GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL Academy Trust Company Number 769819. A Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England Full Governing Board Committee Meeting Thursday 8th February 2024 at 3.30pm in the Boardroom



Attendees	Initials	Position	Comments
Beer, Emma	EB	Member Appointed	Present
Bloodworth, Andy	ABL	Headteacher	Present
Machin, Michael	MM	Co-opted Governor	Present
Newberry, lan	IN	Member Appointed	Present
Rhymer, Matt	MAR	Staff Governor	Apologies
Smith, Doug	DS	Co-opted Governor	Present
Sparrow, Annie	ASP	Staff Governor	Apologies
Wall, Lesley	LW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Whewell, Barry	BW	Member Appointed	Present
Wynne, Colin	CW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Pateman, Jo	JMP	Clerk to the Governing body	Present

MINUTES

Agenda	Agenda Item	Information and Action Required	Action
Reference			
2023/24/ FGB/37	Apologies	MAR and ASP had sent their apologies in advance of the meeting, these were sanctioned.	I, D
2023/24/ FGB/38	Conflicts of Interest	None	IN
2023/24/ FGB/39	Minutes and Matters Arising	The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 7 th December 2023 were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and approved to be signed.	D

Matters arising	
Behaviour – this is an item on the Headteacher report, which is presented each term and will therefore be discussed at every other FGB meeting. It is not necessarily helpful to continually question behaviour, unless there has been a specific incident or concern has been highlighted to a governor.	I
Question raised prior to the meeting: Q – may we have an update on how the issues with behaviour are progressing i.e., is it worse, better, is the policy fit for purpose? ABL advised that the challenges continue, and the impact of mid-phase transfer (MPT) pupils is undeniable. Locking down of the PAN has been effective and means that we will not take any more. The interesting thing is we are actually making a little bit of headway with some of the MPT. It is a slow and gradual process. However, there has been a significant number of fixed term suspensions (FTS) for MPT, particularly those in year 8. We need to keep working with these pupils, but we also need to break their cycle of behaviours. We have reviewed individual pupil behaviour data this week and established another set of plans. We have escalated support, held parental meetings, put pupils on Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) and Pastoral Support Plans (PSP), and some pupils have gone onto off site provision. It is difficult for the pastoral staff to keep on top of everything.	Q
During the deep dive last week, behaviour in lessons was observed. Where staff are correctly following procedures, any pupil displaying unmanageable behaviour is quickly removed and the lesson continues. Four headteachers from Cornwall schools visited GTS yesterday, they commented that they were impressed by the focus and behaviour in lessons and how quickly the pupils transitioned between lessons. They were fairly impressed with the corridors at other times of the day. This is positive, however deliberate behaviour continues, as does the increasing number of parents who are not supportive of the school. There is lots of work to be done and staff are working hard but some of their relational practices do not help de-escalate behaviour and staff are tired. There is lots of absence again at the moment and pupils are regularly having supply staff, which does not help with behaviour. We have had to cancel training and meetings just to ensure we have staff in the classroom. Again, strategic leadership stops because we are struggling by being on call all of the time.	I
The Terms of Reference for the Vice Chair are not quite ready and will be circulated at the next meeting. The Terms of Reference for the GDPR governor were formerly accepted by the board.	I D
The Clerk will circulate a Terms of Reference for a Pupil Premium Governor and the board will agree who will take on this responsibility at the next FGB meeting.	D

		Update from Finance Governor on checking the school website – postponed to next meeting.	I
		Assigning governors to monitoring areas of the SIP – on the agenda later.	I
2023/24/ FGB/40	Committee Matters	Items brought to FGB from the T&L and Resources committees:	
		Teaching & Learning IN reminded the board that more time should be spent looking through the committee minutes to ensure we capture everything in the FGB minutes. At the last T&L meeting, NMM spent time presenting data on bullying, the school has a fairly low level of bullying, according to the data, however there was some discussion over the validity of the data, due to the low numbers. NMM will provide additional data on a regular basis so that the board can monitor bullying. The numbers were not really statistically relevant, and governors had been surprised by the results, which had not been as expected, i.e., the majority of instigators were pupil premium, rather than the majority of victims being pupil premium.	Ι
		The committee also reviewed attendance and discussed at length what the school are doing to try and address the attendance problem. The ongoing issue of internal school refusers was also discussed, as were strategies to address this.	I
		The committee reviewed current PFG data for this year and talked through the issues around that and where the school currently stands with CiC, SEN, PP and gender group results, and where the school stands with FFT data/ predicted results this year against last year's data.	I
		Finally, the SIP was reviewed, and this will be discussed later as an agenda item.	I
		Resources An updated Finance Policy had been submitted and approved to the Resources committee, this was recommended to the full board. The full board ratified this decision and adopted the policy.	I
		The board discussed external and internal auditors, both of which will go out to tender this year and is in hand with the School Finance Manager.	I
		Premises update - there is a serious water leak in the school, which is currently being investigated, and the water invoice has increased significantly. The school are securing a company to find the water leak.	

