





Graham School and George Pindar School Joint Local Governing Committee Meeting Held via Zoom on Tuesday 29th September 2020 at 5.00pm

Present: Emma Robins (Principal, Graham School)

Richard Benstead [to 5.50pm]

[absent from 5.15pm to 6.00pm]

Samantha Taylor

Lesley Welsh (Principal, George Pindar School)

Mandy Gething [from 5.05pm]

Alan Richards (Chair)

Marcus Towse

In attendance: Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust)

Tracey Shaw (Finance Manager, Hope Learning Trust) [to 5.45pm]

Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor, Clerk)

		Action	
2.	Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest		
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Late apologies were received, with consent, from Mandy Gething. Gerry Swain was absent.		
	There were no declarations of interest.		
4.	Principals' Updates		
	It was agreed that Emma Robins would provide her update and answer questions from		
	governors at this point, to allow her to attend the Virtual Opening Evening for the school which would begin at 5.30pm.		
	Graham School – Wider Opening		
	A copy of the wider opening risk assessment, recovery plan and GCSE outcomes summary for		
	both George Pindar and Graham Schools had been circulated with the agenda.		
	With reference to the wider opening of school at the start of the autumn term, Ms Robins reported that the risk assessment and procedures was being reviewed and assessed regularly, to		
	address issues which arose moving forward. She noted, however, that on the whole the changes to procedures were all minor, and no significant adjustments had been required. This included changes to seating in the dining room to ensure all students were facing forward.		
	With reference to face coverings, Ms Robins reported that the school was actively working with students and families to ensure that these were worn in communal areas and corridors. She		
	advised that the Trust's initial position at the start of term had been to "strongly recommend" face coverings, and this had subsequently been changed to "expected" and now "essential".		
	Ms Robins reported that individual risk assessments had been worked through for staff who had been shielding previously, and a two week review of these had just been completed. With the		
	exception of one member of staff who continued to receive medical guidance to say they should not come into school, all other staff members had now returned. Ms Robins advised that she was working with the HR Team at the Trust on this matter, and would keep governors updated on any changes to the situation.		

No questions were raised on the risk assessment for Graham School, and governors thanked the Principal for the update.

Graham School – Recovery Plan

Ms Robins advised that the Recovery Plan was being used to support the daily agenda of work in school, and was a live document, updated as and when actions were completed. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) reviewed the plan on a weekly basis and it would remain on the agenda for future LGC meetings for this term. Ms Robins advised that she expected an indication from the CEO of the Trust around half term about how whether this would continue after the autumn term, or whether a more traditional School Improvement Plan would be required. Ms Robins advised that the key focus of recovery was quality of teaching and learning and planning for remote learning in the event of a future local lockdown.

Also a key point of focus was the allocation of catch-up funding from central government, which was likely to be an allocation of around £80,000. She advised that the Teach First academic mentor scheme would be available to the school, and staff were looking at where the gaps in children's learning were in order to support this in the best way.

Governors noted that the Recovery Plan was clearly focused and there seemed to be a good system of review in place. With reference to catch-up funding, governors asked whether there was any additional information which would be helpful in making the best decision on its allocation to best support pupils. Ms Robins advised that there was currently a lack of information about the tutor programme, which was frustrating. In addition, the Teach First mentor scheme limited all schools to two subjects only, regardless of science. She advised that she would apply for mentors in English and Maths but Science was also a key area of need. Ms Robins advised that there were other resources which could and would be accessed, including motivational speakers and programmes to inspire and raise aspirations in students. She emphasised that the recovery plan and catch up work applied to the whole school from Years 7 to 11.

Governors asked both Ms Robins and Mrs Welsh how standards and expectations were being set in terms of catch up for students. It was noted that there would be some who had more gaps in learning than others, and governors asked how this was being dealt with in the first instance, whilst waiting for the funding to support additional interventions. Ms Robins advised that teachers were undertaking regular and rapid assessment in all subject areas, and the first units of learning schemes included a recap of the curriculum covered both during lockdown and in the previous year. She advised that Middle Leaders and subject teachers were using this assessment to identify gaps in students' learning, and responding to these through quality first teaching. Ms Robins highlighted that issues with attendance did present a challenge in this however.

