



Learning together; learning for life

CHERRY TREE SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING COMMITTEE MEETING THURSDAY 4th February 2021 VIA ZOOM

Name	Governor Type	Attended
Mr Craig Carter	Co-opted governor	Attended
Mrs Emma Lad (Clerk)	Clerk	Attended
Emma Hill (Assistant Head)	Observer	Attended
Emma Kearns	Staff (Support) Governor	Apologies
Miss Emma Penfold	Staff (Teaching) Governor	Attended
Mr James Roach (CEO)	CEO	Attended
Mr Chris Rogers	Parent governor	Attended
Mr Mark Scoulding	Co-opted governor	Attended
Mrs Emily Sheppard	Parent governor	Attended
Ms Cheska Tyler (HT)	Headteacher	Attended
Mrs Marie Vankova (SFO)	School Finance officer	Attended
Mrs Gemma Williamson (chair)	Co-opted governor	Attended

Governor challenge was highlighted in yellow

Governor actions are highlighted in italics

Meeting started at 7pm

Action

1. Welcome, apologies and consent

- The meeting was quorate.
- There were apologies sent by Emma Kearns.
- Shelly McCall and Renee Chandler have resigned and were thanked for their hard work for the governing board over their term of office.
- Mark Scoulding was appointed as a co-opted governor for a term of four years.
- Governor vacancies were discussed and there are now two co-opted vacancies for the board as Chris Rogers was approved as a parent governor.
- *A skills audit will be sent to governors by the clerk for completion to assist with identifying the skills gaps on the governing board.*

Clerk/ All governors

- *SEND/Inclusion, Pupil premium Grant and Nurture award roles were taken on by Mark Scoulding. The clerk will send information relating to the roles to MS.*

Clerk

2. Notification of any other business - None

3. Conflict of interest with agenda items to be declared - None

4. New pecuniary business interests to be recorded - None

5. Minutes of the last meeting 12.11.20 and matters arising

Minutes were approved and will be signed by the Chair of governors electronically via Governor Hub. All matters arising were completed or agenda items

6. Response from Trust regarding LGC comments

- HT performance management has taken place
- Environmental sustainability – The CEO has taken on board comments and explained that the policy is written with children taking the lead and ensuring a sensible balance regarding the involvement of governors.
- BFS LGC meeting will move to the 15th June 2020
- Exclusion policy – being added to the websites
- The concern regarding the nursery playground at LHS has been reviewed and in future any issues will be reported through the premises plan.

The CEO updated that the online provision from the school is excellent and there has been positive feedback from parents which is not every school's experience. Parent governors fed back that the provision has been fantastic and the support which is offered one to one has also dealt with any parents concerns. The CEO explained that the attendance figures are fantastic and the parents were thanked for their contribution to the process.

There are now half termly meetings of the Chairs with the CEO and it is working to improve the communication between the boards.

G: The admission numbers, where are we at with driving the marketing of the school?

CEO: The website pages/advertising videos have been improved. The numbers are down across Watford generally. There is a concern that the first-choice numbers are also down. The Marketing manager is working across the three schools to improve the marketing of the schools.

G: Are we focusing out advertising on social media?

HT: Yes, we have put a budget in place to support the focus of media. The marketing manager is supporting the school.

G: Are other schools seeing the same issues?

CEO: Yes, there are enough places across Herts but the places are in the wrong place. Watford continues to have a low number of children whilst North of the County doesn't have enough school places. Some schools which were two form entry will be moving back to one form entry. Covid-19 is also having an impact and parents are very busy and concerned about sending children into school. Once the building work is completed there will be a further selling point for the school.

HT: The meetings with the marketing manager are very helpful and we are working on virtual nursery tours at present. The team within the school and across the Trust are working together to improve the marketing. The marketing manager is really keeping us focused as marketing could get lost during the pandemic and the daily work of the school.

The chair thanked the CEO for his time.

7.31pm James Roach left the meeting

7. Headteacher report including

Documents distributed ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub

- HT report
- Appendix 1
- Appendix 2

Additional comments:

- Marie Vankova was welcomed to the meeting as the School Finance Officer.

