

## MINUTES OF THE DYSART LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB) MEETING

HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT 5.00PM

**Members of the LGB present:** Thowheetha Shaah [TS] (Chair), Tony Williams [TW] – *joined the meeting at 5.35pm (item 7)*, Patrick Mazzotta [PM], Daniel Masillamani [DM], and Sadie Cawood [SC].

**Also in attendance:** Katie Swire [KS] (Clerk to the LGB) and Emmet Murphy [EM] (Vice Principal)

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors noted that the Principal was unable to attend the meeting due to illness and therefore the Vice Principal, Emmet Murphy, was in attendance to deputise for the Principal.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The LGB received and approved the apologies for absence from Leigh Edser and Jackie Van-West.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. The LGB noted that there were no declarations to be made.
- ii. Governors were reminded to complete and return their annual declaration of interest via GovernorHub.

### 4. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

- i. The LGB re-elected TS as Chair, and JVW as Vice Chair, for the 2022-23 academic year and therefore agreed to recommend the appointment of TS as Chair and JVW as Vice Chair of the LGB for 2022-23 to the OHCAT Board. TS noted her intention to step down as Chair, but remain on the LGB, for the next academic year (2023-24).
- ii. The Chair reminded governors that the consultation on the revised OHC&AT Scheme of Delegation and associated documents launched on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and that all responses should be submitted by 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. The Chair encouraged governors to review the documents on Governor Hub and provide feedback on the consultation process.
- iii. The LGB noted that there is currently a vacancy for a Staff Governor. The Clerk provided an update and governors noted that the vacancy had been advertised

once already and a further election would commence this week to seek to appoint a new staff governor. A further update on the outcome of the election will be provided at the next LGB meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

- iv. The LGB received the revised membership and portfolio list, circulated as Enclosure 04iii, and noted that the vacant portfolio roles have now been allocated to governors, in line with their skills, knowledge, and experience, as follows:

- **Business Development and Marketing:** Patrick Mazzotta
- **HR/OD:** Daniel Masillamani
- **Teaching and Learning:** Sadie Cawood

## 5. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The LGB received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022, circulated as Enclosure 05.

## 6. **MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

- A. The LGB received the Dysart Equality Objectives Report, circulated as Enclosure 06A.

PM asked how potentially vulnerable groups, not necessarily classified as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, are referenced in the school equality report. EM explained that schools have a requirement to publish equality reports in line with the public sector equality duty and this mainly focusses on identified groups in the Equality Act. EM noted that the report is beneficial in other ways as it enables the school to reflect on current practice in other areas, such as recruitment, where Dysart are looking to diversify recruitment practices, to support applications and progression at interview stage from neurodiverse candidates. To support this, the school have sought to highlight question areas and themes to candidates, in advance of their formal interview, to reduce anxiety for some candidates in answering unexpected questions. This in turn will help to reduce barriers to employment for neurodiverse candidates.

## 7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Enclosure 07)**

The LGB received the Principal's report, circulated as Enclosure 07.

EM provided an additional summary, and governors asked questions relating to specific aspects of the report, which were noted as follows.

### **Pupil Matters**

TS asked whether the current number of children on roll (158) was having any significant impact, given the school's PAN of 150 children. EM noted that

Dysart children are split across the three school sites and staff are creative about how they use shared spaces and resources within the school. For example, annual reviews are now held remotely to free up individual meeting rooms, which can be repurposed for other teaching spaces and activities, as and when, needed. EM confirmed that there have been no additional challenges or negative impact for children due to the additional 8 children currently on roll.

In response to a concern from PM about breakout space for teaching staff, EM noted that repurposed meeting rooms have not replaced dedicated space for staff to use during respite periods or non-contact teaching time. There is a bespoke room for staff to use when they are not teaching.

EM confirmed that although the latest number of children on roll for Autumn 2022 is listed in the report as 161, this equated for an additional 3 children to the 158, who have been on roll but not attending school. The three children have now found alternative provision and are no longer on roll at Dysart.

TS asked whether it was unusual for only three children to have left the school last year. EM explained that this was not unusual for special schools as numbers of children leaving the school can vary significantly year on year, depending on the profile of individual cohorts.

### **Staffing and Recruitment**

Governors noted the current list of vacancies in school, particularly the high proportion of LSA vacancies of 22 roles to be recruited too. EM explained that although the number of permanent LSA roles currently being advertised is high, there is a similar position at schools across the borough, with another school having 40 LSA vacancies. EM added that there are a number of challenges in recruiting permanent LSAs, such as salary limitations, but there is also the local issue of competing vacancies across the borough. In order to combat this, the school is looking at bespoke ways to attract staff, such as an electric car voucher scheme and free lunches at school. The school is also looking to expand recruitment advertising to maximise the local catchment area for staff, alongside the more traditional routes such as the TES.