With reference to the tutor scheme, Ms Robins advised that there would not be the funding to provide all students with a personal tutor, but the plan was to work with smaller groups where more support in catch up was needed. She further emphasised that teachers were working hard to identify learning gaps in order to plan interventions to address these.

Ms Dowds advised that the Trust had requested a full curriculum review for all schools, and therefore planning had been reviewed and revised to map out where areas could be limited and re-shaped. She further advised that the curriculum remained a key part of the Recovery Plan. Ms Robins added that there had been a focus on retrieval to support students in recall and memory skills.

In response to a further question from governors about whether the expected catch up funding would be sufficient to address issues with learning gaps, both Principals advised that the key would remain quality teaching and learning in the classroom. The funding would be used as an additional resource to support those with a greater need who would be identified through continued teacher assessment. It was further noted that the impact of any planned interventions would be recorded and carefully monitored.

Governors asked whether the Principal was confident that gaps in learning would be sufficiently addressed before Year 11s took their exams in 2021. Ms Robins advised that as highlighted by Ms Dowds, the schemes of learning had been mapped out to cover the curriculum, and these would continue to be under review to address any identified gaps. She noted that there was some concern about loss of planning time for teachers in moving from room to room. This was also being kept under review and measures being put in place where possible to support staff.

Governors asked for clarification on what the schools' approach would be to holding staff to account, given the added pressures which they were facing. Ms Robins confirmed that objectives for performance management were currently being set, and holding teachers to account was still incredibly important. She emphasised that whilst school leaders were exceedingly mindful of staff wellbeing, the core of the school's business was to ensure that students got the best possible experience in the classroom, and quality first teaching was essential to this.

Governors asked about attendance levels for both staff and students, and whether there were any issues arising. Ms Robins advised that in terms of staff absence, there had been a point where up to twelve staff members were absent in one day. She advised that this was in the most part due to individuals having to isolate due to COVID-type symptoms until they had received a negative test result. Ms Robins advised that there had been difficulties with this, and additional supply had had to be brought in to cover absences. She noted that Year 11 classes were being prioritised in these instances.

In terms of student attendance, Ms Dowds advised that figures for both Graham and George Pindar were low (around 91.5% and 92% to date) but were still above the national average of 88.5%. She advised that figures were being compared like for like with the equivalent period in the last two years, in order to identify any trends or patterns.

With reference to curriculum monitoring, the Chair advised that further discussion would be needed under item 6.2 about how to assign link governor roles. He proposed linking governors to members of SLT at both schools, though it was noted that in-school visits may not be possible at the present time. It was agreed that this would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

GCSE Outcomes – Final Year 11 Data 2019/20

Ms Robins advised that final attendance figures for Year 11 had been disappointing at 91.1%, though this was an improvement on the previous year's cohort. She noted that within this figure, where students had higher attendance, their outcomes had been higher, which supported the improvements in quality teaching in the classroom. Ms Robins advised that attendance remained a key focus for the school moving forward.

[Mandy Gething joined the meeting at 5.05pm]

It was noted that the outcomes were based on Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) though as discussed in the summer, the process to reach these grades had been robust. Ms Robins advised that overall results had shown an improvement on the previous year. However there were still key issues with outcomes for Pupil Premium students, and also around boys in English and literacy.

Ms Robins also advised that outcomes for English and Maths at 4+ were off target, and focus on this would need to be reviewed for the coming year. Outcomes for 5+ and 7+ were positive, showing an uplift from the previous year. The overall Progress 8 (P8) score of -0.38 also showed an increase of around 0.3 from the previous year, though there was still work to do before reaching a positive residual.

