



Company Number: 10561094  
Central Walker LGC/23.04.20

Newcastle East mixed multi Academy Trust

## Minutes of a meeting of the Local Governing Committee of Central Walker CE Primary School

DATE: Thursday 23 April 2020

TIME: 4.30pm

VENUE: Virtual meeting in Microsoft Teams

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### Present:

Claire Leith (Chair), Sandra Larmour (Vice chair), Dawn Day (Head), Maria Irving, Stuart Walker, Kelly Sherriffs, Father Phil Medley, Rev Dr Rae Caro, Jane Caffery.  
Required quorum: 3, or if greater one-third of local governors holding office on that date. Governors holding office on 28.04.20: 13. Governors present on 28.04.20: 9. The meeting was quorate.

### In Attendance:

Faye Kerr (Head), Debi Bailey, NEAT Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Charles Turvill, NEAT Chief Operating and Financial Officer (COFO); Suzanne Hende, NEAT Director of Governance; Hannah Hales, Governance Support Manager (Clerk).

### PART 1 (Classified non-confidential)

1	<b>Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the LGC. The clerk outlined simple protocols to assist with the smooth running of the meeting. The Chair offered an opening prayer.
2.	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Trevor Lennox and Danielle Wetherall were unable to access the meeting due to technical difficulties. Apologies were accepted from Kim Sandy. No apologies were received from Lucy Balmer.
3.	<b>Declaration of any conflict of interest in any agenda item</b> None.
4.	<b>Agree any items of urgent business not on the agenda</b> None.
5.	<b>Consider minutes from previous meeting held on 5 December 2019</b> The minutes were agreed as a true record. <b>Action:</b> Chair to post signed copy of minutes to the Clerk.

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6.	<p><b>Update action grid from previous meeting and discuss any other matters arising</b></p> <p>Presentation from parental support adviser – overtaken by events, governors will return to this item when scrutiny returns in a more normal fashion.</p> <p>Updated IDSR – Ofsted inspection has taken place: not relevant to circulate at this time (minor changes only).</p>
7.	<p><b>Membership of local governing committee</b></p> <p>Six governors are approaching the end of their terms: four in July and two in September.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Chair to follow up with individual governors regarding continuation of role.</p>
8.	<p><b>Report of any decisions taken as Chair’s action since the last meeting</b></p> <p>The clerk reported an Addendum to the Safeguarding Policy to reflect the altered operating model of the school and latest guidance from the Department of Education had been approved.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to circulate approved policy addendum to all governors</p> <p>The Chair reported chair’s action to nominate local governor members of the recruitment panel for the deputy head position – Claire Leith and Sandra Larmour.</p>
9.	<p><b>School operating model during coronavirus pandemic</b></p> <p>Governors received the report. The Headteachers provided a brief update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 staff are classed as vulnerable and long term isolating, it happens that this includes one teacher from each year group, also 2 of the AHTs and the pastoral lead.</li> <li>- Cover at the front desk has been invaluable to deal with queries from parents: one of the Headteachers or a member of SLT plus one admin or TA each day.</li> <li>- Welfare checks are continuing in the background.</li> </ul> <p>A governor asked about the 19 families not accessing free school meal vouchers. The CEO reported that none were at Central Walker, and this is now just 1 family across the whole trust for whom a social care referral has been made.</p> <p>A governor asked about the number of children accessing online learning and whether any will qualify for assistance from the DfE scheme to provide laptops. The CEO reported that all NEAT schools are exploring with their families what the barriers are to online learning. Access to iPads from the schools is being considered and the intelligence gathering will inform that decision.</p> <p>The Head reported that Tapestry has been extended to cover all year groups not just for Early Years. This provides an engagement space for each class and a way of keeping in touch with parents and can be accessed on a tablet. This will be the platform the school uses for each child’s home learning. Engagement via Tapestry in early years has been strong in the first few weeks with lots of interactions. Parents have in the past requested the extension of Tapestry up the school and it is anticipated that this familiar tool will be effective at engaging pupils and families.</p>
10	<p><b>Ofsted next steps</b></p> <p>The Head provided a verbal update. The draft report for factual accuracy has been received, the language is simple but very positive and reflects the school well. The CEO noted that the inspection process had been positive, the strengths of the school were highlighted and next steps concurred with those already identified by the school.</p>

