

GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL
Academy Trust
 Company Number 769819.
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Full Governing Board Committee Meeting



9th December 2021 in SC7 – Meeting started at 3.30pm

Attendees	Initials	Position	Comments
Anstee, Sarah	SJA	Staff Governor (Associate Governor)	Present
Bloodworth, Andy	ABL	Headteacher	Present
Hemsworth, Robert	RH	Parent Governor	Apologies
Lo, Alex	AL	Co-opted Governor	Present
Major, David	DM	Parent Governor	Present on Teams
Meeson, Sam	SM	Member Appointed Governor (Joint Vice Chair)	Apologies
Newberry, Ian	IN	Member Appointed Governor (Chair of Governors)	Present
Smith, Doug	DS	Member Appointed Governor	Apologies
Sparrow, Annie	ASP	Staff Governor (Associate Governor)	Present
Stevens, Jo-Anne	JAS	Parent Governor	Apologies
Wall, Lesley	LW	Co-opted Governor (Joint Vice Chair)	Apologies
Pateman, Jo	JMP	Governance Professional	Present

2021/22/ FGB/15	Welcome	IN welcomed Alex Lo (AL) and Colin Wynne (CW) to the meeting.	I
2021/22/ FGB/16	Apologies	Apologies had been received from RH, SM, DS, LW and JAS, these were sanctioned.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/17	Conflicts of Interest	<p>None declared.</p> <p>IN informed the board that the declaration of business interests had been raised again by the auditors. As a result, our current forms will be amended and any close relative with a significant or controlling interest in a business or organisation, must be listed. These forms will be reviewed at the beginning of each meeting and amended as necessary.</p> <p>Whilst the board waited for SJA and ASP to arrive, IN reminded everyone that there is a standing agenda item on the FGB agenda of <i>Committee Matters</i>. This is where the committee chairs will provide a brief update of items discussed at the committee meetings.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p>

		<p>However, all governors are forwarded the minutes of these meetings, which they should read. All governors are entitled to ask any questions they may have relating to the minutes under this agenda item.</p> <p>It was confirmed that AL will be mentored by SM. SJA arrived at 3.39pm and ASP arrived 3.41pm.</p>	I
2021/22/ FGB/15	Welcome	IN introduced CW to the board and CW explained his experience and background to the board. CW left at 3.45pm. The board voted and agreed to co-opt CW onto the board. CW will join the resources committee and it is hoped that he will take on the role of Finance Governor.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 26	Safeguarding	<p>DA joined at 3.51pm. The safeguarding report had been circulated prior to the meeting and DA advised that there was nothing startling to highlight. Self-harm looks quite high compared to this period last year, however last year we were in a lockdown and the figures are therefore not comparable.</p> <p>CPOMS – DA has created a sexualised incident category so that we can more accurately record and monitor instances of sexual harassment, sexting, sexual abuse and sexualised language and behaviour. 14 incidents since this category was created. We are also doing a survey of sexual violence and harassment within the school; this will be rolled out shortly.</p> <p>Bullying and racial incidents – another category created on CPOMS which was previously recorded on SIMS. However, the perpetrators were recorded on SIMS, and it was often hard to find the victim it related to, whereas CPOMS allows a link between both students. KLR arrived at 3.53pm.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 30	Finance	<p>KLR advised that the only change to the financial accounts since they were distributed, is a note on page 13 relating to the members board, as the auditors had not liked the terminology.</p> <p>The accounts are healthy and there are no issues for this year. The board thanked KLR for her hard work, voted and agreed to adopt the accounts. KLR left at 3.56pm.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I, D</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 26	Safeguarding	<p>CPOMS – previously limited staff access due to the pupil confidentiality; however, we have discovered that it would be useful for more staff to have access e.g., tutors. DA can control the exact information tutors are able to see, but this will allow them to have a better idea of things happening with their tutees.</p> <p>Q – what will you share? Anything sensitive will not be shared, staff may be able to see a heading, but not the exact details. There are lots of filters that can be used, and DA will look at this carefully. We are currently researching how many Merilocks will need to be issued to staff, alternatively they can access CPOMS using a QR code from their phones.</p> <p>A section 175 audit is currently in process, this is a safeguarding audit by Babcock and will generate action points that will populate DA's action plan moving forward. We are still not 100% on our young carers and identifying who they are. Information has gone out to tutors to help them try to identify pupils who are young carers, but it is not that simple.</p> <p>Other areas to report – unfortunately CAMHS have expressed that they are at breaking point, and this will have a huge knock-on effect to schools and pupils.</p>	<p>D</p> <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p>

