

**Graham School and George Pindar School  
Joint Local Governing Committee Meeting Held via Zoom on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>  
January 2021 at 5.00pm**

**Present:** Emma Robins (Principal, Graham School) Samantha Taylor  
Lesley Welsh (Principal, George Pindar School) Mandy Gething  
Alan Richards (Chair) Gerry Swain  
Marcus Towse (Vice Chair) Mark Thompson  
Tracey Woodward

**In attendance:** Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust)  
Tracey Shaw (Finance Manager, Hope Learning Trust) *[to 5.35pm]*  
Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor, Clerk)

		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and extended a particular welcome to Mark Thompson, new parent governor. Introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies were received, with consent, from Phil Rumsey. Richard Benstead was absent.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Finance Update</u></b></p> <p>The Finance Manager provided a summary of key points from the Period 4 Management Reports, which had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b><u>George Pindar School</u></b></p> <p>The Finance Manager advised that there were no significant changes from the previous report, showing an expected surplus by year end of £22,000, which was around an £8,000 increase from the start budget position.</p> <p>The Finance Manager advised that additional income had been received from the Opportunities Area Board for the mentoring scheme, though it was noted that there would also be costs applicable to this. Other additional income had been received from the staff absence insurance scheme. The Finance Manager advised that whilst this would go towards supply cover costs, the wider school closure would mean that these may not be as high as usually expected.</p> <p>The Finance Manager advised that COVID catch-up funding had been included under the teaching staff overtime code, and would be moved out as and when it was used for allocated expenditure. She explained that this was being done for both George Pindar and Graham School budgets, to enable the use of the funding to be tracked and monitored easily. So far, the funding had been used to cover tuition costs for targeted students, starting from January 2021, and also £7,800 for the purchase of Chromebooks. The Finance Manager noted that this last cost would be moved across to the Capital budget in the next report.</p> <p>The Finance Manager highlighted a number of other changes in the support staff budget which were set out in her report. She also noted additional costs for premises staff, relating to the need to recruit a cleaner in-house as the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) service would</p>	

not be providing this from January. This cost was therefore offset in part by a reduction in the cleaning contract costs elsewhere in the budget.

Overall, the Finance Manager advised that the budget was on track and there were no concerns to raise.

**Governors asked whether the school would be expected to pay any surplus back which was over the start budget position at year end.** The Finance Manager advised that any surplus would go into the school's reserves, and would not be clawed back by the Trust. Mrs Dowds added that the DfE were offering some funding to schools to cover costs relating to COVID-19, but this would not be awarded where a Trust had reserves in place.

**Governors noted that the management report related to the period to the start of January, at which point a further lockdown had been announced. A question was raised about expectations of further savings being made as a result of this.** The Finance Manager advised that there were no concerns about the budget at this point, as there was contingency in place where savings could be made to cover additional costs. For example, the amount included in the start budget for staff travel for CPD and student travel would be underspent due to restrictions relating to the pandemic. She advised that she did expect the budget position to improve by year end.

**Governors asked how costs for testing were being covered, and whether this would be paid for by the school, Trust or DfE.** The Finance Manager reported that when the initial announcement for testing had been made, there had been an alert published regarding potential funding available for schools. However, following the lockdown announcement, this information was no longer available and it was unclear whether it would be provided once schools re-opened more widely again. She advised that the purchase of screens and other set-up equipment for the testing sites had been done centrally through the Trust, but it was not clear yet whether this cost would be re-charged back to schools.

#### **Graham School**

The Finance Manager reported similar changes to the budget for Graham School as for George Pindar, in terms of COVID related costs and funding. She advised that the predicted surplus showed an improved position from the previous report, increasing to around £30,000. It was noted that this was still below the start budget predicted surplus position of £107,000. The Finance Manager advised, however, that she expected further improvements by year end, with a £20,000 direct revenue transfer from Capital which would be updated in the next management report.

