

**Minutes**  
**Surrey and Sussex (SAS) Hub LGB Meeting**  
**16 July 2020 at 4 pm**  
**Held virtually via GoToMeeting**

**Present:**

- Ken Cowdery, Chair (KC)
- Philip Knights, Deputy Chair (PK)
- Alison Livesley, Assistant Chair (AL)
- Cath Drummond, Governor (CD)
- Leigh Edser, Governor (LE)
- Sherie Harris, Staff Governor (SH)
- Martin Lowthian, Governor (ML)
- Diana Puica, Staff Governor (DP)
- Dafydd Roberts, Principal, Brantridge School (DR)
- Julian Short, Governor (JS)
- Janet Tremble, Principal, Grafham Grange School (JT)
- Mike Wood, Governor (MW)

**In attendance:**

- Vicky Perry, Deputy Headteacher, St Dominic's School (VP)
- Matthew Bell, Regional Lead SENCO, St Dominic's School (MB)
- Sian Clark, Management Accountant (SC) (to 5 pm)
- Karma Hardin, Management Accountant (KH) (to 5 pm)
- Susanne Wicks, Clerk (SW)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Opening</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<p><b>Attendees and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>KC introduced all newcomers to the meeting and thanked LE and MW for taking on the voluntary commitment of becoming a governor. He outlined some ground rules to be followed by all participants to ensure the virtual meeting ran smoothly.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Amme Hayter, Diana Puica, Sherie Harris and Angela Drayton.</p> <p>Apologies for lateness were received from Martin Lowthian who joined the meeting at 4.50 pm.</p>	
<b>1.2</b>	<p><b>Chair's Remarks</b></p> <p>KC welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all in the school community for the work they have done during this extraordinary period. He noted how impressively schools have coped and children and families have adapted.</p> <p>KC briefly outlined the proceedings of the meeting.</p>	

<b>1.3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> LE declared that her daughter attends St Dominic's School.	
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair as soon as possible.	
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> The matters arising were circulated with the papers for the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Chair's report</b> KC welcomed comments and questions on his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Constitution and appointments</b> KC flagged that two stalwart governors, AL and PK, are coming to the end of their terms at the school and thanked them for their extraordinary help to him in his role as Chair.	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>OHCAT Policy updates</b> Noted.	
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Governance review 19-20</b> KC pointed Governors' attention to his review of the effectiveness of the LGB during the course of the year and its progress against the objectives set. He flagged that if possible, Governors should undertake one learning walk and attend at least one school event per year, for the benefit of both the LGB and the school.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Governance arrangements/targets 2020/21</b> Noted.	
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Governor training/development</b> Noted.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Governors' Reports / Observations</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Review of Portfolio Governor Reports</b>	
	KC reminded Governors that it was decided early in the lockdown to dispense with conventional portfolio meetings for the time-being but for portfolio governors to maintain contact with their respective school counterparts. KC invited portfolio leads to make comment on their respective portfolio areas.	
	<u>Portfolio 1 – Ethos, Vision Strategy</u> KC reported that the predominant issue for discussion had unsurprisingly been the lockdown. He advised that the residential provision at St Dominic's School has been closed and thanked the Residential Team at the school for leading an outstanding offer for many years.	