Governors noted that the LSA vacancies at Dysart are being covered through agency staff.

DM asked if the number of vacancies was related to high turnover within the school. EM noted that there was not an issue of high turnover stemming from staff being unhappy working at Dysart, however, there had been increased instances of staff relocating to other areas of the country, many of which have been linked to the cost-of-living increase. In such cases, staff have relocated to

areas, outside of London and the surrounding suburbs, in which housing is more affordable.

### **Premises**

EM provided an update on the facilities currently unavailable to children and noted that it was unfortunate that the swimming pool, soft play space and trampoline are inaccessible. Governors asked what the impact had been on children and EM confirmed that the children are coping well, despite not having access to equipment. Given the profile of the children at the school and their associated needs, it is not possible to undertake any repair work during school hours. The work required will take longer than a weekend and will need to be completed during the school holidays, which has caused a longer delay to required repairs.

Governors asked whether the issue with the swimming pool was covered as part of the pool maintenance or snagging arrangements with the building contractors. EM noted that at present, the underlying issue in the swimming pool was unknown and the school suspect that it is due to the grouting but cannot be sure until it is investigated further. EM added that the school is looking to replace the lining in the swimming pool to try to resolve the problem as soon as possible to enable children to have access to the facility.

Governors had a general discussion about the role of the LGB in Premises/Estates oversight and noted that it would be beneficial for an additional portfolio role to be created, with a specific remit to monitor the school premises. DM noted that he would be happy to add the Premises remit to his existing portfolio of HR/OD. The Chair asked the Clerk to speak to the Governance Team to find out whether Premises Management had been removed from the portfolio remit for all LGBs. **Action: Clerk.**

## **8. SAFEGUARDING**

The LGB noted that the following listed documents were not available for circulation and would be shared with governors by the end of the autumn term. **Action: Principal.**

- A. Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer
- B. Safeguarding Audit

## **9. PUPIL PREMIUM STATEMENT**

- A. The LGB received the draft Pupil Premium Statement for 2022-23 for publication on school website by 31 December 2022, circulated as Enclosure 09A.

TS asked how the Pupil Premium funding is allocated in school and EM explained that 29% of Dysart children receive PPG funding, however there is no disparity between the outcomes for PPG children compared to 'All' children. Therefore, the school is flexible in the use of funding in targeting specific activities across the school year for PP children, such as residential visits, which are at an additional financial cost.

- B. The LGB received the Sports Premium report for 2022-23, circulated as Enclosure 09B.

TW asked how the impact of the initiatives funded through the Sports Premium are measured in school. EM noted that it is difficult to qualitatively measure the impact of specific activities. For most children, impact of funding is evident in their participation and engagement in activities and the associated reduction in behaviour instances. EM explained that most of the activities utilised through the funding, such as Yoga and Swimming, are designed to support emotional regulation and therefore engagement in such activities often has a cumulative impact on positive behaviour.

EM added that the funded activities are not fixed for all children and if a particular child does not engage in a sports activity, staff will work with families to find an activity which does engage the child to ensure that all children have access to the funding received by the school.

## **10. GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

### **A. Portfolio management**

The LGB received and noted following reports from portfolio governors:

- i. Ethos, Vision and Strategy (**Enclosure 10Ai**)
- ii. Teaching and Learning (**Enclosure 10Aii**)
- iii. Finance and resources (**Enclosure 10Aiv**)

TS suggested that in addition to individual portfolio visits to the school, it might be beneficial for governors to come together at designated Governors' Days held in school, with the aim of observing a number of activities. EM noted that governors are always welcome to visit the school and agreed to speak to members of the SLT to formulate a series of dates in the spring term in which governors, who are available, can come into school for half a day. **Action: EM/Clerk.**

## **B. Other visit reports**

The LGB noted that PM and SC had attended the OHCAT Governance Conference held on 6 October 2022 and the session had been very informative. PM and SC added that it would be useful for similar sessions to be held more frequently during the course of the academic year.

## **C. Governor training and development**

The LGB noted that there were no additional updates on training and development.

## **11. FINANCE AND FUNDING**

### **For information**

- i. Final accounts 2021-22 (**Enclosure 11i**)
- ii. Budget 2022-23 (**Enclosure 11ii**)
- iii. Management accounts report (**Enclosure 11iii**)

The LGB received the listed financial reports above and noted that it would have been beneficial for a member of the OHCAT Finance Team to be in attendance to give a summary of the budget position, as well as to outline what strategies are being explored to manage the projected deficit this year.