The Finance Manager highlighted a change in SEND funding, which had been updated to include additional EHCPs which were now in place. As with George Pindar School, there was also additional income from the staff absence scheme relating to long-term sickness absence. The Finance Manager advised that again this would be offset in part by supply cover costs.

The Finance Manager noted £16,000 which had been used to purchase Chromebooks, using the COVID catch-up funding. Part of this funding had also been used to cover staffing costs for the newly appointed Google Champions, who were supporting remote learning development and training for staff.

	<p>In terms of other expenditure, the Finance Manager highlighted savings on Music Services, which were not being used due to restrictions on visitors into school. She noted that this and other areas of savings would provide some contingency to buffer other costs moving forward.</p> <p><b><i>Governors asked whether the savings on staff travel for CPD were likely to continue into the future following the lifting of restrictions, and whether costs could be reduced by carrying on with more virtual meetings and training in the future.</i></b> The Finance Manager agreed that one of the key things to come out of this situation may well be a change to the way these things were managed. Whilst some face to face training was valuable, she noted that it was likely there would be a lot more online sessions as well, given that the technology was much more reliable now.</p> <p><i>[Tracey Shaw left the meeting at 5.35pm]</i></p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Update from the Principals</u></b> Mrs Welsh and Miss Robins provided an update for governors.</p> <p><b><i>Graham School</i></b> It was noted that whilst some elements referred to the individual schools, practice and operations were consistent across both. Miss Robins reported that the remote learning offer was now in place and had been published on the school website in line with statutory requirements. She advised that the offer clearly set out the expectations of engagement of students. Miss Robins reported that staff were delivering remote learning through a combination of live lessons, online tasks and other elements.</p> <p>In terms of engagement, Miss Robins advised that staff had begun to RAG rate students on a weekly basis, with around 60% students engaging in the last week on average. She noted that this information was now being analysed, and used to inform interventions. Where students were missing all lessons, form tutors were looking into this to identify barriers to learning which may be preventing them engaging. Where this related to specific subjects, class teachers were doing this work. Miss Robins advised that whilst the figures were not great, a lot of work had already been done to increase engagement, and this had improved since the start of term. Miss Robins reported that the school had received a lot of positive feedback from parents about the provision which was encouraging. She advised that a student voice online forum was planned for before half term, as well as a formal survey for parents to get a triangulation of views along with staff feedback.</p> <p>Miss Robins reported that it was clear the rapid development of teachers' skillsets was incredible, and she expressed her praise for every single member of staff. She added that the enthusiasm and engagement of staff was fantastic, with all working hard to develop and progress their approach to online learning and their technical capability. Miss Robins also noted that the work which was being done was exhausting, and she was mindful of the pressures on staff in delivering learning in this way.</p> <p>Miss Robins reported that on the whole students were doing well with the work being set, though there were some who did not engage well online. She added that there were concerns about the amount of time on screen which was being spent by both students and teachers. Staff were looking at ways to set alternative tasks in order to break this up during the day, with the English faculty trialling a number of creative tasks for Years 7 and 8 next week.</p>	

Miss Robins reported that the Graham School had distributed 170 laptops to families who did not previously have access to a device, which had been provided by the DfE, NYCC and the Trust. She noted that the Trust had confirmed they would continue to support the school if additional devices were needed moving forward.

***Governors asked about support for internet connectivity for families.*** Miss Robins advised that the school had applied for data contract extensions from the DfE for 35 families. A number of free SIM cards had also been donated by Vodafone to enable tethering of a laptop to a mobile device. Miss Robins advised that the importance was to keep lines of communication open with families, and to reiterate that the school could support with any access issues by providing equipment.

#### ***George Pindar School***

Mrs Welsh reported that as at Graham School, student engagement was being tracked with increasing figures week on week, from 46% in the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> January to 51% in the week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> January. She advised that an email had gone to parents at the end of last week further emphasising the expectations around students engaging with remote learning. Mrs Welsh noted that the current situation was very different from the first lockdown in March 2020, and highlighted that some students and families needed to be reminded of the increased rigour and expectation. As with Graham School, there was a minimum expectation that teachers would be available on the Google stream online, to answer any queries from students about their work during lessons. In addition to this, there was a range of live lessons, recorded segments and other resources being used, all based around the school's teaching and learning model.