	<p><u>Portfolio 2 – Teaching &amp; Learning</u></p> <p>CD thanked all schools for modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of learners in the context of Covid-19 whilst continuing with long-term planning for next year, about which she looked forward to hearing more.</p>	
	<p><u>Portfolio 4 – Health &amp; Safety, Child Protection &amp; Safeguarding</u></p> <p>KC noted that AL had submitted a written report re Brantridge School prior to this meeting. AL flagged that September 2020 will bring a revised version of the Government’s ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ guidance and all Governors will be required to read it and confirm they have done so.</p> <p>LE will be taking over the Brantridge PF4 Lead role and confirmed that she, AL and KC had met on Friday 10 July at Brantridge School as a handover. LE added that she had been unable to visit Grafham Grange, so would do so next term.</p>	
	<p><u>PF5 – Business Development &amp; Marketing</u></p> <p>JS confirmed he had nothing to report.</p>	
	<p><u>PF6 –HR &amp; OD</u></p> <p>KC confirmed he had nothing to report other than to congratulate and thank staff again for their work during the lockdown.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Procedure Approvals</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Procedures Requiring Approval</b></p> <p>None requiring approval.</p> <p>KC noted that there had been some discussion around ensuring that all Radius procedures had been aligned with OHCAT policies and procedures and undertook to pick this up at his next portfolio meeting.</p>	<b>KC</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>School Principals’ Reports</b>	
	<p>KC noted that the Principals’ reports had been circulated for governor questions prior to the meeting and that answers had been given to all questions raised. Versions of the Principals’ reports showing the queries/comments raised and the Principals’ responses had been circulated as a paper to governors prior to the meeting.</p>	
<b>5.1</b>	<p><b>Brantridge Report / Q&amp;A</b></p> <p>No further questions or comments raised.</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<p><b>Grafham Grange Report / Q&amp;A</b></p> <p>No further questions or comments raised.</p>	
<b>5.3</b>	<p><b>St Dominic’s Report / Q&amp;A</b></p> <p>JS raised two question to be picked up in later agenda items.</p>	

<b>6.</b>	<b>School Finances and Funding</b>		
<b>6.1</b>	<p>KC noted that SC would henceforth attend LGB meetings to present the finance and funding reports and thanked KH for her support up to this point. He welcomed comments and questions from Governors.</p> <p>KC sought some explanation of the financial health ratings in the report and asked how the judgements were reached. KH explained that the OHCAT reserves target has been recently revised and now stands at 45-60 days, noting that schools should not have too high or too low a level of reserves. She undertook to provide a full explanation of how the judgement is made and the criteria against which schools are measured but confirmed that the judgement is for internal use only and not reported to any external body.</p> <p>KC asked that SC offer a short briefing prior to a meeting of the LGB next year.</p>	<p><b>KH</b></p> <p><b>SC</b></p>	
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Brantridge Management Accounts and Budget 2020-21</b></p> <p>AL sought clarity on student number assumptions for the 20-21 budget and KH confirmed that the budget has been set on the basis of 54 students, 48 to start in September, and six more to join in January. DR added that 39 places have been confirmed with five more offer letters awaiting LA approval. He noted that it's unlikely this number will reach 48 by September although it was heading that way before the lockdown. DR suggested that numbers should reach 48 by the end of term.</p> <p>In response to a question from KC, DR confirmed he was confident the school could operate within the budget agreed and that he had been involved in the budget setting process.</p>		
<b>6.3</b>	<p><b>Grafham Grange Management Accounts and Budget 2020-21</b></p> <p>KH reported that the 2020-21 budget for Grafham Grange has been set on 52 students, and JT reported that there are 45 confirmed places so far; the school has also been affected in this regard by the lockdown and was on track to reach 52 before the lockdown. She confirmed that there are further students in the pipeline but noted that some have very complex needs and must be properly assessed to ensure Grafham Grange is the right setting for them, which is challenging in the current circumstances.</p> <p>In response to a question from KC, JT confirmed she was confident the school could operate within the budget agreed and that she had been involved in the budget setting process.</p>		
<b>6.4</b>	<p><b>St Dominic's Management Accounts and Budget 2020-21</b></p> <p>VP and MB welcomed questions on the budget.</p> <p>KH explained that the budget has assumed 141 students, but the schools receives place funding for 150 students. She added that at the time of setting the budget there had already been 138 places agreed with each student's banding approved which led to a high degree of accuracy in the budget.</p> <p>KC asked about the financial health grade for St Dominic's. KH undertook to check but reiterated her previous comment that schools should not have too high or low levels of reserves.</p>		<p><b>KH</b></p>

