

MANOR

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY, YORK

LOCAL GOVERNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 6.00pm

Present: Simon Barber (Principal) Richard Nihill [from 6.15pm]
Andy Richardson (Chair) Steve King
Debbie Cooper Sally Smith
Andrew Gready

In Attendance: Liz Mastin (Vice Principal: Staffing)
Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor - Clerk)

		Action
1.	<p><u>Opening Prayer, Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which opened with a prayer. Apologies were received, with consent, from Charlotte Day.</p> <p>Kieran Jones was absent. The Chair reported that he had emailed Mr Jones a number of times to enquire as to whether he wished to continue as a governor, but had received no response. The Governance Advisor confirmed that as Mr Jones had been absent without apologies at meetings for a period of six months, governors were entitled to agree his removal from the Local Governing Committee, in-line with the Articles of Association.</p> <p><i>AGREED: Governors agreed the removal of Mr Jones from the Local Governing Committee effective immediately as a result of non-attendance for a period of six months.</i></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2021, Action Plan and Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p> <p>With reference to the Action Plan:</p> <p>1. The Chair agreed to contact the CEO to discuss potential changes to LGC working groups and the governance model, and to request some direction about the way forward. It was also agreed that this could be raised for discussion at the next LGC Chairs' meeting in March. Completed. The Chair reported that he had recently emailed the CEO to raise issues discussed at the last meeting and would report back on this when he received a response. He noted that there were a number of substantial changes being proposed by the Trust in terms of governance, which were presented at the last LGC Chairs' meeting on 22nd March. Governors noted that a copy of this presentation had been circulated with the agenda and would be discussed in more detail under item 6.</p> <p>2. The Chair agreed to check and circulate the updated list of link governor roles. It was noted that there were statutory roles including Safeguarding, SEND and Health & Safety which needed to be assigned to individuals, and the Chair agreed to confirm these were in place. The Chair advised that a copy of the current link governor list had been uploaded to the agenda for information. It was noted that this would be discussed in more detail under item 6.</p>	

	<p>3. The Governance Advisor agreed to forward details of how to register on NGA Learning Link to all governors. Completed.</p> <p>4. The Principal agreed to send a formal proposal on the removal of ballot places from admissions criteria to the Chair of the Trust Board and CEO for presentation to the Board, to include an extract from the minutes to evidence governors' support. The Governance Advisor reported that this item had been raised at the last Board meeting on 17th March. Trustees had noted that a formal paper for approval would be needed from the Principal, as well as consultation with the Diocese regarding any changes to the admissions policy.</p> <p><i>[Richard Nihill joined the meeting at 6.15pm]</i></p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Principal's Report</u></p> <p><u>Parent/Carer Survey Responses</u></p> <p>The Principal reported on the outcomes and responses from the most recent parent survey, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Principal noted that Louise Scaum, Vice Principal (Welfare) had taken the lead on improving communications between parents/carers and the school as part of her role. As part of this, a newsletter had been set up which provided detailed information for parents/carers, and this had been well received. The Principal explained that this newsletter had been used to support the school's response to some of the issues raised in the survey. For instance, a negative comment was received, that there wasn't enough information about the curriculum for parents. As a result, the latest newsletter had included a detailed section on this, signposting parents/carers to the school website where the information was freely available.</p> <p>The Principal noted that overall communications with parents/carers had improved over the last few years, and there was a lot of positivity for the school. This was due in large part to the way that the school had provided learning and support during the latest lockdown, with an almost full curriculum being delivered remotely, and a good level of engagement and interaction from students. Parent governors supported this statement.</p> <p><i>On learning that the response rate for the survey was 443 out of the whole school, governors noted that this was overall very positive.</i></p> <p>The Principal advised that another comment which had been raised related to a lack of information on what was provided in terms of wider personal development for students. He advised that there were not as many obvious activities going on this year due to Covid restrictions, but again, there was a need to promote and highlight to parents the opportunities which were available.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the survey had encouraged responders to include their name and contact details. Where this had happened, and negative comments had been made, Heads of Year had contacted parents/carers to try to dig deeper into any issues raised, in order to resolve them.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Governors agreed that from a scrutiny perspective, it would be helpful to see more detail about how the school had responded to negative comments, and whether these were random or a pattern of connected issues. The Principal agreed to request further detail on this for governors' information from the Vice Principal.</i></p> <p><u>Full Re-Opening of Schools</u></p> <p>The Principal provided an update on the full re-opening of school from 8th March. He advised that all students had been invited to take three Lateral Flow Tests before starting back, with 80% taking up this offer. Of around 2,000 tests completed, only one positive asymptomatic case was reported after</p>	SB