- There are two members of staff who are intending on leaving for personal reasons at the end of the year. There have been interviews with NQT's today and one person has been appointed already. A further applicant has been offered but she is attending another interview before making her decision. The HT has arranged a tour on Monday with her as she has been unable to visit the school.

G: Were the other candidates not suitable?

HT: There was one candidate who was very close but the two appointed were strong on all four tasks and the groups completing the interviews felt they were the strongest candidates.

- The HT explained she has been overwhelmed by the feedback regarding online learning provision. That parents are going out of their way to positively feedback is fantastic. The feedback will be posted on Governor Hub for governors to review. The staff are working so hard at the moment and this is evident in the provision.
- An Early Years review has taken place and the report will be posted to governor hub. It was a half day remote review looking at phonics, the school website and speaking to staff. The Early Years Team did very well and the report represents the work they have completed in this area of the school. There are areas for development including focusing on the children's end points. The Team is very new and has had to deal with the pandemic so it is reasonable that this be an area for development.
- The HT explained that she has met some of the governors in person now, socially distanced, which has been really positive and helpful.
- The building of culture within the school has grown within CTS. The Phase leaders have been exemplary and have grown in confidence over the time I have been at the school. The Assistant HT's are also supporting the teachers and ensuring consistency across the school. Pastoral care has continued during the online learning and some of the leader's work has been shared across the Watford HT's as it was so outstanding.

G: Can you explain what has happened about uniform and what is happening for Pupil premium children in regard to uniform?

HT: Our logo has changed and so we felt it would be the right time to make a change to the uniform. We are working hard to ensure consistency in every area of the school. The uniform as a result needed to change. The Watford Observer picture taken for the children in Reception didn't reflect the ethos of the school. There is no expectation for anyone to go out and buy uniform and there is no set date for when the old uniform can no longer be used. The logo change is the only difference in the uniform.

For PP children we have around £500 of uniform with the old logo which could be sold to parents or be given to PP children. The PTA could be asked to see whether a set of uniform could be provided for each child to give something back and to support the uniform change.

G: I would be happy to opt out of that so that the uniform could go to children who needed it more or the money could be saved for the school. The uniform could also be donated back to the school which would help with the uniform needed in school. I agree with the Reception class photo's as it was noticeable that there was a big variety in the uniform which was worn in the school. The uniform should support a sense of belonging for the children.

HT: I need to reassure parents in terms of when they have to change the uniform.

G: A bookbag and jumper for all children from the Friends may be good for marketing as the children carry the bookbag everywhere.

G: To replace the uniform for a child could cost nearly £250 for families and so it may be more sensible to focus on the jumper having the logo rather than the whole uniform.

G: The Salvation Army could help with getting funding for uniform and stationary etc. from the whole community through various forums.

HT: Thank you. Regarding the polo shirts, I am trying to ensure consistency and high expectations. The school, however, will not penalise parents if the polo shirts do not have logo. We need to make it clear what our expectations are but also be realistic and inclusive in the policing of the policy.

Finance report

G: There was a top up for the English and PE curriculum, what impact has that had and why did you spend more?

Marie: We are legally bound to spend the Sports premium and initially it had been miscalculated. The English was used for the purchase of further books.

HT: The Sports premium is used for PE coaches and I will have to look into the English and report back via Governor Hub.

G: The census data may be based on October 2020 and our numbers have increased. What is the impact?
 HT: The biggest impact would be on Pupil premium numbers as they have increased. It would have an impact of around £10,000. I will report back on where we can cost save on Governor Hub.

NOTE SENT AFTER THE MEETING VIA GOVERNOR HUB:

- **£720 extra for the English budget** - this money was used to buy a Christmas book for every child. This was funded from the catch - up premium and the impact was that every child had access to a new book to read over Christmas to continue to promote a love for reading. Another desired impact was more on the wellbeing side and the feeling of 'togetherness' we were trying to create which has been so difficult over the last year. We were keen for every child to feel a part of this and to benefit both emotionally and educationally.
- **£2,000 extra for PE budget** - this money was saved from the cancellation of the swimming lessons in the Autumn term; the PE budget needed to be topped-up to balance the Sports Premium Grant which is £19,400 for this year. We have planned to spend the £2,000 on Bikeability for Year 5 and Year 6 as unfortunately the last year 5 (current year 6) didn't get the chance to do Bikeability last year as the event was cancelled due to Covid-19. Impact: road safety awareness for our children.