***Governors expressed their thanks and appreciation to both Miss Robins and Mrs Welsh and to all staff for the work which had been developed so quickly in order to effectively deliver remote learning to students. A question was raised regarding engagement, and whether those who were not registered were effectively classed as absent from lessons.*** Miss Robins advised that a record was kept of students who logged on and were registered at each lesson, as well as whether they had completed work during that time. She agreed that this did unfortunately mean there was a significant amount of students not engaging, and this was an issue which was being actively pursued in both schools.

Mrs Dowds advised that it was difficult to get the underlying minutiae in terms of actual learning engagement as opposed to simply logging on and registering from the current tracking system. She explained that schools across the Trust were seeing a pattern similar to both Graham and George Pindar Schools in terms of engagement. Staff were working incredibly hard to develop systems further, adapting and refining in all areas, including tracking engagement. Mrs Dowds advised that where a student was not registering, this was followed up with emails and phone calls home to reiterate the importance of accessing the remote learning, and properly engaging with it. Mrs Dowds added that from a safeguarding point of view, the schools contacted all students identified as vulnerable and high risk at least every 48 hours. However, this contact did not guarantee a subsequent engagement in learning, though staff were doing as much as they could to promote this. Mrs Dowds advised that she had asked the Principals to focus on Year 11 at this time, in order to ensure a secure evidence base for teacher assessed grades for GCSEs.

***Governors recognised their duty of care to staff in terms of mental health and wellbeing, and asked how morale was amongst colleagues given the increased scrutiny they were experiencing. It was agreed that people would go through periods of highs and lows in terms of wellbeing, and governors agreed the importance of being aware of this pressure, supporting wherever they could.*** Miss Robins reported that there was a lot of work going on to hold staff

	<p>together, and create a body of support. Briefings were provided both via email and face to face on a weekly basis, and quizzes and other activities were being set up to encourage staff to meet and discuss how they were feeling. Miss Robins advised that a Wellbeing Drive had also been set up via Google, sharing links to webinars, tips and ideas for supporting wellbeing. She advised that staff were working as a very supportive group, with a lot of consideration of others. She noted that she felt that morale was good overall.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: Governors agreed that the question of staff morale and wellbeing should be a part of their link meetings with key members of staff, in order to be able to report back to the next meeting.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Governors asked whether there were still incentives in place for students for engagement, to replicate the practice of awarding stamps in planners when in school.</i></b> Mrs Welsh advised that this had been discussed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at George Pindar School. She advised that every child who engaged in a lesson had a value assigned in terms of stamps, and these would be transferred into their planners when they returned to school. Emails were also sent out to families congratulating students on good work and engagement, providing positive feedback as well as chasing up non-attendance. Miss Robins added that the SLT at Graham School were looking at how to allocate stamps in terms of engagement. She noted that there had been regular emails home from staff to praise students' engagement, as well as phone calls and postcards. Miss Robins added that a weekly draw was held for those students still attending school, with prizes awarded.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: Governors agreed that as part of their next link governor meetings, the question of levels of engagement and any concerns around this should be raised. Reports could then be brought back to the next LGC meeting about staff predictions around the level of catch-up strategies which may be needed when all students returned to school. The Chair also encouraged all governors to review the schools' remote learning offer online, in order to discuss this further with their SLT link.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>A question was raised as to whether some students were not accessing specific lessons due to a shortage of devices or space, in households where there was more than one child trying to access online learning.</i></b> Mrs Welsh agreed that it was essential to be mindful of the situations which students were working in. She explained that some children were still completing the work set, but not during the timetabled lesson, due to a range of family reasons. Mrs Welsh advised that staff were taking this into account when RAG rating engagement, and allowing 24 hours for students to access and submit work.</p> <p>With reference to provision in school, Mrs Welsh reported that the number of students entitled to a place had significantly increased since the first lockdown. She advised that 84 students had signed up that week to attend. Students in school were being looked after by support staff, who were working with them to access the remote learning offer from the classroom, as teachers were engaged in delivering lessons throughout the day. Mrs Welsh advised that the need to minimise the number of students in school to enable safe distancing was being balanced with the number of students who were entitled to a place through the widened criteria of the role of critical worker. She advised that children classed as vulnerable were a key priority, and everything was being done to ensure that they attended school.</p>	<p>All Govs</p> <p>All Govs</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b><u>Autumn Term Data Update</u></b>  Year 11 forecast data had been circulated with the agenda. Mrs Dowds noted that the data had been calculated using the official estimate from 2019, as there was no clear information on what</p>	