With reference to boys' performance in English, Ms Robins advised there was a clear issue with literacy to be addressed. She advised that the Head of English had already raised concerns around a literacy gap during lockdown, and this would be a focus when looking at catch up and recovery. Ms Robins further advised that this work would also extend into History and Geography as well as English.

It was noted that there were some positive improvements to recognise, building on trends from the last two years in subjects including Art, Drama and Spanish. Conversely, there were a number of subjects where outcomes had been significantly lower than the previous year, including Music. Ms Robins advised that there had been a number of issues with this subject previously, but there was now a collaborative approach in place with George Pindar School, and she was fully confident that outcomes would improve this year.

Governors asked what was in place to address the key issues in attainment for both boys and Pupil Premium students. Ms Robins advised that support and interventions for were included within the Recovery Plan, with careful focus needed in particular on how to best use the Pupil Premium funding for this. She noted that there was an increase in the number of students eligible for Pupil Premium in the lower year groups. Ms Robins advised that the Trust were continuing to run a Pupil Premium focused project looking at improving outcomes, and the school had access to support and resources through this.

Ms Dowds noted that the Trust were currently in the process of a merger with the Sentamu Academy Learning Trust (SALT) in Hull, which had a high percentage of Pupil Premium students within its schools, and a much smaller attainment gap of 0.01. She advised that when possible, the Principals of both Graham and George Pindar Schools would be able to visit Archbishop Sentamu Academy (ASA) to start work on sharing best practice in this area.

Governors thanked Ms Robins for her update and responses.

[Emma Robins left the meeting at 5.15pm]

1. Election of Vice Chair

No nominations had been received in advance of the meeting.

Marcus Towse was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the LGC for a term of one year.

3. <u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th July 2020, action plan and matters arising</u>
Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.

There were no actions to report on.

5. <u>Resources - Finance Update</u>

The Finance Manager provided a brief update on the Period 12 report, which had been previously distributed with explanatory notes.

She advised that both schools were in more favourable surplus position compared to expectations at the start of the year. Up to the point of closure in March, surpluses had already begun to increase from the start budget position, but further savings had been made possible during the summer term from savings on planned staffing appointments, utilities and also money put aside for student reward trips.

The Finance Manager advised that additional contingency had been saved at Graham School from the contribution of the Opportunities Area Board to the cost of offsite behaviour provision. It was noted that both schools had benefited significantly from this over the last two years, including funding to appoint a Parental Support Advisor.

Overall, both school budgets were in a strong position moving forward. The Finance Manager advised, however, that close monitoring was still required, as there would be areas where additional expense was required within the year. These would include significant extra costs for increased and enhanced cleaning procedures and also potential increases in supply cover costs. Both schools were also seeking additional Midday Supervision Assistants (MSAs) to cover the extended lunch breaks and to ease the burden on staff already in place.

Governors asked whether any of the increased surplus had already been allocated to additional capital spending at both schools. The Finance Manager confirmed that a request had been submitted to the Trust to allocate £80,000 at Graham to develop outdoor facilities and £25,000 at George Pindar for the same focus. In addition, £50,000 had been allocated at George Pindar to address boiler issues, though the total cost of this was not yet known. The Finance Manager advised that a lot of work on decorating and improvement of premises had also been done at both schools during the lockdown period and over the summer.

Governors expressed their thanks to the Finance Manager and the site team for the work which had gone on in both schools, and for the continued careful management of the budget. Ms Dowds advised that every opportunity had been taken to do as much work as possible to further improve the buildings on both sites. She noted, however, that following the DfE confirmation on teachers' pay award increases for 2020 onwards, continued further careful budget monitoring would be required. Ms Dowds advised that the Trust's Finance Director had assumed close to the confirmed uplift in this year's budget, but in future years this would need to be taken into consideration, particularly as the difference would no longer be funded by central government as in the past.

