

GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL
Academy Trust
 Company Number 769819.
 A Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England
Full Governing Board Committee Meeting



10th February 2022 in E5 – Meeting started at 3.30pm

| Attendees | Initials | Position | Comments |
|-------------------|----------|--|------------------|
| Bloodworth, Andy | ABL | Headteacher | Present |
| Hemsworth, Robert | RH | Parent Governor | Not Present |
| Lo, Alex | AL | Co-opted Governor | Apologies |
| Major, David | DM | Parent Governor | Present on Teams |
| Meeson, Sam | SM | Member Appointed Governor (Joint Vice Chair) | Present |
| Newberry, Ian | IN | Member Appointed Governor (Chair of Governors) | Present |
| Smith, Doug | DS | Member Appointed Governor | Present |
| Sparrow, Annie | ASP | Staff Governor (Associate Governor) | Present |
| Stevens, Jo-Anne | JAS | Parent Governor | Present |
| Wall, Lesley | LW | Co-opted Governor (Joint Vice Chair) | Present |
| Wynne, Colin | CW | Co-opted Governor | Present |
| Pateman, Jo | JMP | Governance Professional | Present |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2021/22/ FGB/37 | Apologies | AL had sent his apologies in advance, these were sanctioned. DM joined online via Teams. RH was not present. | I, D |
| 2021/22/ FGB/38 | Conflicts of Interest | New declaration of business interest forms will be circulated to all to complete and return to the Clerk. ASP and CW declared a conflict of interest to an item that will be discussed as part of agenda item 2021/22/FGB/41. This item will therefore be discussed at the end of the meeting. | I, D |
| 2021/22/ FGB/39 | Minutes and Matters Arising | <p>CW was officially asked to take on the role of Finance Governor. CW agreed on the proviso that it would be useful to have some understanding of what exactly is expected from him in this role. IN advised to understand the accounts and be aware of the finances. CW was advised to contact the School Finance Manager and the Clerk advised that there are training courses for understanding the finances in academies, which may be of use. <u>The board ratified the decision to appoint CW as finance governor.</u></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and approved to be signed.</p> <p>Matters arising – SM advised that most points would be covered during this meeting, however on the subject of mental health, SM has been in contact with the Hardy Centre Manager, who has agreed to report to FGB 3 times per year. The first report will be</p> | <p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| | | presented at the next FGB meeting in April and the Hardy Centre Manager had been advised to present her reports in the format that worked best for her e.g., in person to the board, written report etc. JAS, JSR and NMM joined at 3.47pm. | |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 40 | Policies | <p>Equality information policy – review of progress and impact, policy goes to governors, any other form of report? JSR appendices already agreed, also document NMM has put together (equality and diversity statement) – all already approved by governors – appendix agreed, and evaluation agreed before the policy was agreed. This is a legal policy that we must share on our website – what we aim to do, not necessarily what we can do.</p> <p>Q – anything of concern or significantly changed? Nothing significantly changed as no change to the law.</p> <p>Q – any comparisons for our data with other schools at this moment in time? Benchmarking data, outcomes from FFT. Exclusions – not sure what is shared from Devon. NMM – Jaye MacDonald shares data but no formal sharing data or benchmarking.</p> <p>Q – working towards staffing and governing body that reflects the wider community, how far are the staff reflected in the wider community? IN asks what do you mean by the wider community? CW the community you serve. IN – reflects the local community, if you look at the data of the local community, we are reasonably reflective of that. ABL increase in BME, could be slightly down on that. JSR feels the governing body does not reflect the deprivation depth but that is a challenge for any governing body – do we have the voice of the parents we are trying to serve? SM argues that student body could be invited to attend – IN argues does that address the issue? ASP – in terms of ethnicity we are less diverse than our pupils.</p> <p>LW – first sentence of ‘low income’ requests rewrite – amendment to be made to – change around those two words. Policy adopted, JSR left at 3.57pm.