	<p>2020 data would have been or what 2021 might be. She highlighted that the further this moved from a validated data set, the less robust the forecasting became. Mrs Dowds added, however, that there was consistency across the Trust, with all schools applying the same methodology in using Key Stage 2 standardised data and CATs scores to calculate Progress 8 (P8) figures. She explained that this uniformity, along with an agreed method of target setting, allowed schools to track patterns and trend both in school and across the Trust.</p> <p><b>Governors raised a question regarding English and Maths, which appeared to show a significant reduction in achievement at Grade 4+ in both schools.</b> Mrs Dowds advised that at George Pindar School, this related to the group of lower prior attainers, where a number of students were not engaging and had very low levels of attendance. She explained that this meant that unusually there was no 4+ achievement in the lower prior attainers group, unlike previous years, and this had a significant impact on the overall figure. The schools were working hard to do everything possible to engage with them and support this. Mrs Dowds added that the higher end were on track to achieve above the previous year's cohort.</p> <p>It was agreed that more detailed discussions on data for individual subjects should take place at link governor meetings, and reported back to the next meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Academy Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Framework</u></b></p> <p>A new format of combined Academy Development Plan (ADP) and Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that updates against key priorities had been reported as part of the Principals' updates. Mrs Dowds advised that the new format had been agreed centrally and was being used in all schools across the Trust. She emphasised that the documents were a work in progress, and praised both Miss Robins and Mrs Welsh for the amount of work which had been done to be able to present them to governors at this point, as the template had only been provided at the start of the spring term.</p> <p>Mrs Welsh advised that it was helpful to have a format to the report which included the ability to set out in the SEF the journey which George Pindar School had been on over the last 20 months. She noted her frustration at the lack of a robust data set to formally evidence the progress which had been made, and without which a judgement of Requires Improvement was still in place.</p> <p><b>Governors thanked both Principals for the work which had gone into producing the documents. In terms of targeted intervention, particularly for Year 11 students, governors asked whether there was any more which could be done to support those who were at a real risk of totally underperforming.</b> Mrs Welsh advised that the intervention programme which had been in place had been interrupted by the lockdown, but there were some strategies still continuing despite the situation. This included after school sessions for Year 11 students to further support and address gaps in learning. She noted, however, that any planned intervention for Year 11 students needed to be tempered by the currently unknown outcome of the Ofqual consultation. Until the results from this had been published, firm decisions on where to target interventions could not be made. In addition, Mrs Welsh highlighted the need to be mindful of the current Year 10 cohort, who had experienced a very fractured Key Stage 4 so far.</p> <p>With reference to the Ofqual consultation, Mrs Dowds reported that a trust-wide steering group had been set up, in order to determine a common approach and methodology to teacher assessed grades, once the consultation results had been announced. She noted that the steering group had replied to the consultation, which had highlighted that their response would be subject to change depending on when all students were allowed to return to school, and how much time there was left before submission of teacher assessed grades.</p>	