two tests.

The Principal advised that attendance had been incredibly high, 97% in the first week back. He advised that all students were required to wear facemasks in classrooms as well as corridors and communal areas, unless they were exempt. The zoning and bubble arrangements in place from September 2020 had also been continued. The Principal advised that the school was running well with these arrangements in place at the moment, and he did not feel that it was the right time to start thinking about removing restrictions at this point.

Governors asked whether there was any national guidance on when schools should look to move from current to more “normal” arrangements. The Principal advised that there was not, and that risk assessments varied according to individual schools.

The Principal advised that now the school was fully open again, the focus for this half term was on Year 11 and ensuring that tests and assessments which would be used to calculate Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) were moderated and compliant. Governors noted that the Standards Group had discussed this in detail, and an update would be provided on this later in the meeting.

The Principal advised that the school was also preparing for the external review which had been commissioned by the Trust to take place at the start of May. In order to comply with Covid restrictions, the review would comprise of two inspectors carrying out interviews remotely online on 5th May, followed up with one inspector visiting the school for a walk-round in September. The Principal emphasised that this was not a “Mocksted”, but a review to look at day to day practice in school. No additional work was being requested of teachers to prepare for this.

Behaviour & Attendance

An update on behaviour and attendance had been circulated with the agenda for information.

The Principal reported that fixed term exclusions were at 4.5% this year, compared to 10.7% nationally. Students with one or more incident of fixed term exclusion was 2.9% compared to 4.9% nationally. In all measures, the school was below the national average.

Governors asked whether benchmarking data was available to compare with schools with a similar demographic and context. The Principal advised that he was not aware this was possible. He noted, however, that of the other secondary schools in the city, Manor’s figures were the second lowest.

Governors asked whether it should be assumed that a low number of exclusions was better. The Principal advised that he had been challenged on a similar point by the CEO during a recent meeting, and asked whether an outstanding school should have an even lower rate of exclusion. He advised that the school had extremely high standards, with clear expectations for all students of the consequences of not adhering to these.

The Principal reported that attendance figures were very high, though national figures for comparison were not available for the last term. He noted that the authorised absence figure of 4.3% related mainly to the fact that where vulnerable students were invited to attend school during lockdown but did not do so, they were required to be marked as authorised absence, not Covid-related absence.

Governors noted that this had been discussed at the Standards Group meeting, with the Vice Principal (Welfare) providing a report on the actions taken to ensure that vulnerable students who did not come into school were safe at home. Governors noted that reassurance had been given that this figure was a statistical anomaly and was not expected to recur.

It was noted that unauthorised and persistent absentee figures were also below national figures.

