14	<p>SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</p> <p>This had been scrutinised in detail at Standards Committee and the minutes of the meeting were available to governors. Targets had been set.</p> <p>Action: The whole school targets to be shared with governors via the GVO. SA to send to Clerk for uploading.</p>	SA and Clerk
15	<p>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER / EXTERNAL ADVISOR / LEADERSHIP PARTNER VISIT</p> <p>Jane Lowe was continuing on an informal basis as an external advisor. She was the DfE link advisor for Axis and could not therefore be the formal advisor for FA. She was due to attend the school on 10th December.</p> <p>Action: HT to report after her visit.</p>	HT
16	<p>ADMISSIONS</p> <p>There was considerable pressure in relation to ongoing referrals and there were currently 61.4 students on the roll (based on full time equivalents). It was noted that not all students were full time. There had been four referrals during the previous week and inductions were going on constantly.</p> <p>Action: Mark Robinson (Head of Pastoral Care) to be invited to the next FGB to tell governors about the induction process. Clerk to place on the agenda.</p>	NB and Clerk
17	<p>DIRECTOR'S REPORT</p> <p>The autumn term report had been circulated to the Governing Board, Resource and Audit Committee and the Standards Committee in advance of the meeting. It was suggested the governors might wish to read the sections on Safeguarding.</p>	
18	<p>GOVERNOR MONITORING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	

	<p>Action: SA would circulate to governors by way of example his monitoring report from the visit on 4th December 2018. At the next FGB all governors would be invited to give a short verbal summary of the outcome of their monitoring visits. Clerk to place this on the agenda.</p>	<p>SA Clerk</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>SCHOOL POLICIES</p> <p>All policies for approval had been on the GVO for governor review.</p> <p>19.1 Pay Policies for teachers and non-teaching staff It was noted that Pay Committee had scrutinised the Pay Policy for Teachers and for non-teaching staff members and had recommended the approval of these policies by the FGB. The Pay Policies were approved.</p> <p>19.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy The changes to this were in line with Department for Education requirements and no additional changes had been made. The policy was approved.</p> <p>19.3 Admissions Policy This was unchanged and was approved.</p> <p>19.4 Reserves Policy It was noted that Resources and Audit committee had scrutinised the Reserve Policy and had recommended the approval of the policy by the FGB. The policy was approved,</p> <p>19.5 Policies held over It was noted that governors had not all taken the opportunity to consider the following policies: Appraisal and Capability Policy Complaints Procedure SEN Policy</p> <p>Action: Governors to review these policies on the GVO noting any comments or approval. Clerk to review comments and advise School Director of Business when governors had approved the policies.</p> <p>Policy review to be an agenda item at the next meeting to allow governors to determine the best way to manage rolling review of policies.</p> <p>19.6 Delegation of Policies The delegation of the below policies for approval by other committees or by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-bullying by SLT • School Behaviour by School Principal 	<p>All Governors and Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting (held over from Summer 2018) To consider delegating further reviews to CEO / Principal • Disciplinary Policy by School Principal / CEO • Equal Opportunities Policy by Principal / CEO noting that this policy was last reviewed in summer 2017 and that the review may operate on a four year cycle, to agree review cycle • Grievance Policy by SLT • Safe Touch Policy by School Principal/ CEO • Data Protection Policy by School Principal / CEO / Director of Business • Supporting Students with medical conditions (held over from Spring 2018) by SLT on annual cycle • Sex and Relationships by Principal / CEO 	
20	<p>APPROVAL OF DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PAY COMMITTEE</p> <p>Governors had been provided with the opportunity to consider the draft terms of reference on the GVO and noted that Pay Committee had recommended approval of the Terms of Reference to the FGB. The Terms of Reference were approved.</p>	
21	<p>PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS</p> <p>EC noted that the recent residential visit to Wincle to a cottage run by a local charity, Back Dane Trust had been very successful. Students had enjoyed participating in Peak Pursuits. The one and a half day period for each of two groups had been the ideal length.</p> <p>The school planned to repeat the visit in the forthcoming year 2018/19.</p> <p>Governors approved the visit subject to satisfactory completion of a Risk Assessment and confirmation that liability insurance was in place.</p>	
22	<p>MEETINGS</p> <p>The next meeting was confirmed for 26th March 2019 at 4.00pm. A Strategy Committee meeting would take place immediately before at 3.00pm</p>	
23	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	
24	<p>IMPACT STATEMENT</p> <p>Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised the school's financial performance and noted the approval of auditors. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered strengthening the governing body.• Explored the vision for Cornerstone.• Considered the strategic path appropriate for the school in the medium term.• Reconfigured the governor training programme.	
--	--	--

The meeting ended at 6.23pm

.....Chair

.....Dated