			I
		The cleaning contract is coming to the end of its 3-year term, the board discussed the potential of bringing this service 'in house' and the committee agreed that was not a good idea due to costs etc. Governors instructed the Head of Operations to negotiate a 2-year extension with KGB.	
		The committee had a lengthy conversation around the budget, which has been set as a deficit budget. SLT have investigated several changes, including a slight increase to class sizes, which has reduced the deficit from approximately £250k to £145k. There are other potential funding streams which we will continue to monitor. If the school is unsuccessful with the CIF bid, this will release £80k, however a proportion of this will be needed to dedicate to the roofs.	I
		Q – were there any issues highlighted for staff dealing with larger classes? Classes will only increase by 2 or 3 pupils, and classes have been this size historically. GTS class sizes will still be significantly lower than other schools. However, the school has needed to work to reduce the deficit budget to a more controllable figure.	Q
		Q – I read that there had been damage to the sports hall floor, has this been rectified? Yes, the company hiring the facility were extremely apologetic and have funded the repair, which will be completed over the half term break.	Q
2023/24/ FGB/41	Committee Members	Three parents had applied to join as parent governors and are currently in the process of obtaining DBS checks etc. The board formerly accepted Amber Heywood, Sharon Balman, and Caroline Chipperfield to the governing board. It was agreed that Amber and Sharon will join the T&L committee. Caroline has not yet expressed a preference, the clerk will contact her again. The clerk will now add the new governors to Companies House and update the website and handbooks.	I D
		The board reviewed the committee members. The board discussed the meeting lengths and agreed that Resources had improved now that the new build is complete.	l I
2023/24/ FGB/42	Safeguarding	As raised in T&L and Resources - the regularity of safeguarding meetings is improving although they are sometimes cancelled at short notice due to safeguarding demands within school. As the meetings are now more regular they are becoming increasingly more effective.	I
		The current patterns of safeguarding are continuing to be around online incidents and a large number of pupils sharing images. The school has work going on around that now and will need to revisit again soon.	Ι
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		In addition, we are holding a larger number of high-end cases that are not hitting child protection level but are extremely challenging for the staff and professionals working with them. Overall, the pattern of input from staff is very good in terms of safeguarding. The DSL has been tasked with reviewing how we are using CPOMS, we are concerned that a lot of low-level behaviour is being included, which means we are losing some of our methodology for tracking behaviour, as the patterns are not seen as easily, and data retrieval from CPOMS is not as good as SIMS. CPOMS is a wonderful thing, but by recording everything, safeguarding can get lost amongst it.	
		LW reported from her safeguarding meetings that it is quite unsettling discussing the types of incidents that school staff are dealing with on a daily basis. In addition, she learnt that for pupils transferring to GTS, the school is not provided with pupil information prior to them joining the school. This prevents GTS from being properly prepared. Safeguarding Update from the safeguarding governor and/or Headteacher	I
		In addition to this update, ABL has met with the Subject Lead of IT, as part of the Deep Dive process, they also discussed online safety and what the department are doing to educate our young people in the perils of online safety. He has rewritten the year 7 SOW to make it more impactful after experiencing how different the year 7s are to year 8s, with	I
		regards to their online presence, privacy and the content of what they are viewing on social media. We will do more work with the Year 7s and will discuss at future safeguarding meetings and roll out through PSHE and assemblies. Q – do we inform parents at the same time so that they can re-enforce this message at home? Yes, we write to parents at least once year providing resources and signposting where to go with concerns. We also provide online videos for parents to watch. We also raised online safety at the year 6 parents evening.	Q
2023/24/ FGB/43	SIP	New governors to be assigned to areas of the SIP with existing governors for mentoring/training.	I
1 0 07 10		IT will attend the next FGB meeting as a training opportunity to remind the board how to access and use SharePoint.	I
2023/24/ FGB/44	Terms of Reference	Covered under minute reference 2023/24/FGB/39 Matters Arising	I
2023/24/ FGB/45	Policies	The Business Continunity Plan was presented to governors, there had been no questions from governors prior to the meeting and the policy was adopted.	I, D
2023/24/ FGB/46	Training	LW has been tasked with organising a new skills audit, to identify training needs, signpost governors to training, and encourage governors to attend.	Ι
		LW has recently attended a governance briefing with DAG, the points raised regarding Ofsted, (previously raised by the Head) were discussed. The governing board can stop Ofsted if they feel that the Head is getting too stressed by the visit. The governors should be more firmly in control of the wellbeing of the staff. It has also been raised the Ofsted	I