</p> <p>Bereavement policy – NMM advised that the policy had been created following an increasing number of children who have sadly suffered bereavements. The school have dealt with this well in the past, however it felt right to have a policy in place and a clear plan to follow. The policy had been taken from The Key, the first part of the policy is based on dealing with the loss of someone in our school community i.e., pupil or member of staff. The rest of the policy focuses on what to do when a pupil suffers a bereavement i.e., how to support them returning to school. We do not feel we can have a definitive ‘you must do this’ list, as everyone’s circumstances are different. However, this creates a guide for staff to follow. Our very first action would be to appoint a member of staff, who possibly already has a relationship with the family, to make contact and establish how to proceed.</p> <p>A pupil may return immediately to school, or have a phased return, the school will put in place the right plan for the pupil whilst keeping consistent boundaries to support them as much as we can. A key thing that we have not done to date, is to have a bereavement calendar, particularly for those pupils who have lost close family members. Contact would be made with the family to pre-empt dates and events that may trigger the pupil e.g., the first month or year of the death, birthdays etc. Bereavement counselling does not start until 6 months.</p> <p>Q – is the bereavement counselling in school? There is a list of agencies in the policy, including FIG, a Bideford based charity that we use.</p> <p>Q – can you offer bereavement counselling in school? FIG are experts in grief, and we would prefer pupils meet with them, at least initially.</p> | <p>I, Q</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Q – where the policy relates to staff, does it apply equally to teaching and support staff? Yes, and section 7 relates to supporting staff when they return to work. ABL requested that the Business Continuity Plan be added to the list of linked policies. <u>Governors voted and agreed to adopt the policy.</u> Q – what is the T drive? Previously, all policies were saved to the T drive, we now use a Shared drive. NMM left at 4.06pm | Q D Q |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 41 | Committee Matters | T&L – main points from this committee will be covered through agenda items in this meeting. Resources – one item to bring to FGB from Resources will be discussed at the end of this meeting due to conflicts of interest. Sport facilities – recommendation from Resources to approve taking on responsibility of the sport facilities, however a number of action points raised in Resources have not yet been addressed. IN not prepared to decide today and suggested creating a sub-committee of IN, DS and CW, to deal with this moving forward and report back to Resources and FGB. <u>Governors agreed.</u> CW advised that he had raised several questions relating to figures for the sport facilities which the school finance manager had provided an explanation for. The Clerk to forward these questions and answers to the full board for info. Q – when are TDC suggesting we sign? 1 st April 2022. We therefore need all the action points raised in Resources, addressed by the middle of March. Staffing – this had been discussed at Resources. Several staff have informed the school of their intention to retire within the next few years, which may leave the school with gaps. In addition, some of the younger teachers joining the profession, are not aware of the full requirements of being a teacher. At a recent meeting with Dawn Stabb, earlier this week, she suggested that this is a County wide issue. We are therefore looking ahead 2 to 3 years when planning staffing and are mindful of trying to keep the experience in our school. | I I I D I Q I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 42 | New Build | This was discussed at great length in Resources and a report from the Head of Operations was sent to all governors. The board were asked to provide questions to the Clerk, who would invite the Head of Operations to attend FGB to answer these questions. However, no questions had been submitted. IN checked again that there were no questions from the board. Q – do you still believe you will stay within the original budget? A few items included in the first budget are now separate. ABL argues that the final cost will be lower than the budget of £1.2 million. Material and labour costs have increased; however, the main risk is felt to be the start time and whether we can secure anyone to do the project within our time frame. | I Q |