		NMM is putting together a bereavement policy and this will come to governors shortly.	I
		DM is now attending the fortnightly safeguarding meetings in school.	I
		DA maintains a safeguarding chronology of training delivered to staff and pupils etc. and can add this to the Governor SharePoint.	I
		DM advised that he will shortly send out an email to all staff, introducing himself and explaining his role as safeguarding governor. He will also chase up any outstanding safeguarding policies and training. DA left at 4.03pm.	I
2021/22/ FGB/18	Minutes and Matters Arising	The minutes of the FGB meeting on the 30th September 2021 were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and approved to be signed.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 20	Sporting Facilities	KLH joined at 4.07pm. KLH had circulated information and costings to the governors on bringing the sporting facilities back into the school. KLH feels the school could generate more money than estimated on her report with good advertising, however she is trying to be realistic for the time being. ABL would like the lettings income to become a collective, whether from the gym, ATP, or something else. This would go into a community pot and will generate enough to maintain the services and provide a sinking fund. ABL also feels the income amounts are conservative. This is a secure option. ABL is slightly worried about staff, however we can adjust current staff job descriptions to accommodate this. JMB joined at 4.09pm. IN felt the report was not a massive surprise and proves that for very little effort we should be able to generate a good level of income. The governors agreed for the school to continue to pursue this. The key thing is to make sure that there are no items outstanding before the negotiated settlement is in. KLH confirmed she is in communication with DCC and 1610 about several outstanding items, there are a few things we may have to let go, as we cannot prove whether damage was done by school pupils or outside of school time. However, the ATP is done, which was the main item. We are still a long way off signing on the sports hall. Governors voted and agreed to proceed with plans to take on the sporting facilities but asked to be kept up to date and advised that no significant expenditure should be agreed without the prior permission of the board.	I D
2021/22/ FGB/ 21	New Build Update	JMB provided a recap on the new build for the benefit of AL, who is new to the board. Going back several years, the school had two builds, which gave better quality provision but oddly enough, only provided small capacity, as we replaced several cabins. At that time, the school had a falling demographic, and could therefore cope. However, the demographic has been increasing since 2013 and we have applied for several CIF bids for new builds, but these have been declined. Pupil numbers have continued to increase, and we have now had to look at providing additional capacity and began looking at different sites around the schools and companies to work with. We decided on the area outside of the science block, this is slightly run, is on a slope and would allow us to have a new block without really losing any outside space. Historically we also have planning for a single storey build on this site, although this has now lapsed. After speaking with the governors, a feasibility study was completed and following this TFQ Architects were appointed to manage the build. They are providing quantify surveying drawings etc. Planning permission had now been submitted, we do not anticipate any problems and will now plough ahead with tenders for the build in the New Year.	I I

		<p>In essence, the new block will contain a library and classroom downstairs with a few offices and 2 classrooms upstairs. The current library will be converted to additional dining space, as we do not currently have enough dedicated dining space for our pupils. ABL has managed to secure £500,000.00 funding from DCC, with the rest paid from the school reserves. Current estimates are looking at a total build cost of £1.2 million, which would include contingencies and fittings.</p> <p>Q – will there be any chance of whole new school build? Unfortunately, we are victims of our own success. We have repaired and maintained the building over the year, whereas if we had allowed it to fall down completely, we would be in a strong position for a new build. JMB and KLH left at 4.26pm.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>I</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 18	Minutes and Matters Arising	Governors voted and agreed to ratify the decision for RH to move back to the Teaching & Learning committee from the Resources committee.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 32	Governor Visits	This agenda item will be moved to the next FGB agenda as SM, LW and RH, had all sent apologies to this meeting.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 25	D of E	The board must appoint a link governor for D of E. As such a high number of governors had sent their apologies, this will be moved to the next meeting, however in the meantime, the Clerk will contact JAS to ask whether she would be interested in taking on this role.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 31	Academic Dates	<p>The academic dates for 2022-23 were adopted by the board.</p> <p>ABL advised that an additional occasional day had been added to the academic dates for 2021-22. This is set for Friday 6th May 2022 and has been set as schools were advised to add an additional occasional day as the Queen's Jubilee holiday falls within the half term break. NMM arrived at 4.33pm.</p>	<p>D</p> <p>I</p>
2021/22/ FGB/23	Policies	<p>The physical restraint section of the behaviour policy was adopted by the governors. NMM advised that the restraint recording form will become an appendix. ABL reminded the board that the procedures around restraint are agreed each year and that as a school, we have always felt it is wrong to have someone specially trained in restraint, as this often encourages restraint. The restraint policy does allow staff to restrain, but only as a last resort. We would never look to physically remove a child. Governors agreed that they were happy to continue with the policy that we do not train staff in restraint techniques.</p> <p>NMM advised that the behaviour policy had a small addition relating to searching, this wording is from DfE guidance. Governors voted and agreed to adopt the policy. JSR arrived at 4.39pm.</p> <p>Anti-bullying policy – NMM has added advise to the policy for parents whose children are displaying bullying behaviour, as we do a lot of work around protecting those who are the target of bullying, but we also need to help the child who is displaying bullying behaviour. The policy was adopted by governors. NMM left at 4.42pm.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 22	Pupil Premium	<p>Each year the school has produced a pupil premium strategy, however last year a decision was made by the DfE to change the format. All schools must use the same format and the information asked for is very clear. JSR has completed several training courses on how exactly to provide this information. The report is more involved than previously and runs through everything strand of school.</p> <p>The basic principles are that equity is inclusion and students are more than their labels.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I</p>