	<p>Governors asked again whether it was possible in some way to benchmark this data against schools with a similar intake.</p> <p>ACTION: The Principal agreed to check with the Vice Principal (Welfare) whether this analysis was possible, and report back.</p>	SB
4.	<p><u>Academy Development Plan / Self-Evaluation Framework</u></p> <p>Governors noted the latest version of the Academy Development Plan / Self-Evaluation Framework, which had been circulated with the agenda. Debbie Cooper provided an update on discussions at the Standards Group which had looked at the document in detail. Minutes from that meeting had also been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Dr Cooper reported that the group had received a detailed update from Mr Hill (Vice Principal: Attainment and Progress) on the process by which TAGs would be calculated for Year 11s, and also the communication with parents/carers to explain this, and to provide assurance that students would be given a fair assessments. Mr Hill had explained that a folder of evidence would be compiled per student and per subject, which would contain all the information on how the TAGs had been determined. Controlled assessments would be taking place during this half term, and Mr Hill had explained the arrangements in place to ensure that all students could access these consistently where there were absence issues due to Covid. Dr Cooper reported that students would have the opportunity to keep contributing to their assessment marks up to the latest possible point, to allow them full opportunity to do the best that they could.</p> <p>Dr Cooper reported that the group had discussed the likelihood of national criticism around grade inflation, though it had been agreed this was out of the hands of the school. The Principal advised that a similar discussion had taken place within the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). For example, he explained that outcomes for French this year were expected to be significantly better than in 2019, due to the fact that this was now an option subject, and there were half the number of students on the course than in the last exam year. The Principal explained that for this reason, it was not a like for like comparison. He advised that there was a facility within the process which allowed schools to submit explanatory reports such as this to the exam board.</p> <p>Dr Cooper advised that the group had also received a report on moderation arrangements for TAGs within the school and across the Trust. The Principal advised that an additional inset day had been provided by the CEO on 24th May, specifically for the moderation of TAGs within departments.</p> <p>With reference to remote learning, Dr Cooper advised that there had been discussion around retaining some of the techniques which had had to be implemented during lockdown. For example, the ability to provide learning remotely could enable students to work from home in the event of snow or other bad weather requiring the closure of the school. Dr Cooper noted that governors had discussed how the good parts of this experience could be retained and used to support learning moving forward. The Principal advised that this also related to the use of space across school at break and lunchtimes. He noted that having separate spaces for each year groups and different areas for them to socialise in had been really successful. The Principal also noted that there could be a possibility to run revision sessions for students across more than one school in the Trust by arranging these remotely.</p> <p>With reference to the tutor programme, the Principal reported that this was continuing to work well with a small group of students, using the Covid catch-up grant.</p> <p>Governors noted that the key priorities within the Academy Development Plan had been covered within other discussions in the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Resources – Finance Update</u></p> <p>Period 6 reports had been circulated with the agenda, along with minutes from the Resources working group meeting held on 10th March.</p>	

	<p>Governors noted their formal thanks to Sara Simpson, who had recently resigned from the Trust and would no longer be working as Finance Officer for the school.</p> <p>Dr King highlighted that the expected start budget position of a surplus of £116,000 had reduced to £54,000. He noted that the Finance Officer had reported that this could increase to around £80,000 by the end of the financial year, if restrictions were lifted. It was noted that this was due in large part to the loss of income from lettings not being able to take place this year.</p> <p>With reference to staffing, it was noted that non-Covid related staff absence was very low, which was a real positive. Liz Mastin, Vice Principal (Staffing) advised that staff absences due to Covid had had an impact on the budget. She noted that where cover supervisors were required these were being funded through the Covid catch-up grant.</p> <p>Ms Mastin advised that a point of national concern was the ongoing effects of Long Covid, and how this was affect people moving forward.</p> <p>Governors noted that overall the majority of staff had coped incredibly well during this period, with resilience and optimism. Governors agreed that this was testament to the team and to school leadership, and set a positive example to students about dealing with adversity.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Governance Update</u></p> <p>6.1 Governor Vacancies and Recruitment</p> <p>The Chair advised that since the last meeting, Fiona Titterington had resigned from the Local Governing Committee. Governors thanked Ms Titterington for her contributions during her time as a governor.</p> <p>Current vacancies had been flagged with the City of York Council Governance Service (for Trust Appointed) and the Diocese of York (for Foundation).</p> <p>6.2 Link Governor Reports</p> <p>The Chair advised that he had uploaded the most up to date list of link governor roles to the agenda for information. He asked governors to review the list and contact him if they would be happy to take on additional roles which were currently vacant.</p> <p>In terms of statutory link roles, it was noted that Sally Smith was the link governor for Safeguarding and SEND. The Chair agreed to take on the link governor responsibility for Health and Safety.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to contact Chair to advise which link governor roles they were able to take on.</p> <p>It was noted that ongoing Covid restrictions meant that visits to school were not currently possible. However, the Governance Advisor highlighted information which had been circulated earlier in the year with advice and guidance on how to carry out link governor monitoring remotely.</p> <p>ACTION: The Governance Advisor agreed to re-circulate information on remote link governor monitoring.</p> <p>6.3 Update from Chairs' meeting (22nd March)</p> <p>A copy of the presentation from the CEO to LGC Chairs on the future of governance in the Trust had been circulated with the agenda. The Chair explained that this information had been presented at a meeting on 22nd March, and provided an update on the forthcoming merger with Sentamu Academy Learning Trust (SALT) as well as governance arrangements including finance monitoring responsibilities.</p> <p>The Principal reported that the Trust had increased in size over the last few years, and would increase again significantly following the merger with SALT in September 2021. He advised that</p>	<p>All</p> <p>JS</p>

