

The Charter School East Dulwich

Minutes of Local Governing Board Meeting

Thursday 23rd January 2020 at 6.30 pm at Jarvis Road, London, SE22 8RB

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| Alex Crossman (ACN) | Headteacher | Present |
| Stephen Potter (SPR) | Chair of Governors | Present |
| Rosamund Jones (RJS) | Vice Chair of Governors | Apologies |
| Tim Naik (TNK) | Governor | Present |
| Catherine Rose (CRE) | Governor | Apologies |
| Laura Duffell (LDL) | Governor | Apologies |
| Gwen Sinnott (GST) | Governor | Present |
| Celia Johnson (CJN) | Governor | Apologies |
| Philippa Jupp (PJP) | Governor | Present |

In attendance:

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| John Godfrey (JGY) | Chair of Trust Board |
| Glyn Griffith (GGH) | MAT Finance Director |
| Rebecca Hardy (RHY) | Deputy Headteacher |
| Shalene Varcoe (SVE) | Clerk |

| ITEM | MINUTES | ACTION NO. AND OWNER |
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| 1 | <p>Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and the Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. There were apologies from Laura Duffell, Celia Johnson, Catherine Rose and Ros Jones. There were no declarations of interest. The meeting was quorate. The Chair agreed to move the Trust item and the Reach report to items 2 and 3 on the agenda. | |
| 2 | <p>Trust Updates</p> <p>a) CEO Report</p> <p>This had been circulated before the meeting. JGY reminded governors that a new CEO had been appointed as the current CEO was only 1 day per week and was unable to offer any more capacity, which was needed to take the Trust into its next stage.</p> <p>He informed the governors that the new CEO selection process had been open and rigorous and that Cassie Buchanan had been duly appointed on a 3-day per week basis – her other 2 days would be as executive Headteacher at Charles Dickens Primary School (CDPS).</p> <p>He advised that CDPS was intent on joining the Trust but that this would need to follow a proper process of due diligence.</p> <p>He advised that the RSC annual review had been positive but that due to purdah ahead of the recent general election the report was very short. He advised that the Trustees had requested a more detailed version.</p> | |

The Chair commented that it was very positive that the Trust was now committed to paying all directly employed staff the London Living Wage.

Governors were reminded that Ofsted was currently consulting on its proposals to change the inspection exemption for 'outstanding' schools, which could affect the sibling school, TCSND.

b) Top slice proposals

Governors were advised that their feedback on the Top slice proposal document would be shared with the Trust board at their upcoming strategy day.

GGH took the meeting through the proposals, informing governors that the Trust had agreed a top slice mechanism in principle in order to work both for the existing two schools, but also for any potential new schools joining the Trust. He advised that the figures in the previously circulated document were based on current assumptions but that these could change.

The paper detailed which income streams were included in the calculations for top slice and which were not included.

GGH described what resources would be paid for by the top slice mechanism:

- Current centralised service provision including HR, Finance, and Governance etc.
- Increased CEO capacity
- Additional HR support
- Additional estates management resource
- Additional clerking support
- Additional finance staff and the addition of a business manager at CDPS.
- Management tools
- Legal fees

GGH explained that the current 50:50 split between the two existing schools would no longer be fair to TCSED and that future forecasts are based on a 3-school model. He added that as more schools came into the Trust costs per school would reduce.

He added that TCSED was well funded but that the Trust would need to be cautious going forward. However, the ED forecasts including the top slice still show a surplus.

Q: A governor asked how sustainable it was to have increased CEO capacity with the proposed 3-school model, paying them 50% out of Trust reserves.

A: GGH confirmed that Trust reserves could not be used indefinitely to pay 50% of the CEO salary and that part of the new CEO remit was to grow the Trust.

He added that the target for Trust Reserves was 3% of revenue and that the intent was that this would be kept in case of emergencies.

Q: A governor asked if this target was guaranteed.