| 2021/22/ FGB/43 | Safeguarding | There has been an increase in anti-social behaviour inside and outside of school. ABL has met with NORDAB and this appears to be consistent across north Devon. ABL will be working closely with the Head from Bideford and the Police, focusing on behaviour on the quay. Drug misuse and substance misuse is a factor. DM has been working closely with school too, focusing on sexual harassment in schools. An online survey was sent to all pupils in school, at the last count we had received 824 responses, which is excellent. The school are currently building an action plan to deal with some of the areas raised from the survey. There are very encouraging areas, some misconceptions and areas we clearly need to address, for example normalisation of behaviour and ‘sexting’. We need a reset. | I |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | | <p>Q – will parents be asked to complete the surveys? Yes, in time. We need to do work with parents around online concerns and raising their understanding of this.</p> <p>Q – are the primary school addressing this too? JAS advised that she had similarly seen an increase in anti-social behaviour and lots of issues with learning behaviours in the classroom. A lot of time and effort is going into social and emotional care, plus additional interventions. Many believe this is related to Covid, children missed out on so much. They are now back in school, but it is strange to them and they are struggling to deal with this socially and emotionally. This also links to families and what is happening at home.</p> <p>The Police had reported that the level of respect they receive from children has dropped. GTS have asked the Police to come into school and have more of a presence. It was noted that whilst behaviour is worse, this does relate to a small minority. ABL advised that pupils had not had the usual opportunities for positive recognition due to the pandemic.</p> <p>DM informed the board that 2 governors were still to confirm they had read the DfE KCSIE guidance, the Clerk will contact these governors.</p> <p>DM also reminded the board, that with the exception of SM, ASP and JAS, all governors still need to complete The National College safeguarding training. The Clerk will email a reminder with login in details and IN informed the board that in addition to the safeguarding training, there were lots of useful training resources for governors on the National College website.</p> | <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 44 | SIP | ABL will circulate his list of priorities to the board. | I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 45 | Governor Self-Evaluation | <p>This has previously been discussed at T&L, it is considered good practice to regularly self-evaluate the effectiveness of the board. With Ofsted on the horizon, it was felt an important time to do this. A skills audit and 20 questions for SATs (both NGA documents) had been circulated to the board prior to the meeting. SM suggested delegating this to IN as Chair, and someone who knows the board well. Once completed, the information could be circulated to the board, who would have an opportunity to contribute at this stage.</p> <p>Q – delegate what exactly? The skills audit and questions from NGA, to evaluate how we operate as a board. This is a valuable exercise and can be used as a pre-cursor to engaging external governor support. SM has already made enquiries to our School Improvement Partner for governor support. She is waiting to hear back but is hopeful that we can arrange specific governor training. <u>All governors to complete the skills audit and return to the Clerk by Friday 18th February.</u></p> | <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>D</p> |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 46 | D of E | JAS has kindly agreed to be the link governor for D of E but asked for further clarification of exactly what this entails. The Clerk to contact the lead teacher of D of E. <u>The board ratified the decision to appoint JAS as link governor for D of E.</u> | <p>I</p> <p>D</p> |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 47 | Covid Update | There is no longer a requirement to wear masks in school, although this is a personal choice and approximately 10 to 15% of staff and pupils continue to wear masks. Staff have been asked to continue with thresholding i.e., hand sanitiser on arrival to class, but it is the decision of individual teachers whether to clean down tables. Nothing else has changed in terms of moving around the school etc. We anticipate that we will not be given many more rounds of tests. More staff are currently off with Covid than during the entire pandemic. | I |