Governors asked whether any of the schools' budget surplus would be used for improving opportunities for blended learning and ensuring that all students had internet access. Mrs Welsh advised that Chromebook provision at George Pindar had been increased during this period. Ms Dowds advised that the CEO and Board of Trustees were looking at connectivity and ICT provision as a whole for all schools within the Trust. She noted that initially, the Board had proposed holding all catch-up funding centrally for this purpose, though this approach had now changed. Ms Dowds advised that longer term strategic planning aimed for a fully interactive

community across the whole Trust, though this posed significantly greater challenges for schools with higher levels of deprivation.

Governors asked whether the Trust would make decisions centrally about allocation of any surplus budget, or whether this would be a decision for school leadership and the LGC. The Finance Manager advised that any surplus would go into the school's revenue reserves budget. It was noted that the Scheme of Delegation set out levels of authorisation for any expenditure, and whether this could be approved at school or Trust level.

In response to a question about top-slice, the Finance Manager confirmed that this was currently 5%. The Chair proposed a wider discussion at a later date on what was included within this amount, and what services were provided by the Trust to the school. The Finance Manager noted that the 5% covered Central Services including finance, payroll and HR, as well as insurance cover, legal fees and audit. She further noted that some school improvement services were also included. Ms Dowds advised that she understood that a review of the top-slice was also an issue being considered by the Board of Trustees.

[Tracey Shaw left the meeting at 5.45pm]

4. Principals' Updates (continued)

Mrs Welsh provided a continuation of the update for governors on George Pindar School. She reported that the measures set out in the risk assessment were all running as planned, and were under regular review. As with Graham School, a change in wording to "essential" would be implemented in relation to face coverings.

Mrs Welsh reported that a health and safety group had been set up to allow staff an opportunity to raise any concerns, and that changes had already been made in response to some of these. She noted that this was a positive development and enabled staff to feel they were being heard.

Mrs Welsh advised that the site team at George Pindar had been tireless in responding immediately to issues arising around school. Two cleaners were now on site during the whole of the school day, and this had made a tangible difference to the environment, particularly around toilets and high traffic areas.

As noted by Ms Robins, Mrs Welsh highlighted to governors the difficulty for staff in finding a space to work in where their own classroom was not available to them. She advised that working this out had been a significant challenge, but there was now a "free room" rota in place to support staff during their PPA time. Mrs Welsh also reported that part of the planned works in school had been to swap over the music and staff rooms. This project was not yet completed, meaning that whilst the music room was in place, the new staff room was not accessible and would not be finished until October half term. Mrs Welsh reported that staff were adapting well to the new ways of working, including a move to online briefings to avoid risks in all staff coming together in one room.

Mrs Welsh reported that a number of individual risk assessments were in place for staff who were classed as clinically vulnerable or extremely vulnerable. She advised that she had worked closely with HR to support the return to work of these staff, all of whom were now back in school. As with Graham School, these risk assessments continued to be regularly monitored and reviewed.

[Richard Benstead left the meeting at 5.50pm]

Governors asked whether there had been any evidence of infection rates increasing within the school environment. Mrs Welsh advised that to date, there had been nobody in the school community who had tested positive, though there were a number of students or their family members presenting with symptoms.

A number of questions relating to acronyms in the Recovery Plan were raised, and Mrs Welsh provided explanations for these.

With reference to the George Pindar School Learning Model (GPSLM), Mrs Welsh advised that this was a process which had been running for a number of years. She explained that keeping workload pressures in mind, she had asked staff to continue to embed this system which they would already have planned for during the summer term, rather than introducing new initiatives at this point.

With reference to Drop Everything and Revise (DEAR) time, Mrs Welsh explained that this focused on strengthening and embedding skills around retrieval and recall of key knowledge. She advised that at Key Stage 4 (KS4), every lesson included a DEAR time task, and she had observed excellent examples of this across the curriculum during a recent learning walk. It was noted that this fit with the focus of addressing gaps in students' learning which was a key priority within the Recovery Plan.

With reference to performance management targets for staff, Mrs Welsh advised that these would be linked to an aspect of the Recovery Plan. In the majority, these would be around embedding remote learning to mitigate attendance issues.