A: GGH replied that it was a target rather than a guarantee. JGY added that the Trust board believes that reserves do not need to be kept too high and that the majority of income should be used to benefit pupils. However, they also cannot be too low in case something happened that required emergency access to funds at any of the schools in the Trust.

Q: A governor asked if this was a mechanism that was used in similar sized MATs and with what success.

A: GGH replied that this was the case and that a level of 4.5 – 5.5% as a top slice was typical. He added that the CEO had carried out some benchmarking and that the average seemed to fall between 3% and 6%. He added that value for money was key – what schools actually received back in terms of service, resource and support. JGY added that this was a very common model.

Q: The Chair asked if other models had been considered such as schools paying for services provided by the MAT or buying some services externally as a measure of value for money.

A: JGY replied that having a market-accepted model made it easier for potential joining schools to understand. GGH added that more schools joining would lead to greater economies of scale and that the Top slice model was not necessarily sustainable in a two school MAT.

The Chair responded that a growth strategy for the MAT should not be based on cost reduction but on educational values. He added that what was included was clear and that the central services currently provided were excellent but he asked if there was a robust succession plan in place to ensure continuing excellent service delivery.

Q: A governor asked if there was a recommended % for top slice.

A: GGH replied that benchmarking had indicated 4.5 – 5% but it was unclear as to what this includes in terms of services as every MAT is different.

The Chair added that there were examples of central services growing too fast and that a cap on the top slice (as a % of GAG) would be preferable together with a review plan. He added that a cap would help the schools plan and adjust their budgets well in advance and that the LGB at ED had a duty to safeguard the financial stability of the school.

JGY said that this view would be shared at the Trust strategy day but added that the figures and resulting central service model would look very different for a MAT with 3-5 schools versus a MAT with 5-7 schools, and that he believed that this was the correct model going forward.

The Headteacher added that there were other MATs with larger central service teams.

Q: The Chair agreed with the proposition for a single bank account across the Trust, observing that it can help to ease the administration burden but that in some Trust's this had led to the pooling of income which was then dispensed by the Trust rather than schools.

A: GGH advised that the aim was to save time and costs on admin rather than to 'pool' GAG income or to transfer it between schools.

The Headteacher advised that he felt that a cap was the right thing to do to ensure financial discipline in the centre as well as within schools. JGY advised that this feedback would be shared with the Trust.

The Chair thanked GGH for an excellent paper and JGY for his contribution and they left the meeting.