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| | | <p>We have unfortunately, had to use rarely cover again, although we do continue to book supply ahead (1 person), but it is almost impossible to find additional supply staff.</p> <p>If isolation periods are scrapped, and Covid is treated like a cold/flu, this could affect attendance and how we record attendance. In addition, staffing could be affected, as some may attend school and spread the virus, others could be off for extended periods of time.</p> <p>As part of our re-set of standards, pupils will be asked to come into school wearing uniform on the days they have PE, (previously pupils have worn PE kit all day to avoid using the changing rooms.</p> <p>Q – will you return to normal assemblies? We have checked the various risk assessments to check whether information around this has been updated. It still states to avoid where possible. However, we feel that we need to return to live assemblies. Staff will return to live briefing after half term, held in the drama studio as this is a large space than the staffroom.</p> <p>Q – are other schools re-setting? Yes, having spoken with NORDAB heads this week, all are implementing some form of re-set.</p> | <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p> |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 48 | Governor Visits | <p>SM and LW were the panel for the Headteacher appraisal, along with Simon Bissett from Babcock, as an advisor. The process is now complete.</p> <p>SM and LW met with Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning) and discussed staff and how tired everyone. They asked how we should press ahead with improvement, and JS suggested another Headteacher, this was raised at a subsequent governor meeting, but the general feeling was that we were ok without this outside assistance. JS also felt that more time could be devoted to reading, this was discussed with ABL who assured governors that there is a reasonable balance. Everything raised during these meetings was discussed with ABL or the full governing board.</p> <p>LW also took part in interviews and spoke with the Deputy Head later that day, discussing 'putting evidence to work' a school's guide to implementation. JSR is very keen on this and they talked about needing someone from outside, she was quite keen on having more contact with a particular institution, but when this was raised at governors, JSR felt she was receiving good individual support from them. ABL advised that representatives were attending a SLT meeting next week (originally scheduled over a month ago but postponed due to Covid).</p> <p>LW is also aware that RH visited the school and met with the school finance manager, as he had briefly taken on the role of finance governor, prior to CW joining.</p> <p>SM has visited and met with the Deputy Head to talk about PP, as the link governor, and they also set the agenda for T&L. Nothing really to report on PP as JSR was in the process of putting her report together and has since presented this to governors. With regards to the T&L agenda, SM, JSR and LW will meet to work on a year plan for the agenda and what we focus on as part of the governance cycle.</p> | <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | | <p>SM informed the board that the T&L committee had adopted a template for governor visits. As well as recording the visit, this helps governors to focus on the aim of their visit. Resources may wish to adopt this too. SM advised that there is also a policy for visits, which she would like to recommend the board adopt – to go to next FGB.</p> <p>IN reminded the board that he has fortnightly meetings with the Head.</p> <p>The Clerk will circulate the governor visit form and guidance again, (this will also be saved to the Shared folder).</p> <p>The board discussed governor visits and whether the focus had changed in recent years. Some governors felt that in terms of triangulation, they should visit lessons as a way of evidencing what they are told is happening, is happening. ABL and IN advised that guidance now almost prohibits governors from going into lessons and strongly states that they are not there to observe or judge. There was also suggestion that this was in an attempt not to put pressure on teaching staff by asking governors to go into lessons.</p> <p>Governors agreed to revisit this once the SIP priorities were finalised. Governors are permitted to visit the school, and this will be driven through the QA cycle and SIP.</p> | I I I I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 49 | Code of Practice | The Code of Practice was circulated to all governors. | I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/50 | Staff Governor | Matthew Rhymer had applied to become a staff governor, (as an associate governor as advised by the Academies Financial Handbook). <u>Governors voted and agreed to ratify this appointment.</u> MAR will join the next round of governor meetings. | I D |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 51 | Items Through the Chair | None. | I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 52 | Final Point | Positive impact on pupils – bereavement policy etc. | D |
| 2021/22/ FGB/ 53 | Dates of net meetings | <p>T&L 24th March 2022</p> <p>Resources 31st March 2022</p> <p>FGB 7th April 2022</p> | I |
| 2021/22/ FGB/41 | Committee Matters | ASP and CW left at 5.10pm (due to conflict of interest with this item). The meeting moved to Part 2. | I |

Meeting closed at 5.21pm

Action Points

| Minute Reference | Action | By Whom | By When |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| 2021/22/FGB/48 | Resources committee to adapt and adopt the governor visit form | SM | 31.03.22 |
| 2021/22/FGB/48 | Governors visit policy to go to FGB | SM | 07.04.22 |

Signed **Chair of Governors**

Date