GCSE Outcomes – George Pindar School

Mrs Welsh reported that outcomes for 2020 had shown a real improvement on the previous year. She noted that she was satisfied that the approach in calculating the CAGs had been robust and fully evidence-based. Staff were being asked to continue to gather evidence in the same way moving forward, in case there was a requirement to provide CAGs again in the future, as well as to support targeted intervention.

Mrs Welsh highlighted the improvement in grades 9-4 in English and Maths from the previous two years. She noted that Pupil Premium outcomes in English and Maths had increased at 9-4, though Pupil Premium remained a significant issue. Mrs Welsh advised that the Associate Assistant Vice Principal who had taken on the Pupil Premium Lead would be fully focused on ensuring improvements here.

Mrs Welsh reported that improvements were also evident in EBacc subjects from the previous year. She noted that 15 grades had been raised through the government algorithm for combined science. Geography outcomes were also improved, though still lower than those for History.

It was noted that open bucket subjects showed a great improvement, and were a real strength of the school. As with Graham School, where students had high attendance they had made positive progress. Mrs Welsh advised that this was a real motivator for teaching staff, and reflected the improvements in teaching and learning. Boys had performed better than girls in Maths, whilst girls had out-performed boys in the open bucket subjects. Overall both groups had made improvements.

Mrs Welsh highlighted to governors the importance of continuing to build on this improved performance, embedding systems to further raise achievement. She advised that there was work to do in all subjects, and SLT would continue to hold subject leaders to account on this. In particular, there would be a focus on targeting English and Maths at grades 9-7, and also Pupil Premium students. Mrs Welsh added that SEND was also a concern, and the SENCO (newly appointed in January 2020) would be focused on ensuring aspiration for SEND students to achieve their very best.

[Emma Robins re-joined the meeting at 6.00pm]

With reference to English, Ms Dowds reported that George Pindar School was part of the English Mastery Project, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which should lead to positive impacts on English and other areas related to literacy moving forward. Mrs Welsh noted that there had been really positive feedback from this project so far, and it was exciting to continue to be a part of.

Governors asked how the outcomes for 2020 were benchmarked, given that the grades were centre assessed rather than based on results of examinations. It was noted that this was not meant to be a punitive comment or to challenge the thoroughness of the process, but to query how it would affect internal analysis moving forward. Mrs Welsh advised that she felt the fact that the outcomes confirmed evidence based predictions from February 2020 provided a real confidence in the process which was followed. She advised that these predictions had been made using PIXL results from the English and Maths papers taken by students before Christmas 2019, which provided a national database for comparison. Mrs Welsh advised that she was as confident as possible that whilst the CAGs represented colleague judgements, they were as accurate as they could be.

The Chair commented that on his recent visit to both schools, he had been impressed with the Writing Wednesdays initiative, which provided students the opportunity to practice exam responses in controlled conditions. He remarked on the benefits of this in building resilience with students on how to deal with exam situations.

Ms Dowds commented that there would be no published performance tables or national data sets this year to make comparisons against. She advised that the key lines of enquiry around Pupil Premium, higher attainers and boys had been clearly identified, and would be the main areas of focus moving forward.

6. LGC Strategic Direction

6.1 Working Group Membership and Schedule of Meetings

It was noted that the vacancies on the LGC would need to be addressed before considering the establishment of working groups. Governors agreed to re-visit this at a future meeting.

6.2 Link Governor Roles

As previously discussed, governors supported the proposal of the Chair to look at a system of linking governors to SLT members.

ACTION: The Chair agreed to discuss the best way of linking governors to SLT members with the Principals and bring back to the next LGC for further discussion and agreement.

