





## Graham School and George Pindar School Joint Local Governing Committee Meeting Held via Zoom on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 5.00pm

Present:	Emma Robins (Principal, Graham School) Lesley Welsh (Principal, George Pindar School) Alan Richards (Chair)
	Marcus Towse (Vice Chair)
	Tracey Woodward
	Mark Thompson
	Gerry Swain
	Samantha Taylor
	Mandy Gething (from 5.37 pm)

In attendance: Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust) Tracey Shaw (Finance Manager, Hope Learning Trust) Janet Edgar (Cover Clerk – Governance Support Officer CYC)

		Action
1.	Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received, with	
	consent, from Phil Rumsey. Richard Benstead was not present. Mandy Gething had notified	
	the Chair that she would be late.	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
2.	<u>Review of progress to date – evidence consideration</u>	
	Link governor reports	
	Marcus Towse - telephone call to Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning (Diane	
	Pickering), George Pindar (1 <sup>st</sup> March)	
	Mr Towse said that his telephone call with Ms Pickering had provided the 'inside track' on the	
	nature and impact of remote learning. An example of this was finding out that remote	
	learning was done 'in the dark' ie with the cameras turned off, which had made sense of the	
	difficulties that staff had experienced with checking pupils' engagement with remote learning.	
	The visit had generated follow-up questions, as noted in the report, which would be followed	
	up. There were key issues regarding how remote learning connected with learning in the	
	classroom, and about the transition back to normal learning.	
	A Governor picked up on the point that remote learning was undertaken with cameras	
	turned off, and wanted to know more about the limitations and challenges that this gave	
	<i>rise to.</i> Mrs Welsh explained that the school had worked on a new protocol for live remote	
	learning and a proforma had been developed for gaining permission for cameras to be turned	
	on. In response to a question about the proportion of pupils that were happy to sign the	
	proforma, Mrs Welsh said that take up had not been high as the pupils were due to return to	
	school, however it had been beneficial in the short term, particularly for subjects which had a	
	high visual element, such as drama.	
	Governors asked what lessons had been learnt from the use of online resources, such as	
	those provided by The Oak Academy. Mrs Welsh said that the school had been open to staff	
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using whatever resources they wanted as long as they were well chosen to suit the curriculum model the school delivered. This had been the main consideration for teachers when choosing from the wealth of resources available, rather than opting for eg Oak Academy and then running their scheme. *There was a follow-up question about how the choice of resources was overseen by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)*. The response was that the Heads of Faculty were overseeing the process, not to judge but to see what was being used and the quality of the engagement from the children.

A Governor was interested to know whether the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) would be carrying on, and whether this way of learning was going to be utilised when the NTP finished. Miss Robins advised that the schools were trying to learn from Covid in every respect, and one of the main considerations was how to make the best use of remote learning opportunities. Another good lesson learned was how to set work when the teacher could not be in the classroom, for instance teachers in the last 28 weeks of pregnancy had to work from home. Teachers had found ways to deliver a lesson from home with a facilitator in the room this could not have been conceptualised a year ago. With respect to the other point, there was a strong suggestion that the NTP would continue until the next academic year, and that the schools would continue to buy into it.

It was suggested by a governor that new ways of learning provided opportunities to enhance the offer to children in seclusion, by providing high quality material and a more interactive experience. Miss Robins agreed that this was about moving with the times and reminding teachers that they could use new methodology in a variety of situations.

<u>Gerry Swain – Safeguarding virtual visits for Graham School (25<sup>th</sup> February) and George Pindar</u> <u>School (27<sup>th</sup> February)</u>

Mr Swain said that the Graham School report was the outcome of a lengthy zoom call, going through the LA audit documentation, which had been useful. There had been limited time at George Pindar, and the call had focussed on the headlines. Across both reports, there was a secure picture of safeguarding. There were high evaluation scores, and he had been able to discuss any below a score of 5.