G: You are having weekly assemblies and I am happy to take assemblies for the children if it would alleviate work for the teachers. Also, on the question of children not engaging in home learning. I am meeting with the pastoral leads for the Trust next week to see whether packs would be helpful including stationary, snacks etc.

G: I know that packs have been delivered for SEN children which have a focus so that may be helpful.

HT: That would be very helpful

G: We had costed for PP children to have one to one support in school. As the children are now not in school, we are providing PP books for maths, English and writing which should help them at home.

G: These packs should help convey the fact that the community continues to be there to help families and support them.

G: We could also check with the local community whether there are any resources which they could donate to support home learning.

8.15pm Marie Vankova left the meeting

8. Review and update School Plan/ discuss targets

Documents distributed ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub

- CTS School plan

The HT was thanked for her work on the plan by governors.

9. Governor monitoring

Documents distributed ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub

- H&S visit feedback 4.12.20

Role	Governor	Autumn term visit	Spring term visit
Environmental governor (Green Flag award)	Craig Carter	Meeting to be booked with the environmental leader within the school.	Not possible at the moment due to the pandemic

Health & Safety	Craig Carter	Termly visit and report completed	<i>Annual report meeting to be booked</i>
Inclusion/ SEND	Renee Chandler Mark Scoulding	The SEND visit was very positive and the governor was very pleased with the diligence of the SENCo. A working group with parents, the school SEND governors and the SENCo will be set up. Phone visit and funding questions and answers session completed.	<i>Clerk to send further information on the role and remote visit to be completed</i>
Modern Foreign Languages	Chris Rogers	Visit to be booked	Not possible at the moment due to the pandemic
Nurture Award governor	Renee Chandler Mark Scoulding	An email conversation has taken place and a meeting will be booked.	Not possible at the moment due to the pandemic
Pupil Premium	Shelly McCall Mark Scoulding	Emma Hill will contact Shelly to book a virtual meeting	<i>Clerk to send further information on the role and remote visit to be completed</i>
Safeguarding/ Children Looked After	Emily Sheppard/ Craig Carter	December 2020 – visit to discuss roles and termly report.	<i>Visit being booked at present</i>
School Improvement	Gemma Williamson	Regular updates received	HIP Visit attended and Early years feedback. Communication with EYFS Leader Regular contact with HT
Sports premium	Chris Rogers	Visit to be booked	<i>Electronic visit to be booked</i>

All governors

10. Governor to complete a school website audit

Documents distributed ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub

- Website checklist

Phone website – Chris Rogers

PC website – Emily Sheppard

Standing items:

CR/ ES

11. Items from Trust board meeting – covered under HT report/ CEO update

Documents distributed prior to the meeting via Governor Hub

- 07.09.20 IMAT Trustees minutes
- 14.10.20 IMAT Trustees minutes
- 15.12.20 IMAT AGM meeting
- AGM PowerPoint

12. Risk review (From Trust Risk Register High Risks)

• Pupil Numbers

There is a lot of marketing online and we do need to make sure that we are reaching those who don't use technology. We have contacted nurseries but we are worried about using leaflets for example at present due to Covid-19.

G: All the schools have done well engaging the community on twitter but maybe using Instagram would be helpful as that is used by parents as well.

Chair: It is on the schools marketing plan and the marketing manager will be working on this in the short term.

G: Could we work on getting pieces into the local press as this helps build the online footprint for the school?

HT: I will take all of these suggestions back to the Marketing manager.

HT

The clerk was asked to start a marketing thread for governors on Governor Hub

Clerk

G: Staff wellbeing is a concern at the moment. Without staff the school and community will be negatively impacted. How are we making sure we are keeping staff wellbeing as a priority?