6.3 Governor Training – Skills Audit Summary and Identification of Training Needs

AR

Previously distributed for information. The Chair proposed that in the future, where possible questions should be raised in advance via the notes function on Decision Time by the Friday before the meeting. He explained that this help to keep meetings on track in terms of timing and improve focus, as well as giving the Principals time to prepare responses in advance of the meeting. Governors fully supported this proposal. 7. Admissions – Draft Policy for 2022/23 and Proposals for PAN The draft admissions policies for Graham and George Pindar Schools had been circulated with the agenda for information. It was noted that the PAN for both schools had been reduced for 2021, and this decision had been approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2020. The proposed PAN for 2022 remained the same for both schools (150 for George Pindar and 240 for Graham School). 8. Safeguarding (Standing Item) The Chair agreed to take on the role of Safeguarding Governor for both George Pindar and Graham Schools. ACTION: The Chair advised that he would arrange a visit to both schools to review the Single AR Central Record as part of his role as Safeguarding Governor. Mrs Welsh advised that in line with Trust procedures, a review of the Single Central Record had identified two gaps in governor information – a DBS check for Sam Taylor and a confirmed sight of Marcus Towse's DBS certificate. ACTION: Rev'd Taylor and Mr Towse agreed to liaise with Mrs Welsh to ensure all required DBS ST/ checks were in place, ΜT Mrs Welsh advised that the Building Bridges programme which provided support for a number of students at George Pindar School had folded. She highlighted that therefore the significant support provided by Building Bridges had been withdrawn, and had left the school in a very difficult situation. The students who had been in receipt of the support previously were struggling, and this was impacting on behaviour in school. NOTED: Governors agreed that further discussion was required outside of the meeting about what other support could be put in place for students affected by this issue, and what support the LGC and Trust could provide to the school in this matter. With reference to safeguarding, it was confirmed that the Trust commissioned an external agency to carry out an audit every year. The Chair advised that in his role as Safeguarding Governor, he would use this audit report as a starting point to ensure that any issues raised had been addressed. Ms Robins advised that the Trust had recently approved a new trust-wide safeguarding policy, which was to be adapted where required at a local level in school. She advised that both Graham and George Pindar Schools were in the process of updating their policies in-line with this. AGREED: Governors approved the policies subject to review by the Chair, who agreed to sign both off when completed.

9.	Ethos & Wellbeing Update				
	It was noted that this update had been covered through the Principals' reports.				
10.	Any Other Business				
10.	10.1 School Websites – Governor Information Mrs Welsh advised that an update was required				
	to the LGC information currently on the websites for both schools.				
	ACTION: Governors were asked to provide Mrs Welsh with a pen portrait to be uploaded to the website by 9 th October.				
	10.2 Principals' Performance Management PM of HT The Chair and Executive Principal agreed				
	to set a date for performance management review of the Principals.				
	10.3 Governor Contact Details Governors confirmed they were happy to share mobile contact numbers with the Chair.				
11.	Dates and Times of Next Meetings				
	* Tuesday 1 st December 2020 at 5pm				
	* Tuesday 26 th January 2021 at 5pm				
	* Tuesday 20 th April 2021 at 5pm				
	* Tuesday 15 th June 2021 at 5pm				

The meeting ended at 6.30pm

Signed Alan Richards	Date 01/12/2020
Alan Richards, Chair of Governors	

Action Plan from the Graham-George Pindar Joint LGC Meeting Held On 29th September 2020

	Action	Item	Responsible	Date
1.	The Chair agreed to discuss the best way of	6.2	Alan Richards	01/12/2020
	linking governors to SLT members with			
	the Principals and bring back to the next LGC for			
	further discussion and agreement.			
2.	The Chair advised that he would arrange a visit to	8	Alan Richards	31/10/2020
	both schools to review the Single Central Record			
3.	Rev'd Taylor and Mr Towse agreed to liaise with	8	Sam Taylor, Marcus Towse	31/10/2020
	Mrs Welsh to ensure all required DBS checks were			
	in place			
4.	Governors were asked to provide Mrs Welsh with	10	All Governors	09/10/2020
	a pen portrait to be uploaded to the website by			
	9 th October.			

Future Agenda Items:

^{*} Governor vacancies, working group membership and link governor roles

^{*} Update on Recovery Plan