Governors noted that the number of safeguarding incidents was reducing over time, and asked why this was. Mr Swain said it was a positive impact of the arrangements over lockdown. Miss Robins said that the use of CPOMs was better than ever before and staff were dealing with incidents more quickly; there was a very strong safeguarding team. Mr Swain said that CPOMs had allowed the team to produce reports on specific areas of concern, thereby facilitating a more effective response.

*Mr Swain highlighted from his report that the schools were having to fill gaps due to the high thresholds that other agencies had for support and intervention.* There had been a few cases where the school had had to be patient and determined to keep children with very complex needs safe, whilst making arrangements for their onward care and education.

Governors recognised that the report was positive and it was evident that the schools were looking after children when other agencies could not. They wanted to explore how effectiveness was measured, and how certain the schools could be that the picture on CPOMs was due to improving behaviour rather than a lack of recording. Mrs Welsh said that CPOMs was only as strong as every member of staff inputting information, and it was not seen as a negative when there were more logs, as this showed that incidents were being followed up. It was an important point that there should be other evidence to support the

	trend on CPOMs, and the improving behaviour that could be seen in school was another	
	source. Last year's Trust safeguarding review was also available; this was a rigorous process	
	which the schools would be preparing for again. Mrs Dowds added that part of the	
	conversation she had with the Headteachers was the wider support that could be provided by	
	the Trust, for instance identifying need and gaps, and the scope to use Trust specialists and	
	centralised service.	
	Mr Currin said it had been quite hard to acceptain the quality of the alternative provisions in	
	Mr Swain said it had been quite hard to ascertain the quality of the alternative provisions in	
	both schools. There had been very positive feedback on ARC at George Pindar, but no way to	
	triangulate, and a mixture of feedback in Graham School. Miss Robins invited Mr Swain to	
	visit the school, explaining the significant improvement planned to ARC and how keen the	
	school was to move on. There would be improvements to the building, work with other	
	agencies, weekly CPD sessions and a collaboration with The Woodlands Academy – these	
	were exciting but challenging opportunities.	
	A Governor asked why two safeguarding reviews were required - the in depth Trust	
	Safeguarding Review and the NYCC Review. Mrs Welsh explained that the NYCC was an audit	
	completed by the school and did not involve a visit, it was a 'self-fill' that was ratified by the	
	LGC. The Trust Review involved a visit and thorough checking process.	
	The Chair thanked Mr Towse and Mr Swain for putting their reports in writing. It became	
	apparent that not all governors had received the Governor Visits Feedback Form.	
	Action: The Chair to send the Governor Visits Feedback Form to all governors; governors to	
	complete the form after a Link Governor visit and submit to the Clerk.	AR
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	<u>Samantha Taylor – Wellbeing (verbal report)</u>	
	Ms Taylor reported on her visits to both schools to discuss staff and pupil wellbeing. She said	
	this had been very positive. She outlined some of the measures that had been taken to help	
	staff, including CPD opportunities, a focus on building resilience, monthly bulletins with	
	signposting, five steps to mental health, TED talks, team meetings, and fitness/social activities.	
	She commended the extraordinary efforts that everyone had taken to engage pupils and staff	
	in helpful activities.	
	in helpful activities.	
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	Action: Ms Taylor said she would provide a written report when she received the proforma.	
	She was thanked for the update and there were no questions.	
	[Mandy Gething joined the meeting at 5:37 pm]	
	The Chair thanked the schools for all of the work that they had undertaken on wellbeing,	
	recognising the importance of this in helping everyone to meet the challenges arising from the	
	pandemic.	
	[The order of the meeting was changed, to allow the Finance Manager to leave].	
4.	<u>Finance</u>	
	The Finance Manager provided a summary of key points from the Period 7 Management	
	Reports, which had been circulated with the agenda.	
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## **George Pindar School**

The Finance Manager reported that the overall revenue position showed a surplus of £59k; the surplus had increased month on month. There was a positive variance of £45k, and a movement in month of £16.5k. There had been an increase in income, a large part of which had been offset by expenditure. The DfE FSM Grant of £12k was highlighted, with the Finance Manager explaining that this was related to Free School Meals (FSM) but was not funding for FSM. There had also been funding for SEN, a looked after off-site child and long term staff absence. The budget included a 1% pay award (reduced from 1.75%) even though the government had indicated that there would be a pay freeze.