pages 10 and 11 of the presentation outlined the Trust Board's decision to pool all schools' reserves centrally from April 2021, and then all GAG funding from September 2022. The Principal advised that from a Trust perspective, there was a clear rationale for holding resources centrally so that these could be allocated according to key priorities, providing an equity of funding across all schools which may not be in place presently. He advised that curriculum based financial planning would be used to make allocations, rather than the traditional model in-line with national funding formulas.

The Principal advised that budget parameters had been set, looking at points including the amount spent on teachers as a percentage of total expenditure, teaching time and class sizes. He advised that schools were expected to meet these parameters, in order to ensure that resources were managed efficiently.

The Principal explained that the Trust had advised there was no intention of leaving any school short of resources. He also advised that governors would have a chance to feed back any concerns regarding these new arrangements.

Governors raised a question regarding accountability to stakeholders (parents/carers and students) and how these would be maintained if financial decisions were held centrally and not directly by the school. The Principal advised that the Trust intended the process to be fair, transparent and consistent, a collaborative system rather than a fight for the interests of individual schools.

Governors noted that these points were still not measurable in terms of accountability, and asked the Trust to consider that this was a key point to consider.

The Chair advised that financial accountability of Local Governing Committees would be limited under the changes to the Scheme of Delegation. Instead, Local Governing Committees would be accountable for:

Standards

Distinctiveness

Personal Development

Vision, Values and Ethos

Achievement of the school against the Academy Development Plan

The Principal advised that the Trust was already using curriculum-led financial modelling for budget setting, through an online system which had been purchased. He advised that this was accessible governors, the Trust and the school to look at, and was open and transparent in that all schools' information was available to view. The Principal advised that the expectation was that this would enable the Trust to direct funding where it was needed to make rapid improvements.

Governors raised concerns about what would happen if the school's allocated funding was reduced, and how this would affect the running of the school. It was highlighted that the school had worked hard to reduce a significant deficit over a number of years and was now in a good position. The Principal advised that he shared governors' concerns on this matter, but that the CEO was open to challenge and keen for this to be a fair and transparent process. The Principal advised that he was confident the school would have the opportunity to raise objections if the proposed funding settlement was restrictive or less than that which was currently being received.

Governors noted that the proposed changes to Local Governing Committee accountability did not make any reference to buildings and premises, and asked whether this meant that the Trust would be fully responsible for this as well. The Principal confirmed that the Trust were responsible for estates management.