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| 3 | <p>REACH mental health study update</p> <p>RHY advised governors that the full REACH school report could be found in the google drive.</p> <p>RHY advised that the school had been part of the REACH study at KCL since 2016 and that its aims were to explore resilience around mental health and examine what factors contribute to poor mental health issues in young people.</p> <p>She advised that in return the school received support from the REACH team, offers of work experience placements and GCSE intervention programmes to help combat stress. The latest report looks at trends over time and compares data for intakes 1 and 2 (Y10 and Y9) and with other schools.</p> <p>RHY drew the governors attention to the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the proportion of students with mental health issues occurring in Year 7 is most likely linked to anxiety around transition to secondary school. - 2/3 of all students have never had any mental health problems - Trajectories of mental health problems are similar at ED to other REACH schools - 7% of students have persistent mental health problems - Proportion of ED students reporting bullying was slightly higher at ED than at other REACH schools but this did not correlate to the percentage of students reporting bullying in-school and could be a question of how pupils define what constitutes bullying. RHY advised the at the school was looking into ways of how pupils can report bullying anonymously. - The impact of life-experience on mental health was lower at ED than at other schools – possible due to relative advantage of school student profile compared to others. - Pupils at ED report higher social support from friends or adults - A higher percentage at ED students report persistent loneliness compared to other schools – RHY reported that the school is focusing on 100% participation in enrichment activities to help boost social contact and build friendship networks for all pupils. - Slightly fewer ED pupils report that they feel safe in school compared to other REACH schools. This contradicts the findings of the annual student survey but staff will monitor this. - Risk & resilience – RHY advised that loneliness and bullying were the biggest factors that can impact negatively on mental health and that the school has implemented measures to address these, which may not have yet been reflected in the REACH study. These include anti-bullying policy and assemblies, the SOS button on student logins, anonymous suggestion boxes. - The student council are also involved in the support and delivery of an anti-bullying ethos, especially regarding cyber-bullying. <p>RHY went on to detail the wellbeing support in school including in school counselling provision, a new wellbeing room managed by specially trained LSAs. She added that the need for this type of support will increase and that the school would need to increase financial support in order to maintain the service level as the school grows.</p> <p>Q: A governor commented that it was useful to see the focus and priority that mental health and wellbeing was given at the school but asked how this could be maintained if resources were finite. A: RHY agreed that the national picture regarding mental health support provision was concerning but added that the school was fortunate to be able to work with KCL and offer good support currently.</p> <p>Q: A governor asked if the comparison was with all REACH schools. A: RHY replied that the comparisons were with similar REACH schools in terms of type/areas/student numbers.</p> <p>Q: The Chair commented that the figure for those feeling safe in school was concerning and asked if that may have been a reflection of being on the temporary site.</p> | |
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| | <p>A: RHY replied that this was a possibility and that it would be interesting to see the next set of data, which would reflect being on the new site.</p> <p>The Chair added that none of this data would reflect the increased stress around exams so the next set would be interesting for that reason too. He thanks RHY for her report and RHY left the meeting.</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Minutes and matters arising</p> <p>a) The minutes from 21/11/19 were approved and signed. ACTION 1: Clerk to upload to website</p> <p>b) Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Headteacher advised that the new annual surveys (parents/staff/students) would be ready for distribution at half-term - The Headteacher advised that the literacy programme and policy were being updated and would be presented at a later meeting - The behaviour data would be updated for the next meeting <p>All other actions were complete or covered in the agenda.</p> | 1.SVE |
| 5 | <p>Headteacher's report</p> <p>a. Au2 achievement update</p> <p>The report was circulated ahead of the meeting and governors had gone through the data together at a session led by GST on the previous evening.</p> <p>The Headteacher invited any questions.</p> <p>Q: A governor queried the lack of Progress 8 data. A: The Headteacher replied that P8 was problematic for the Y10 as the founding cohort (Y10) had come in under the new SATs system and that to date there were no government guidelines on how to forecast P8 using the data from this new system. He advised that P8 forecasts based on historic data were therefore likely to be highly inaccurate and that the first opportunity to look at realistic P8 forecasts would be when the early entry data was available later in the year.</p> <p>He advised that they were tracking individual students and that as of Au1 24 were above target, 70 were on target and the remainder were below target, though none significantly.</p> <p>ACTION 2: Headteacher to share this data with governors (anonymised)</p> <p>Q: A governor commented that it would be useful to know if any students with good KS2 results were not making expected progress and the Chair added that it was also important that teachers knew who these students were. A: The Headteacher pointed to the data on current achievement by prior attainment included in governors' papers and relied that teaching staff were aware.</p> <p>Q: The Chair asked how predicted grades were generated. A: The Headteacher replied that the Au2 Y10 actual grades from practice papers were taken and then an assumption of expected progress from that point was made.</p> <p>Q: A governor asked if in all subject areas, teaching staff were able to have pupils answer actual GCSE questions (under new curriculum). A: The Headteacher replied that all subject areas were now assessing against actual GCSE content in Y10 but that the availability of past GCSE papers was restricted for some subjects as the reformed GCSEs were phased in over a three year period from 2017-19 .</p> | 2. ACN |

A Governor commented that the numbers of students taking each subject would be useful.

ACTION 3: Headteacher to include numbers of students in Y10 and taking each subject for the next report.

Q: Governors commented that the EBACC was very challenging and queried if the attainment forecast was realistic or was it in danger of aiming too high.