The Finance Manager said that the key points were the same for Graham School, as noted in the executive summary, therefore it was decided to move to questions rather than provide a verbal summary.

A Governor asked whether there was contingency for the expected cost of supporting children to catch up. The Finance Manager advised that it was not clear whether Covid funding would continue and this would be a consideration for next year's start budget.

A question was raised about the catch-up premium and how clear the schools could be that it was supporting pupils and closing gaps. Governors were also interested to know how it linked to the improvement plan. The Finance Manager provided an overview on how the funding had been spent – there had been expenditure on Chromebooks so pupils could access remote learning; for Graham school the Teach First Mentor; overtime for TAs for interventions; and mentoring and tuition through the The Brilliant Club and My Tutor. For George Pindar, sessions were being held through Pearson Education Resources, using the catch-up tutoring funding. Mrs Welsh said that all expenditure was covered in the Recovery Plans, which were shared with governors. It had not been possible to recruit a Teach First Mentor for George Pindar and although an arrangement had been made with a contact, this did not come to fruition. The plan was to keep the interventions going, and there would be some quantitative feedback on the impact. The Finance Manager advised that there was a costed spreadsheet for catch-up funding, and the Headteachers were good at providing her with the information for tracking purposes.

A Governor asked how the schools had decided which activities to fund through the Premium, and whether all pupils were getting what they needed to fulfil their potential. The Headteachers explained that the activities chosen were those with a proven impact, and the schools had identified those children that could benefit. There had been an investment in Chromebooks as this was vital to supporting remote learning, and devices had also been received from government funding, therefore the schools were in a good position. Miss Robins said that at Graham School resources to support English mastery had been used for all of Year 7 and this would continue as the pupils moved to Year 8. Mrs Welsh said that the position was very similar at George Pindar.

A Governor asked how the catch-up funding was supporting disadvantaged pupils and how it was used to help mental health. Mrs Welsh said that there were long waiting lists for support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the schools carefully helped pupils, utilising the Sidewalk Mentoring project.

A Governor wanted to know whether there were plans to spend from the contingency budgets this year. The Finance Manager advised that a report had been prepared for both Headteachers to consider, and areas of possible expenditure were work on the IT suites at

Graham, so larger classes could be accommodated, and the repair/replacement of floors at George Pindar. A catering grant would be available due to the roll out of Universal Credit, and it was hoped that his could be used to enhance the eating area. Miss Robins added that there was a facility for staff to make bids for funding, for example a bid to replace equipment in Design and Technology, which were then looked at very carefully. Mrs Welsh advised that the work to improve the learning environment was very significant, as it engendered a sense of pride in the school which fitted with school values. The Headteachers advised that the Finance Manager provided excellent support to them in the way that she thought about the impact on the budget for next year and the sustainability of projects under consideration.

Governors noted the variance that had arisen due to the disparity between the expected and actual Pupil Premium (PP) funding, and asked whether the schools had been able to learn from what had occurred. The Finance Manager explained that the anticipated PP numbers had been inflated due to a recording issue in SIMS; some pupils had 'received a tick' in the system on the basis of receiving a free school meal, but should not have been included. The lesson learned was to be specific with the request for information from the schools. The Finance Manager advised that the PP numbers were now based on the October census rather than the January census, and funding was likely to be less as a result. Miss Robins added that staff were now more confident due to the work had been undertaken on all aspects of data.

There were no further questions and the Finance Manager was thanked for her reports, and for answering governors' questions.

[Tracey Shaw left the meeting at 6:20 pm]

2. <u>Review of progress to date – evidence consideration (continued)</u> The Committee returned to the order of agenda, and resumed discussion on Item 2.