6.	<p><b><u>Governance</u></b></p> <p>Governors were asked to ensure they completed the NGA Learning Link safeguarding module online if they had not already done so, and to forward a copy of their certificate to the school and the Governance Advisor on completion.</p> <p>As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was agreed that governors should set up initial meetings with their assigned link in school, and report back to the next LGC meeting. Suggestions for some of the key areas of discussion had been noted earlier in the meeting.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: The Chair agreed to contact new governor Mark Thompson to discuss and assign him to a link governor role.</i></b></p>	AR
7.	<p><b><u>Safeguarding (standing item)</u></b></p> <p>The Chair reported that he had visited both schools to review their Single Central Records (SCRs) in detail. He had highlighted a small number of points and requested additional information on these. The Chair reported that he was satisfied with the answers received to these queries, and was happy that both SCRs were now up to date. He noted that he would carry out an SCR review on a termly basis from now on.</p> <p>Mrs Welsh reported that governors who had been part of a panel to review a recent fixed-term exclusion at George Pindar School had raised significant concerns regarding the lack of specialist provision in NYCC for girls with SEMH issues. As a result of this, it had been agreed that the LGC should make representation to NYCC directly about the difficult position this was putting schools in, where provision was needed but not available to access.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: The Chair agreed to liaise with Mrs Welsh and write a letter on behalf of the LGC to NYCC regarding this issue.</i></b></p>	AR
8.	<p><b><u>Policies to Note / Approve</u></b></p> <p>The following policies had been circulated with the agenda for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Exclusion Policy</li> <li>* Anti Bullying Policy</li> <li>* NQT Induction Policy</li> </ul> <p><b><i>APPROVED: Governors unanimously approved the policies.</i></b></p> <p>Governors noted the following policies, which had been reviewed and approved by Trustees for adoption trust-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* School Minibus Policy</li> <li>* Pupils with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy</li> <li>* NQT Induction Policy – COVID addendum</li> <li>* Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy</li> <li>* Alternative Provision Policy</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b><u>Items and questions to raise with the Trust Board</u></b></p> <p>Governors noted their thanks to the Trustees for navigating schools through the transition of leadership with a new CEO, as well as the ongoing work with the merger with Sentamu Academy Learning Trust (SALT) and the pressures and restrictions caused by the pandemic.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, Action Plan and Matters Arising</u></b></p>	

	Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record. All actions had been completed. There were no matters arising.	
11.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b> <b><i>ACTION: The Chair agreed to write a letter to all staff on behalf of the LGC to formally express their gratitude for how hard they had been working over this period, recognising the challenges and pressures which they faced, and the commitment of governors to supporting staff wellbeing.</i></b>	AR
12.	<b><u>Dates and Times of Next Meetings</u></b> * Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 5pm * Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 5pm	

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

Signed Alan Richards  
Alan Richards, Chair of Governors

Date 20/04/2021

#### Action Plan from the Graham-George Pindar Joint LGC Meeting Held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

	Action	Item	Responsible	Date
1.	Governors agreed that the question of staff morale and wellbeing should be a part of their link meetings with key members of staff, in order to be able to report back to the next meeting	2	All Governors	13/04/2021
2.	Governors agreed that as part of their next link governor meetings, the question of levels of engagement and any concerns around this should be raised. Reports could then be brought back to the next LGC meeting about staff predictions around the level of catch-up strategies which may be needed when all students returned to school	2	All Governors	13/04/2021
3.	The Chair agreed to contact new governor Mark Thompson to discuss and assign him to a link governor role	6	Alan Richards	15/02/2021
4.	The Chair agreed to liaise with Mrs Welsh and write a letter on behalf of the LGC to NYCC regarding the issue of lack of specialist provision	7	Alan Richards	15/02/2021
5.	The Chair agreed to write a letter to all staff on behalf of the LGC to formally express their gratitude for how hard they had been working over this period, recognising the challenges and pressures which they faced, and the commitment of governors to supporting staff wellbeing	11	Alan Richards	15/02/2021

#### **Future Agenda Items:**

Link Governor Reports



APPROVED