A: The Headteacher replied that the school was keeping this under constant review and that 4 pupils had recently been removed from languages with a potential further 2 under review.

Q: A governor asked if it was generally MFL that was the biggest risk in terms of students completing the EBACC.

A: The Headteacher replied that this was correct and added that in future cohorts there may be different rates of EBACC entry as it depended on a pupil being able to access the full suite of EBACC subjects.

Q: A Governor asked if the school was confident that the curriculum broad and balanced for all as this would be considered by Ofsted.

A: The Headteacher replied that he was confident that the majority of pupils could access the curriculum, adding that in some subjects pupils could sit foundation level papers.

Q: A governor asked if the end of Y10 would offer a more realistic picture.

A: The Headteacher replied that forecasts for Y10 were unlikely to change much but that they would be different for other cohorts.

Q: The Chair observed that E&M stood out in terms of measures put in place to target any under-achievers and asked if the school was confident that it had identified the correct groups.

A: The Headteacher replied that the focus of intervention in E&M was on those pupils who did not get a pass or a strong pass (grade 4 or 5) but all subjects would have some form of intervention.

Q: Governors asked if this was based on actual exams.

A: The Headteacher replied that this was the case. PJP added that in maths the exam was based on actual GCSE questions for the topics that Y10 had covered so far and grade boundaries from the actual GCSEs. She advised that pupils would be expected to make 1 grade and 2 sub-levels of progress during the course of a year.

Subject Areas:

Q: The Chair commented that he was surprised at the residuals difference between E&M, stating that he would have expected it to be closer to zero.

A: The Headteacher replied that there were some gaps in achievement, especially among some of the DA cohort, and that a residual difference could be changed dramatically by the difference in attainment of one student. He added that over performance of some groups could have a clear effect in some subject areas.

Q: A governor observed that DA pupils do less well across most subject areas and if there were any specific reasons for this.

A: The Headteacher replied that it was not down to the teaching but a wider variety of factors such as home support, access to the internet etc.

Risk Factors:

Q: The Chair asked if there could be more detail around the identified risks, including how big a risk this was, how many pupils it might affect etc.

A: The Headteacher replied that the biggest risk was around the DA results.

Q: The Chair observed that E&M was another risk with a number of students off-track and that it needed to be monitored closely over the year in case extra resources are needed to be deployed to combat this risk.

b. Au2 SEF update

The Headteacher advised that the SEF had been self-assessed by SLT. He highlighted the following:

3. ACN

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| | <p>Quality of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is good evidence that downward differentiation could be better in some classes. For example ensuring accessibility to certain texts to ensure ambition but consistent accessibility for all. <p>Behaviour & Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spontaneous acts of courtesy and kindness are still too low and there are high rates of re-offending for 'rude' behaviour, especially in Y7. - The attendance issue is both real and cosmetic. This is being addressed for example by more diligent recording of when pupils are in interventions as present rather than absent and extra guidance for teaching staff so that they improve register marking. The school is also exploring ways in which afternoon registration can be improved. <p>Q: A governor asked if there was something that could be done to improve the culture of non-attendance for minor ailments/ tiredness, stating that some pupils feel that it is just OK not to go to school if they feel tired or even a little unwell. The perception was that this was tolerated by some parents and they asked what the school was doing to address this. The Chair suggested that more resource could be put into communications about the impact of non-attendance.</p> <p>A: The Headteacher responded that persistent absence resulted in a letter home and a visit from the EWO but that it was hard to see the impact fully until the inconsistencies in registrations had been resolved.</p> <p>He added that there were some vulnerable students with severe attendance issues and that the reduced timetable policy was designed to support those pupils to allow them to reintegrate back into school after a period of absence without overburdening them.</p> <p>A Governor suggested that as a parent it was shocking to see the actual figures and that the impact of poor attendance should be spelled out to parents regularly. ACTION 4: School to share communication with parents about the impact of poor attendance and share with governors.</p> | 4. ACN |
| 6 | <p>Premises/Resources update</p> <p>IT provision/MAC suite – The Headteacher advised that this was still on hold due to the GAIA situation and the release of funds from the ESFA. ACTION 5: IT update at next meeting</p> <p>A date has been set to gain access to the Chateau to inspect the building so as this could be factored into the Phase 2 final building plans.</p> | 5. ACN |
| 7 | <p>Governor Business</p> <p>The joint training day is being held at TCSND on April 25th – all governors are invited to attend. Initial thoughts for the agenda include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do we mean by inclusion? ○ PP ○ SEND ○ Exclusions <p>All agreed that these were good areas to focus on. Governors asked that there should be lots of time built into the day for governors to network with colleagues from ND - especially link governors.</p> | |