	<p>The strategy links to SEND and JSR is now working closely with HVW on the SEND strategy. JSR has been the PP link for the last 9 years, we had to change our strategy as it was simply not where it needed to be. JSR has been working with a national organisation that works with schools and on the research with the EEF whose entire purpose is to raise the attainments of disadvantaged pupils.</p>	I
	<p>JSR has identified the challenges in the strategy from 1 to 10 and has looked at diagnostic and informative assessments, classroom data, spoken to pupils and teachers, completed 360 reviews with pupils, looked at pastoral data i.e., fixed term exclusions, attendance, and academic outcomes. JSR has focused on the questions, do we have the right culture to deal with these problems and do we have astringent bias – we have not had exams for 2 years, but our gap is getting bigger.</p>	I
	<p>JSR will focus on targeted academic support and small group work. Also, wider strategies i.e., physical support to access wider school life, provided with uniform etc. The strategy must evidence the research for each single activity that we do, and this will link into the SIP.</p>	I
	<p>Evaluation and monitoring – we need to know our plan has impact. JSR will monitor with SM, as link governor, to ensure there is a clear path with mile stones and that we have implementation plans in place.</p>	I
	<p>Governance is included in the strategy and the key role of the governors to know when to check the actions and how to evidence that it has been successful.</p>	I
	<p>Question from SM prior to the meeting - <i>what the specifics are re: implementation (when you may have timescales and what they might be) and your plans for monitoring/measuring the impact of all the strategies outlined? You do mention a robust framework on the last page of the report but wondered if you're able to give any more detail at this stage, or share with governors an example from the framework?</i></p>	Q
	<p>Implementation is linked to the SIP – the time scales are all included and certain aspects are already in place. Realistically its tied into the SIP.</p>	I
	<p>ABL - slight concern is if we look at a PP plan on its own, would it not have that in there? JSR - that is the question I think SM is asking. The PP strategy is a standalone thing.</p>	I
	<p>JSR – can review mid-year and at the end of the year as to where we are – a lot will be integrated in the SIP. JSR suggests we do a general review of our outcomes with PP pupils but also as governors, when you are reviewing the SIP, you make sure that PP and SEND is always front and centre. JSR finding it hard to understand the question, suggests we wait until she has met with SM in the New Year.</p>	I
	<p>IN – when is it in the SIP and when will it be monitored in the SIP? It's in the SIP now, JSR has presented a EEF structure and SLT are having training in January.</p>	Q