		are not focusing enough on governance. It was noted that SEND is broken, but offered no solutions. Mainstream schools cannot cope and are not the place for all pupils. Another point from other school, mainly primary schools, is having direct contact with the pupils re: teaching and learning, and their experiences in the school. LW would like to revisit. The briefing also raised the necessity of all governors attending permanent exclusion training if they are being asked to sit on GDC panels.	
		IN advised that he had recently asked Devon Education Services whether they could provide a bespoke training session to our board on permanent exclusions and appeals. The Clerk to chase this as no further contact to date. IN had also asked the LA officer to provide a training session on what his actual role is.	I
		The board discussed staff wellbeing, monitoring absence, turnover and workload. It was suggested that a staff wellbeing survey should be completed. The clerk to organise with the deputy head.	I
		CW advised that the board that he had attended a governor finance training session, the second part of which had been budget setting and monitoring for MATS, however the principles were the same for SATS.	I
		EB has recently attended a short webinar on securing good outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, to an extent, every child in Devon is disadvantaged as we live in such a rural area.	I
		The clerk will share all training slides with the board and these are also saved to the training file on SharePoint.	I
		LW asked all governors to provide a brief synopsis of any training they attend with key learning points to share with the board.	I
2023/24/ FGB/	Policies	KLH joined at 4.37pm.	I
		Business continuity plan – no substantive changes, all relevant policies have been updated within the document, as has action in the event of severe weather, invacuation, and fire evacuation. Key contact numbers were checked and updated.	I
		Q – local authority support, were numbers checked? Yes.	Q
		Q bomb hoaxes, can we make sure key staff are aware of this? Our receptionist is aware and has information in reception in the event of a call. KLH has the same information, finance could potentially benefit from having a copy too. KLH to action providing this information to key staff who cover reception.	Q

		Governors agreed to adopt the policy.	D
		KLH left at 4.47pm	I
2023/24/ FGB/47	Governor Visits	Visit reports had been circulated prior to the meeting, the board were reminded that all visit reports are also saved to SharePoint for future reference.	I
		IN advised that he continues to have regular meetings with the Head.	I
		ABL raised for discussion governors going into lessons as part of the deep dives. The Clerk advised that this is advised against and governors are not permitted to make judgements, however ABL would like to consult staff and unions, is this a piece of work the governors wish to pursue? The board discussed, the Clerk to check advise/guidance from unions and Devon Education Services.	I
		Q – could we have governors attached to subject/department areas? Yes, we did in the past when the board was larger, we could potentially revisit doing this again now that the board numbers have increased.	Q
	Items Through the Chair	Q - what is the school doing in reference to the recent data breaches flagged / publicised and the weaknesses identified in the Class charts app that have gained publicity in the last few days (and have also been referred to the ICO in January)? The school were disappointed to find out about the serious ClassCharts breach via the press, rather than via ClassCharts themselves. It was raised at SLT this week, to ensure everyone was aware. The ICO is investigating the breach, whilst it is not technically our breach it could have caused our pupil's data being visible to others. JMB has contacted ClassCharts accordingly (Monday). Their approach was to contact school where pupil data could have been visible to others, constituting a breach to our data. We have not been contacted as they do not believe our pupils data has been affected. Jon has expressed his disappointment at this approach, as he felt ALL customers should be notified of the risk under the circumstances. The problem was caused by a 'patch' which ClassCharts applied to their own servers to improve speeds, unfortunately this had unforeseen consequences. Their data was potentially unsecure for less than a day whilst this was rectified, however verbal confirmation (they won't go into writing at present) states this did not affect any of our pupils / staff. It did not affect all schools / data apparently. We have not been contacted by anyone who has seen our pupil data, nor have any of our 'data subjects' expressed any concerns.	Q
		The Chair questioned whether we should be communicating this to parents? The board discussed and agreed not to, there had been a more sever breach last year and no contact was made with parents. If the school were concerned it would respond.	I

		ABL raised contact with parents and asked the board to consider and potentially review how we deal with parents. There are a number of parents whose tone and types of contact are inappropriate. Just this week there have been 4 parents contacting the school by various means who have been aggressive, rude, and putting undue stress and workload onto staff.	I
		Q – what could work, how can the governors help? The Governors have a duty of care to pupils, but to our staff too. Q – could you start with a notice that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated? We already have on email footers.	Q Q
		The board discussed at length and agreed they were in full support of the school and that parents must contact and behave appropriately to all staff. The board are fully supportive of the school taking a more robust response in the future.	I
2023/24/ FGB/50	Personnel	The board were asked to discuss a vacancy, which had not gone to Resources. The meeting moved to Part 2.	Ι
2023/24/ FGB/49	Final Point	There had been a significant amount of work ensuring governance is focusing on reviewing the SIP, and allocating governors. The board have focused on training and ensuring governors are better prepared for strategic planning in the future. The board have discussed the need for continued support from the board for staff wellbeing in these challenging times.	D
2023/24/ FGB/51	Date of next meetings	T&L Thursday 21 st March 2024 Resources Thursday 28 th March 2024 FGB Thursday 18 th April 2024 All starting at 3.30pm in the Boardroom	Ι

Meeting ended at 5.35pm

Minute	Minute Item	Action	Ву
Reference			whom/when
2023/24/	Matters Arising	Clerk to provide an example Terms of Reference for a PP Governor, circulate to all and add to the next FGB	Clerk
FGB/39		agenda.	18.04.24
2023/24/	Matters Arising	Finance Governor to check the school website.	CW 18.04.24
FGB/39			