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| | <p>Training reminders were sent out by the Clerk. ACTION 6: All governors to inform the clerk when training was completed, ideally with a certificate of attendance/successful completion</p> <p>Link governors Link governors fortnights are: Spring: 2nd March - 13th March (LGB on 19/3) Summer: 15th June - 26th June (LGB on 2/7)</p> <p>Link Governor roles were confirmed as: TNK – Careers CJN – Safeguarding LDL – SEND RJS – English GST – Maths CRE – Buildings and premises</p> <p>ACTION 7: All link governors to make appointments to visit the school and relevant staff during link governor fortnight. Karen Tempia will facilitate ACTION 8: Clerk to send link governor meeting template out again.</p> <p>New governor recruits would be linked with finance and community link areas.</p> <p>Governor vacancies Governors were informed that two applications had been received for the governor vacancies and that these would be interviewed by the Chair and the HoG in the next few weeks.</p> <p>6th Form working party Governors were informed that the candidate for the DHT 6th Form secondment was due to be interviewed on the 3rd February.</p> | <p>6.ALL</p> <p>7.ALL</p> <p>8. SVE</p> |
| 7 | <p>AOB</p> <p>Dates for the diary: Next LGB meeting: Thursday 19 March 6:30pm Trust meeting Tuesday 31st March – please let Chair know if you wish to attend Parent Forum – 26th March – Governors are encouraged to attend</p> | |

Minutes approved by: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Action points arising from the LGB meeting of TCSED on Thursday 23 January 2020

| No | Actions Carried Over | By | When | Status |
|-----------|---|------------|-------------|---------------|
| | A comparison of survey responses with those to the TCSND surveys to be prepared for governors once new data is available from surveys in Feb | DHT | May | Revised |
| | Update on school literacy catch up programmes and impact to be produced for governors | HT | May | Revised |
| | Confirm date and attendees meeting with MLT | VC | ASAP | Carried Over |
| | Updated behaviour data to be shared with governors at next meeting | HT/ DHT | May | Revised |
| | NEW ACTIONS | | | |
| 1 | Clerk to upload minutes to schools website | SVE | ASAP | NEW |
| 2 | Headteacher to share anonymised data for Y10 showing students who are on target/above target/ below target for each subject. | ACN | Summer term | NEW |
| 3 | Headteacher to include numbers of students in Y10 and taking each subject for the next report. | ACN | Summer term | NEW |
| 4 | School to share communication with parents about impact of poor attendance and share with governors | ACN | ASAP | NEW |
| 5 | Headteacher to provide an IT update at next meeting regarding IT support, mac suite and ongoing effects of Gaia collapse | ACN | May | NEW |
| 6 | All governors to inform the clerk when training was completed, ideally with a certificate of attendance/successful completion | ALL | ongoing | NEW |
| 7 | All link governors to make appointments to visit the school and relevant staff during the link governor fortnight. Karen Tempia will facilitate | ALL | 2/3 – 13/3 | NEW |
| 8 | Clerk to send link governor meeting template out to all governors | Clerk | ASAP | NEW |