	<p>LE asked about the intention to spend some of the reserves on the school for the benefit of the students currently on roll. VP confirmed that plans are in place for the summer break and beyond to upgrade the premises, expand the capacity of the site to accommodate all students and provide adequate specialist teaching spaces for subjects such as Sport and ICT. LE sought confirmation that the planned expenditure has been approved and VP advised that the school is waiting for some approval of Lower School works. KH confirmed that reserves can be spent on capital works.</p> <p>KC asked why St Dominic’s reserves have built up to the level they have and KH explained that they have increased steadily over the past few years. She confirmed that students on higher banding will drop off as they leave the school, but the banding system in place at the school will be retained for the foreseeable future. She reminded Governors that St Dominic’s place funding operates on four levels of banding, but at Brantridge and Grafham Grange, all students are funded at £25K plus additional one to one funding if appropriate.</p>	
<p><i>The meeting was adjourned for five minutes. KH and SC left the meeting.</i></p>		
<p><b>7. Strategic Matters for Review / Discussion</b></p>		
<p><b>7.1</b></p>	<p><b>Updates on covid-19 arrangements/planning for summer recess and autumn term</b></p> <p>KC invited DR, JT and VP to give a brief outline of plans for next term.</p> <p>DR reported that all boys are back in school where their parents have expressed a wish for them to be. Of all of those due to return in September, there are only four who have not been in school at all during the lockdown. The school is planning for all students to return in September, with a staggered start agreed for a few learners. JT confirmed that the expected Grafham Grange to be fully open in September with a staggered start. VP confirmed the same for St Dominic’s School.</p> <p>DR confirmed that students will remain in bubbles and although they will go back to the pre-Covid curriculum, the school is keen to continue measures introduced during the lockdown which worked well. He expressed confidence that the school will cope well in the event of a second wave.</p> <p>JS commented that all three schools have responded fantastically well to the levels of variation in demand and need, and the measures imposed by Government. He asked if the school planned to continue with online learning and DR confirmed that this had been delivered and would continue if needed. However, he pointed out that for some families, learning at home was causing too much anxiety and in those circumstances the school had not and would not put pressure on students to undertake home learning.</p> <p>VP reported that St Dominic’s have worked hard to develop a remote offer via MS Teams, but have been affected by some legacy issues around the IT network which are due to be resolved by OHCAT’s IT Team over the summer. This will put the school in an increasingly strong position to develop a robust offer but the school’s approach would remain flexible to meet the needs of students and families.</p> <p>JT reported that Grafham Grange have been bespoke in their approach, and have offered Zoom teaching, but also hand delivered work to students’ homes where needed. She confirmed that the Zoom teaching offer would be expanded if required.</p>	

	<p>JS sought reassurance that disadvantaged students would be able to access online facilities and VP reported that the school have provided work in whatever method appropriate for the learners. She acknowledged that using Teams will not be suitable for all but was pleased to report that the school has been given eight Chromebooks from the Government's scheme which will be passed to disadvantaged students.</p>	
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Proposals for change to school timetables</b>	
	<p>KC reported that all three schools have proposed changes to the school day, based on the core position that modifications to the school day will be beneficial to the children. He noted that each Principal has provided a report on this matter, and that Governors have asked questions which have been answered. During the consultation with parents at the three schools, responses from Brantridge and Grafham Grange families were largely positive, but the feedback from the St Dominic's School families was mixed. In response to their feedback, some further changes have been suggested, and the plans will be considered by OHC&amp;AT's ESLT on Friday 17 July, who will also take into views of Governors raised at this meeting.</p> <p>DR reported that there was not a great number of responses to the consultation and that those in favour were broadly so due to the benefits the changes would have on learners. Those who disagreed with the proposals largely did so due to the impact it would have on the practical arrangements for their family. He confirmed that the proposal for change was based around the needs of learners.</p> <p>CD explained that she did not respond to the consultation as her child is about to leave the school but pointed out that logistic and practical issues for a family could ultimately impact negatively on the child if family life is disrupted. She noted that many boys' behaviour had improved during the lockdown, which may be partly due to the changes of the school day but could also be attributable to other factors such as having more time with their parents, as well as the changes to the school day. DR acknowledged this point and agreed that behaviour would be influenced by many factors.</p> <p>LE asked if Principals were concerned that the changes could influence parents' choice of school and may lead to numbers dropping.</p> <p>JT stated that she had no such concerns and explained that the changes would ensure that over the duration of the week there will be more learning time and the timings of each day will be more consistent, which will make the boys feel more secure. ML echoed these comments, noting that the old structure did not make sense and was not consistent. He also advised that his son, who will go into Year 9 in September, prefers to have a more consistent structure, with a shorter lunchbreak. He added that the new, consistent timing of the school day had supported his son to get used to going back to school and he had settled well.</p> <p>JT reiterated that the revised timetable would provide a better structure for the children and reported that during the lockdown it became apparent that the boys preferred a tighter structure. She also pointed out that the boys won't have to get up so early in the morning and will get home earlier so can spend time with siblings and friends. JT confirmed that there would be a degree of flexibility offered to families on pick-up time after school but noted the intention to develop extra-curricular activities in the future.</p>	