Governors noted that although the budget position is healthy, the impact of the rise in teaching and support staff salaries and pensions will result in the school having to draw down on its financial reserves. In addition to the increase in staff costs, energy costs have risen exponentially; the level of which was not forecast in this year's budget.

TW asked EM whether the school is claiming the maximum amount of allowances eligible to be received for all children in the school. EM confirmed that this is the case and all additional funding streams are being utilised.

The LGB agreed that they would like a written summary from the OHCAT Finance Team to outline what steps are being taken to manage the projected deficit for this financial year and how this will be mitigated for the next three years. In addition, the LGB agreed that it would be beneficial for a member of the Finance team to attend future LGB meetings. **Action: Clerk.**

## **12. PAY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The LGB noted that Dysart Pay Committee met on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 to consider and approve pay recommendations for eligible teaching staff. Governors noted that all pay recommendations were approved in line with those set out by the Principal.

### **13. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The LGB noted that the following policies and procedures had been approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 1 July 2022. [Policies pages GovernorHub](#)

Appraisal Procedure  
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy  
Freedom of Information Policy  
Pay Policy  
Supporting Students with Medical Conditions in Education Policy  
Whistleblowing Policy  
Delegation of Duty Policy  
First Aid Policy  
Information Security Policy  
Menopause Policy  
Modern Slavery Statement  
Reorganisation, Redundancy and Redeployment Procedure  
Subject Access Request Policy  
Student Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy  
Substance Misuse Policy  
Traffic Management Policy  
Vaccination Policy

- i) Governors noted that consultation on the reviewed RSE Policy and Offer has now commenced and will close on 2 December 2022, for the final policy approval by the LGB by the February half term 2023.

### **14. KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2022**

The Chair reminded governors that the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document had been updated with effect from September 2022 and the latest version, available on [GovernorHub](#), should be read in its entirety. Governors were reminded that once read, they should confirm this via the declarations tab on their individual profile page on GovernorHub.

The Clerk also reminded governors to undertake their annual Safeguarding training and noted that there are three ways that this training can be completed, by undertaking one of the following options:

- Watching the Safeguarding presentation given by JWV at the recent OHCAT Governance Conference on 6 October 2022.
- Completing the online Safeguarding training module on the Key website, which can be accessed via Governor Hub.
- Completing the online Safeguarding module on the NGA website.

Governors noted that following completion of one of the above, they should note this and upload any associated training certificates on their training log on their profile page on Governor Hub.

The Clerk confirmed that any governors who had attended the OHCAT Governance Conference in person, and watched the Safeguarding presentation delivered by JVW, had already completed this element of their annual Safeguarding training and should record this on their individual training profile.

The Chair requested that details of the Governor Hub notification providing information and links demonstrating how governors can access the three mechanisms of Safeguarding training be recirculated to the LGB. **Action: Clerk.**

## **15. ACADEMY TRUST HANDBOOK**

Governors noted that the Academy Trust Handbook had been updated with effect from September 2022.

The LGB further noted that Academy trusts must comply with the handbook as a condition of their funding agreement. It provides an overarching framework for implementation of effective financial management and other controls, consistent with their obligations as publicly funded bodies. The Handbook is available on [GovernorHub](#).

The Chair requested that, should there be any significant updates to the handbook, these be drawn to governors' attention. **Action: Clerk.**

## **16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business.

## **17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Governors reviewed the dates of future meetings listed below and approved to the proposed change of date to LGB Meeting 3, from Wednesday 21 June 2023 to the new date of Wednesday 28 June 2023.

- ***LGB Meeting 2: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 6.00pm (in school meeting)***
- ***LGB Meeting 3: Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 5.00pm (Virtual meeting)***

## **18. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The LGB noted that there were no items deemed confidential or to be excluded from the published minutes.



Meeting ended at 6.50pm.

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>
4iii	Update on Staff Governor recruitment to be provided at next LGB meeting	Clerk
7	Clerk to check whether Premises portfolio governors are still allocated to LGBs	Clerk
8A & 8B	Dysart Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer and Safeguarding Audit to be shared with governors before the end of the autumn term.	Principal
10A	Dates for Governors Day visits in the Spring term to be circulated to the LGB.	Emmet Murphy/ Clerk
11	Finance Team to provide a written summary indicating what strategies are in place to manage the budget deficit.	Clerk/OHCAT Finance Team
14	Governor Hub notification and details of how to access and complete required Safeguarding training to be shared with governors.	Clerk
15	Any significant changes to Academy Trust Handbook to be shared with governors.	Clerk