<u>Data snapshot</u>

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the data.

*Governors queried the absence of Year 11 data*; Mrs Welsh said that this had not changed since the last meeting. There were no more forecasts, and the focus was now on the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process.

<u>Teacher Assessed Grades</u> - With respect to TAG, and concerns expressed in the sector about possible appeals, a Governor asked how confident the school was that there was a strong evidence based across all subjects, including those with a practical element. Mrs Dowds advised that a TAG Steering Group had been set up, with representatives from all secondary schools across HLTY and SALT, proceeding to explain how schools would work with the Trust's templates, submit to the Trust portal and provide exemplars of work for each grade. The Trust would arrange moderation across the secondary schools to supplement the internal moderation that would take place within schools. Grades would be submitted to Fischer Family Trust (FFT), as the organisation was running a service to highlight spikes in data sets, with a 24 hour turn-around promised.

The TAG process for each school would be shared with governors, so that they were aware of the stages. It was emphasised that all aspects of moderation would be covered, as the Trust was working to a template. Staff would sign to confirm that they had read the guidance. Trustees would have sign off, to confirm that they were satisfied that schools were working under the same policy.

A Governor wanted further information about the process a pupil would follow, if the grade awarded was not what they had expected. Mrs Dowds said that the scope for an appeal would be pinned to the Trust's TAG policy. The school would first check if there had been an administrative error, but beyond that the process would be managed by the examination boards. The school would be required to demonstrate that it had followed its QA process and provide evidence to support the grade awarded. The fact that the appeal was managed at Examination Board level had been welcomed by schools.

Mrs Dowds continued by saying that a point to note was that the candidate could submit a subject access request, in addition to an appeal. The school would have to respond within 30 days, therefore there would have to be some staff available throughout the holidays. Staff had been advised to make the documentation on students as minimal as possible and to avoid certain types of communication, for example no email exchanges.

*In response to a suggestion that staff might feel uncertain and worried about the grading process,* Mrs Dowds said that this was why building up a secure evidence base and internal testing were important. The instructions from Ofqual were clear, that pupils could only be assessed on what they had been taught; remote learning could be included. There was a large window of evidence to draw from, and it was recognised that the next few weeks would be a challenging and worrying time for staff.

**Returning to the data, governors asked questions about the measures in place to address the gap between PP and non-PP pupils**. Mrs Welsh said that a huge part of the school's work was to support the PP children, and the strategy that had been devised included isolating about 20 pupils for intensive work, using catch-up funding, enhancing parental support and removing barriers to learning. She said that it was worth noting that for George Pindar the Year 9 and Year 10 data was from the third week of the autumn term. In the first lockdown, the school did not have the robust systems that it had put in place for the third lockdown, therefore the biggest impact of the pandemic would have been in the autumn term. Another data collection would take place that week.

A Governor continued the questioning on PP, by asking whether the schools had used the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Miss Robins said that Graham School had, for PP as well as for specific subjects. The strategic plan incorporated EEF research, and the school was also supported by Mark Rowlands, who was a national expert on PP.

A Governor said that when looking at higher, middle and lower attainers, he had noticed that the higher attainers were performing less well with respect to the Progress 8 (P8) scores, and asked whether this was a normal picture. Miss Robins said that this could vary between subjects, for instance there had been a focus on maths to ensure that the curriculum was covered at a suitable pace. Mastery classes had been provided and more had been done with respect to raising aspiration. She said that the school needed to continue to push on this area. Mrs Welsh agreed that higher prior attainers were a specific group and required a high level of challenge; George Pindar had raised the bar in relation to the minimum grades expected and were making sure that the pupils could 'produce' in exams.

Mrs Dowds said that she had requested the Year 9 and Year 10 data as it was important to examine what was 'coming through'; Year 11 was important, but there had to be a focus as well on other groups. Year 7 and Year 8 data would be included in the next report to governors.