HT: The staff are working hard and it is exhausting. We have started to talk about it as Watford Heads. The ongoing debate is that we are good at the small things which are manageable but the longer-term impact needs to be monitored and reviewed. The SLT are continuing to work on this and discuss.

Examples of changes which have been made to support welfare are:

- *The Team have agreed to not send emails after hours.*
- *Parents evening week has been changed to welfare calls during the school day and we have released teachers from classes during that week so that they are not overloaded. Work has been provided for the children during this time.*
- *A governor sent in biscuits for the staff.*
- *We also have our SAS service which includes private medical help, counselling and physiotherapy. Staff are using this at the moment where necessary.*

G: The small things are good but those need to be planned as well. Mental Health is an area we need to monitor for the staff.

Staff G: The culture is changing in the school and when the phase leaders met with SLT they felt comfortable to speak about concerns and this is now the culture throughout the school.

Clerk asked to add staff welfare and wellbeing to the agenda for next meeting.

Clerk (Agenda)

- Covid Risk assessment
- *Any other local risk which Trustees need to consider – Welfare and wellbeing of staff*

Clerk (Trust)

13. Safeguarding

Documents distributed ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub

- Termly report to governors

14. Health and Safety issues to report to the Trust

- Confirmation from HT that Autumn Term H&S review completed - completed
- Date to be set this term for Annual H&S review to be completed with H&S Governor – to be booked

HT/ CC

- *Any H&S issues to discuss – None*

Clerk (Trust)

- CIF bid – the work is underway and the school is changing and improving rapidly.

15. Policy tracker review and policies due

The following policies were approved for use:

- Local Equality statement –

G: It says pupil numbers are 443. Is that right?

HT: Yes. That is not capacity but it is improved from the October census

- Marking and feedback policy (from last meeting)

G: Do staff feel the policy is usable?

HT: The process of creating the document has been shared with staff. The final version has not been shared with them as the school went into lock down but now approved, we will ensure it is explained thoroughly.

16. Training

Governors were reminded of the training available from HFL.

17. Clerks update

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) changes – update GH

KCSiE has been updated to take account of changes to recruitment after the UK left the EU. The latest version can be downloaded. As these changes involve safer recruitment - senior leaders, governors, and office staff who deal with recruitment or the single central register should be informed.

The changes to the guidance are as follows:

This update replaces Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020. Changes are strictly limited to those related to the UK leaving the EU on 31 December 2020. European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority teacher sanctions or restrictions 149.

From 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Now Schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records check for overseas applicants – Home Office guidance can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk); and for teaching positions
- obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants should contact is available from the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC.

Governors were asked to read the changes to KCSiE and then update their confirmation of understanding on Governor Hub

All governors

- *Diversity in the Governing body webinars – Governors were encouraged to listen to the six-part series on **Diverse governance**. You can view the webinars via You Tube*

<https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/diversegovernance> or click here: [#Diversegovernance](https://twitter.com/diversegovernance)

All governors

18. Any other business - None

19. Items to be sent to Trust/ LABs

- *Any other local risk which Trustees need to consider – Welfare and wellbeing of staff*
- *Any H&S issues to discuss – None*

Clerk (Trust)

Clerk (Trust)

- Governors discussed the CEO/COO attendance at the meetings. It was felt it would be helpful for them to attend for the first 15 to 30 minutes. *The COO is to be invited to the next meeting and the HT was asked to seek governors' views when appropriate on the budget forecasting.*

HT/Clerk (Trust)

- *G: How will the Trust support the school if there is an in-year deficit as a result of the census date change from the DFE?*

Clerk (Trust)

20. Future Dates

Governors were thanked for their time by the chair. The school staff were thanked for their considerable work and effort during these trying times by all governors.

LGC: (7pm)

Spring term:

2nd February BFS

3rd February LHS

4th February CTS

Summer term:

8th June BFS

9th June LHS

10th June CTS

Governor open day 9th July 2021

15th December 2020 AGM at 6pm

Ended 8.50pm