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	<p>Governance came out strongly in the feedback – evidence of activity and challenge was seen as a strength.</p> <p>A governor asked when the report will be published and how much can be shared at this stage. The information the school has is that nothing will be published by Ofsted until schools reopen and the report remains confidential at this stage. A governor asked if the final report will be received by the school even though not being published yet – no, which will lead to significant delay in governors seeing the report. Governors discussed the justification for sharing the draft report at this stage due to the current circumstances causing an exceptional delay.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to share draft report with governors in strict confidence.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><b>Financial Reports</b></p> <p><b>a) 2019-20 Management accounts</b></p> <p>Current position year to date – surplus higher than budget. Additional income in early years, high needs and FSM grant. Staff costs are increased through additional HT days and overspend on supply (a trend across the trust). Non staff costs are significantly below budget although the impact of the current situation on spend to the end of the year is unclear at this stage. It is possible that additional costs due to Covid-19 might be able to be reclaimed but the DfE has made it clear that it does not expect schools to have surpluses.</p> <p>A governor asked about the contract length for the renewed SIMS contract: 1 year while the best way forward for trust is determined. It was a deliberate decision to continue with current provider while all schools were in the Ofsted frame.</p> <p><b>b) Initial draft budget 2020-21</b></p> <p>Income: schools block funding shows a substantial increase due to increased numbers and an enhanced rate. Early years numbers are cautious and do not include any of the proposed new capacity. Additional pupil premium grant is included.</p> <p>Expenditure: the new DHT role and the additional welfare role are included in costs. Reduced pension contributions for support staff represent a 6% saving. Non staffing costs needs further close analysis to identify resources and priorities. The starting point is a small surplus.</p> <p>A governor asked about the level of involvement of the Headteachers in the initial budget – it includes key staffing changes but not the detail of non-staffing costs. A governor sought clarification on the variation between forecast for non staffing costs in this year's accounts and the forecast included in the budget. A governor queried whether the budgets for agency supply costs and other staff costs have been set high enough given the spend in this year to date – some spend will be covered by additional roles recruited but the COFO will revisit this before further detailed discussions with the school. A formal proposed budget will be available before the next meeting.</p> <p><b>c) Wider context for 2020-21</b></p> <p>The CEO noted the strategic thinking around staffing for September and that the two additional roles will have strong positive impact.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><b>Trust approach to assessment and pupil grading in light of governments decision to cancel Primary SATs and GCESs/A levels</b></p> <p>Governors received the report. The CEO gave a verbal summary emphasising that no final judgements on pupil assessment will be made until local authority-wide</p>

*Budget?*

*Update?*



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	<p>guidelines have been shared with staff. The trust leads on primary statutory assessment through the teaching school and is currently working on a set of principles (especially around borderline pupils) to ensure a consistent approach across the LA that will support transition.</p>
13.	<p><b>Update on Early Years project</b> Governors had received the site plan, summary schedule of works and draft budget in advance. The COFO reminded governors of the history of the project. Additional grant funding from the DfE to support the budgeting shortfall (£320k rose to £380k) has been confirmed. In total grant funding of £211k is confirmed with the remaining balance of the £380k project costs being funded by the trust. There has been detailed discussion in school about the design with the input on practicalities especially useful. A governor asked why the space for playgroup is larger than the nursery space: playgroup has higher adult:child ratio and square metres required per child is higher. Both spaces are designed for just over 30 children. A governor asked about safeguards on costs if the timescales are not fulfilled. The current budgeted costs are from a company in which there is a high level of confidence although they are based on estimates from early in this year. The project will go out for tendering as part of the best value process and prices could change but the desire is to have a durable building and not cut costs. A governor questioned whether a target of November opening is ambitious. It may actually be possible to bring the opening forward through a slightly different procurement process that would increase risk but save time on the design part of the process. This would see all major works completed on the school site before the end of the summer with an opening in early October. This is the preferred route and there is confidence on controlling costs. The trust board will be asked to approve the capital expenditure at the meeting on 30 April, with the project to start from 1<sup>st</sup> May by engaging consultants and submitting the planning application.</p>
14.	<p><b>Urgent business</b> None.</p>
15.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Governors agreed to hold an additional meeting in June: <b>Thursday 4 June</b>, 4.15pm for 4.30pm start (anticipated as a virtual meeting due to ongoing social distancing) <b>Thursday 9 July</b>, 4.30pm</p>
16.	<p><b>Closing Prayer</b> Father Phil Medley offered a closing prayer.</p>

Meeting concluded at 17.40hrs

Signed Clare North Date 4/6/20