A Governor wanted to know more about the data analysis on literacy, pointing out that achieving a certain reading age was necessary if pupils were to be able to access GCSE questions. Mrs Welsh said that the school had to be careful not to over analyse the data, and the most important point was to identify trends and take action. There had been an investment in provision monitoring software, which would assist the school in identifying the issue for a group of students. This software would be vital in working out where the interventions should be. The school was working on its literacy strategy, which linked back to catch-up funding. It was agreed that allocating limited resources had to be evidence based.

## 3. Academy Development Plan / Self-Evaluation Framework

The Chair thanked the Headteachers for providing the documentation, and asked if governors had any questions.

A Governor asked a question about the rationale for applying the minimum expected grades to the entire cohort, for instance was this appropriate for those children with less than a reading age of six. It was explained that the minimum expected grades were from FFT Aspire and took into account all data - those with less prior attainment would not be expected to make the same progress, ie the step was not the same. The school was being pushed to be better than the average position, but there would be less progress for the less able, more progress for the more able.

Mrs Dowds advised that one of her responsibilities was to encourage engagement by governors. She thanked the Headteachers for their summary report, and asked them to identify, for each sub- area, the most important priority for action. This was so the LGC could identify priorities for assessing, and tracking, impact.

The Chair agreed that it would be helpful to identify what was most important, and what governors could expect to see. Another governor suggested that although the documents were already an accessible snapshot, they could be improved further with short statements along the lines of – 'the impact has been this', 'we know this because' and 'we are looking at the next stage of development and this is what we are going to do next'.

Mrs Dowds asked the Headteachers to pick out four priorities, one from each area, noting that these were initial thoughts, as the Headteachers had not given it prior consideration.

Mrs Welsh picked out that for quality assurance QE 2.3 was important, 'maintaining an up to date tracker of teacher performance including data', due to the impact on children. With respect to behaviour, BA 4.5 'Create and roll out clear improvement plans for those causing concern' was a priority, due to the need to address repeat exclusions and support those children who were harder to reach. For personal development section, the way consent was taught and meeting the needs of all children was important. For leadership and management, the emphasis was on TAGs.

Miss Robins pointed to attendance as being high up the priority list for behaviour and attitudes, specifically embedding systems so that the school could launch well in September. QE 2.1 had many points to achieving the priority of improving the consistency of teaching and learning. Personal development was going well and for leadership and management the focus would be on TAGs.

	Mrs Dowds thanked the Headteachers and apologised for putting them on the spot, however it was important to be able to track through a specific priority, so that governors could answer 'how do we know it is happening and how do we recognise the school'. A Governor said that this was linked to hearing the pupil voice and governor visits, creating a 'virtuous circle', as governors could gear their visit to finding evidence of impact.	
	A Governor said that as someone who was new to the role, he had been impressed by the work that had gone into producing the SEF and SED and commended the Headteachers. He said he had been heartened by the Requires Improvement (RI) sections of the SED and SEF, as they demonstrated honest reflection and provided a real picture of the schools.	
	The Chair summarised that governors should have a line of enquiry for visits to school, which would be worked on in the next few meetings. The documentation had to show a school that those involved, eg SLT member, staff member, governor etc. recognised and that there was a consistency of language right the way through the school.	
	<u>Principal summary report of progress to date with reference to each core element of SDP</u> It was noted that the Principal Summary provided an executive summary of the Development Plan. Given the earlier conversation about focussing on four priorities, it was agreed that the format of the summary might require amendment.	
	Action: The Chair and Executive Principal to review the format of the Principal summary report, so that it reflected the four most important priorities for action (one from each sub-area).	AR/HD
	National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Presentation – Miss Robins informed governors that three members of the leadership team were undertaking whole school projects as part of the NPQH, which required them to give a presentation to governors. It was suggested that rather than the presentations being part of an LGC meeting, they be delivered to a sub-group of governors. The group would include the Chair, Headteacher and Link Governor for the relevant area, and two other governors.	
	Action: Miss Robins and the Chair to make arrangements for the sub-group of governors for the NPQH presentations.	AR/ER
5.	<u>Governance Update</u> Governors noted the Board of Trustees Update for LGCs – April 2021 and the slides from the Future of Governance Presentation to LGC Chairs (22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021). The Chair said that he had received some further documentation, which he would forward on if different to the documents included.	
	A Governor said that he had noted from the slides that there were some interesting developments with respect to the pooling of resources – first reserves and then GAG funding. He asked for information on the implications of this for the schools. Mrs Dowds advised that SALT schools had operated with one funding stream/methodology for a long period of time, and HLTY would adopt this system, which was about supporting schools in need. The funding would provide for cross-MAT projects for school improvement and be efficient and effective. Although RI schools might require a bigger resource, it did not mean that outstanding schools would be the poorer relation. It was worth remembering that the Trust received GAG funding currently and then it was distributed to schools, rather than schools contributing to central Trust funds.	