Governors again raised concern about the incentive for ensuring local efficiency of financial performance. It was agreed that the transition to this new system was important, and governors asked if it was possible to request that there was no significant disparity in the amount of funding

	<p><i>received in the first one to two years.</i></p> <p>ACTION: It was agreed that the Chair should request a meeting with the CEO to raise governors' concerns about the pooling of funding and changes to Local Governing Committee responsibilities and discuss these in more detail.</p> <p>Governors also noted that there were implications that the way the Local Governing Committee was run, in light of the changes to the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>ACTION: It was agreed that the Principal, Chair, Debbie Cooper (Standards) and Steve King (Resources) should meet to discuss potential changes to the way that the Local Governing Committee operated from September.</p>	<p>AR</p> <p>SB, AR, DC, SK</p>
7.	<p><u>Safeguarding (standing item)</u></p> <p>Governors noted the Single Central Record audit report, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Principal advised that the Trust's Inclusion Lead had carried out the audit, with some minor changes to formatting being requested, as well as additional information about third parties working on site. He advised that these points had now been addressed, and overall there were no other issues raised.</p> <p>The Principal reported that all school leaders in the Trust were receiving training on how to audit their Single Central Records, so that this could be done on a regular and ongoing basis.</p> <p>With reference to vulnerable students during lockdown, the Principal advised that all were encouraged to attend school and those who didn't, received a weekly phone call and welfare check.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Policies to Note / Approve</u></p> <p>The following policies (approved by the Trust Board) had been circulated with the agenda, and were noted:</p> <p><u>FOR ADOPTION:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Trust-wide SEND Policy (for adoption) <p><u>FOR INFORMATION:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Leave of Absence Policy (NEW) * Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave Policy (NEW) * Expenses Policy (Review - with new content and forms) * Reserves Policy (Review) * Protection of Biometric Information Policy (Review) * Minibus Policy (minor correction on p6, item 2.5, third bullet point) 	
9.	<p><u>Ethos, Wellbeing & Church Distinctiveness</u></p> <p>Documents which had been shared with the Ethos working group had been circulated with the agenda, along with the minutes of the last Ethos meeting on 24th March. Governors noted the information, which included an update to the Church School Overview Report.</p> <p>It was noted that Katherine Humpleby, the Trust's Secondary School Improvement Lead was looking for governor representatives from all church schools to join a Church School Network. Andrew Gready agreed to take this role on behalf of the Local Governing Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: Andrew Gready to contact Katherine Humpleby to volunteer as Manor representative on the Church School Network.</p>	AG
10.	<p><u>Items and Questions to Raise with the Trust Board</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the issues and concerns relating to proposed governance changes and pooling of funding should be raised by the Chair directly with the CEO for response, rather than raising these</p>	

	with the Board at this point.	
11.	<u>Any Other Business</u> There was no other business to report.	
12.	Date and Time of next meeting Full LGC: 23 June Resources Group: 19 May Standards Group: 26 May Ethos Group: 9 June	

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed: Andy Richardson Date: 23/06/2021
Mr Andy Richardson (Chair)

MANOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY ACTION POINTS – 14TH APRIL 2021

	Action Point	Item	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Governors agreed that from a scrutiny perspective, it would be helpful to see more detail about how the school had responded to negative comments, and whether these were random or a pattern of connected issues. The Principal agreed to request further detail on this for governors' information from the Vice Principal.	3	Simon Barber	15/06/2021
2	The Principal agreed to check with the Vice Principal (Welfare) whether exclusion data comparisons with schools of a similar demographic was possible, and report back.	3	Simon Barber	15/06/2021
3	Governors to contact Chair to advise which link governor roles they were able to take on.	6.2	All Governors	15/06/2021
4	The Governance Advisor agreed to re-circulate information on remote link governor monitoring.	6.2	Jess Swarbrick	COMPLETED
5	It was agreed that the Chair should request a meeting with the CEO to raise governors' concerns about the pooling of funding and changes to Local Governing Committee responsibilities and discuss these in more detail.	6.3	Andrew Richardson	30/04/2021
6	It was agreed that the Principal, Chair, Debbie Cooper (Standards) and Steve King (Resources) should meet to discuss potential changes to the way that the Local Governing Committee operated from September.	6.3	Andrew Richardson, Simon Barber, Debbie Cooper, Steve King	15/06/2021
7	Andrew Gready to contact Katherine Humpleby to volunteer as Manor representative on the Church School Network.	9	Andrew Gready	30/04/2021