		<p>ABL feels we cannot refer to the PP strategy as the SIP. The PP strategy needs to be a 3-to-4-year process.</p> <p>Q – when will we get the first feedback from JSR that the strategy is working? The strategy must be on the website by 31st December 2021. Governor agreed to adopt the strategy.</p> <p>JSR proposes reporting back to governors at Easter. This is a 3-year plan and not everything will happen immediately. Once we have our first draft, we can look at all the dates and see what needs to shift as we do not want to overload staff. Governors agreed to have feedback from JSR termly at every other T&L meeting. JSR to provide a written report and governors to forward questions prior to the meeting. JSR requested that governors are familiar with the template.</p> <p>SJA left at 5.15pm and JSR left at 5.17pm</p>	<p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 29	Policies	The Safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies were adopted by governors at the last resources meeting. This decision was ratified by the board.	I, D
2021/22/ FGB/ 24	Parental Communication	The board discussed the uncomfortable and unacceptable communication being received from parents. The school cannot control when staff read their emails and several staff have been really upset by communication from parents. This relates to a small minority of parents, however the board agreed that ABL and IN should write to all parents reminding them of the pressure and time constraints that teachers are under and to remind them that teachers are working hard to educate their children. All teachers and staff at GTS welcome open communication with parents as part of the education of young people, but parents need to be mindful of what they are communicating. Teachers are humans too, with human emotions, who require our respect. The school will potentially and robustly respond to parents who continue to abuse staff.	I <p>D</p>
2021/22/ FGB/ 27	Covid update	<p>At present, we have a significant number of pupils off, and attendance is around 80%. 257 pupils have tested positive since September, and we have a large number of staff off, approximately 12% at any given time, as 1 returns, another leaves. Finding supply staff continues to be an issue and our staff are giving up their PPA time to cover lessons. Staff have been incredible, but everyone is very tired, and this cannot continue indefinitely. Hopefully, whilst the new Omicron variant is not good news, it will help raise the profile of wearing masks and taking precautions, as our pupils have been following guidelines for so long, it is hard to maintain.</p> <p>Our next challenge is the new guidance and the need to re-test in January 2022. This means we are back to finding staff to test and laying out rooms etc. ABL would like to ask for a governor's decision now, rather than calling an extraordinary meeting. Several schools are running a staggered start in January, and we feel this may be beneficial at GTS. ABL would like to propose Years 10 and 11 returning on Wednesday 5th January, when they will also be tested. Years 8 and 9 would return and test on Thursday 6th and Year 7 on Friday 7th. We have not done this previously, as case numbers were low, however due to the numbers in Devon now, the school feel we should look at a staggered return. Governors discussed, voted, and agreed to this.</p> <p>IN asked ABL to pass on the thanks of the board once again to all staff for their hard work and commitment.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p>

		Q – at what point do we say this is not sustainable re: covering staff? We are simply trying to get to the end of this term. We are already booking in staff for January, and we are looking at collapsing classes and some year groups staying at home, if this becomes necessary. However, this can create more work for staff, but we are investigating all possibilities.	Q
		Q – can pupils not simply use work on the website? If pupils work from home, we will need to return to the remote learning model.	Q
2021/22/ FGB/ 28	Headteacher Report	<p>The Headteacher report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Q – is the Resource Base now not happening? SM expressed her view that if we could not do this properly, it would have an impact on staff and pupils and that it may be wise to withdraw. This is a valid question that we have been asking ourselves. The situation is that we have 2 pupils who will be funded, as already on roll. We met with DCC yesterday and they are keen to support what we do in this school, and we are now talking about additional funding to consider pupils with slightly greater needs than those in mainstream. This would allow us to fund more staff and support the children who would probably end up coming to GTS anyway, as there is nowhere else to accommodate them. Simon Niles from DCC is currently trying to confirm details with the RSC.</p> <p>IN – resource base/hub has advantages as it would highlight what we do here. However, this would not provide publicity and creates concerns around potential withdrawal of funding unexpectedly? ABL does not believe this would happen, the funding is a very generous package, and the money will be attached to those individual pupils. If we feel those pupils are beyond GTS, we can say no.</p> <p>IN supports if each pupil we take on is correctly funded and supported. AL left at 5.39pm.</p> <p>SM had raised a question on the HT report which ABL felt was covered by Daryl Chapman. ABL has recently met with Daryl Chapman as a SLS Headteacher Mentor, his response to the work completed by GTS in the last 2 years, was that he could not believe we had managed to do so much whilst in the middle of a pandemic. Daryl knows the school and was very satisfied with the changes we have made and felt they were in the right place and recognised that they were significant changes.</p> <p>JSR has prepared the internal data and will bring this back to the next meeting, as there was a significant amount of data requested at short notice.</p> <p>IN is nervous in gathering data for the sake of gathering data. It needs to be data you the school is gathering anyway, and which is useful to the school for further improvement. That is the key thing about governance i.e., not asking for additional information that serves no benefit.</p> <p>Q - Another question from SM was whether we have identified similar gaps in other year groups? Yes, the gaps are consistent across the school.</p> <p>Q - Looking ahead what are your strategies? That is the SIP and the quality of T&L as a whole. The SIP will be presented at the next meeting. Finally, ABL advised that he had tried to provide a narrative of the year in his report, rather than what has already been relayed to governors.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p>

2021/22/ FGB/ 34	Items Through the Chair	None.	I
2021/22/ FGB/ 35	Final Point	Everything that the board does have a direct impact on the pupils in our school. We have discussed the new build, pupil premium, sort facilities, a strategy for closing the gap, special needs provision and we have a health set of accounts.	I. D
2021/22/ FGB/ 36	Dates of next meetings	Teaching & Learning Thursday 27 th January 2022 at 3.30pm Resources 3 rd February 2022 at 3.30pm FGB 10 th February 2022 at 3.30pm	I

Meeting closed at 5.50pm

Action Points

Minute Reference	Action	By Whom	By When

Signed Chair of Governors

Date