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	with a high proportion of children with SEND or behavioural issues this could be particularly challenging. This was addressed through the support the school had in place, for instance through the new mapping technology that Mrs Welsh had mentioned earlier in the meeting and the work of the SENCO. It was confirmed that no amendment to the policy was required,	
	as the statement regarding teachers' responsibilities was correct.	
	The following policies had been circulated with the agenda for information: * Leave of Absence Policy (new)	
	<ul> <li>* Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave Policy (new)</li> <li>* Expenses Policy (review – with new content and forms)</li> <li>* Reserves Policy (review)</li> </ul>	
	* Protection of Biometric Information Policy (review)	
	* Minibus Policy (minor correction on page 6, item 2.5, third bullet point)	
	The following policies had been circulated with the agenda for approval:	
	<ul> <li>* Careers Policy (Graham School)</li> <li>* English as an Additional Language Policy (George Pindar School)</li> </ul>	
	APPROVED: Governors unanimously approved the policies.	
9.	<u>Items and Questions to Raise with the Trust Board</u> There was nothing to report under this item.	
10.	<u>Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021, action plan and matters arising</u> The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by	
	the Chair.	
	With reference to the Action Plan:	
	1. Governors agreed that the question of staff morale and wellbeing should be a part of their	
	<i>link meetings with key members of staff, in order to be able to report back to the next meeting.</i> Completed.	
	2. Governors agreed that as part of their next link governor meetings, the guestion 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. Completed.	
	3. The Chair agreed to contact new governor Mark Thompson to discuss and assign him to a link governor role. Completed. The Chair advised that Mr Thompson had been asked to focus on the way schools communicate with stakeholder groups. There would be some overlap with the responsibilities of Link Governors.	
	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. Completed.	
	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. Completed. The Chair reported that three staff had written to him in reply, to say they had been delighted to be recognised by the governors.	

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11.	Any Other Business There was nothing to report under this item.	
12.	<b>Dates and Times of Next Meetings</b> <i>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 5 pm.</i> It was noted that this meeting would include a review of the TAG data, which would be confidential as it would not have been submitted to the examination boards. Year 7 and Year 8 data would be included, and the Headteachers would report on the schools' plans for September.	

The meeting ended at 7:19 pm.

Signed Alan Richards Alan Richards, Chair of Governors Date 15/06/2021

	Action	Item	Responsible	Date
1.	The Chair to send the Governor Visits Feedback Form to all governors; governors to complete the form after a Link Governor visit and submit to the Clerk.	2	Alan Richards	30/04/21
2.	Ms Taylor said she would provide a written report (visit on wellbeing) when she received the (link governor) proforma.	2	Samantha Taylor	14/05/21
3.	The Chair and Executive Principal to review the format of the Principal summary report, so that it reflected the four most important priorities for action (one from each sub-area).	3	Alan Richards/Helen Dowds	For next meeting
4.	Miss Robins and the Chair to make arrangements for the sub-group of governors for the NPQH presentations.	3	Emma Robins/Alan Richards	14/05/21

## Items for the next meeting's agenda:

Teacher Assessed Grades

Year 7 and Year 8 Data