	<p>With regard to St Dominic’s School, KC summarised the concerns raised by families and highlighted in AD’s report that the consultation was not undertaken at right time, it was done too late in term and in the shadow of Covid-19 leading to some uncertainty about plans for September.</p> <p>JS reiterated his earlier point that he perceived that there was a lot of challenge and negative feeling around these changes and sought Governors’ views on whether they felt they should have been consulted prior to seeking the views of parents. CD stated that, like JS, she first heard about the proposals as a parent, rather than as a Governor.</p> <p>DR acknowledged this point and by way of commentary, asked the LGB to bear in mind that the changes to the school day were initially temporary, but when the positive impact was observed, he realised he had to grasp the nettle when he did or would have had to go back to the old pattern in September, just to consult and make changes again, which would have impacted negatively on students and families.</p> <p>VP described the process St Dominic’s School undertook, noting that it was felt that the changes would be of benefit and that they shouldn’t be avoided due to the pandemic. She echoed the comments made by DR, noting the need to minimise changes for learners.</p> <p>LE noted that, as a parent of a pupil St Dominics’, she was more comfortable with the suggested adaptations to the proposal set out in the Principal’s paper to LGB. However, LE queried whether the school could realistically deliver lesson effectively at 9am if pupils arrive at 8.45am. VP explained that the first lesson would be used as part of the settling in process and also focus on other Needs Led Curriculum items. LE also queried whether, as with Grafham Grange, it would be better for the Friday timetable to mirror the other days. VP explained the rationale for the difference but stated that the school would consider the suggestion.</p> <p>CD noted the points made and suggested that consultation with Governors could have slowed the process, and that they should consider that for the future. JS stated that he would have made himself available if asked to. KC noted that there is some lack of clarity about whether this sort of issue falls within the remit of the LGB and he undertook to raise that with OHC&amp;AT colleagues. However, all Governors agreed that resumption of regular meetings between Principals and Chairs of Governors would help alleviate issues such as this arising again.</p> <p>KC noted that the key rationale for change at all three schools is that will improve the experience and outcomes for pupils and students and that Governors should receive further reports on the impact of the changes to ensure that they are having the desired impact.</p> <p>KC undertook to feedback comments to OHC&amp;AT colleagues prior to ESLT on Friday 17 July 2020.</p>	
<p><b>7.3</b></p>	<p><b>90 second curriculum presentations</b></p> <p>At the request of KC, DR, JT and VP delivered a short presentation on each school’s curriculum, all of which focussed on the ‘three Is’ - Intent, Implementation and Impact.</p> <p>KC invited comments from Governors and CD praised all three presentations, noting that they were likely to be positively received by Ofsted. CD commented that of the three, the impact of the curriculum at Brantridge School’s may be the hardest to measure as much of</p>	

	<p>the evidence will be qualitative rather than quantitative, and suggested that parental feedback and testimony be collected in order to demonstrate the impact of the curriculum upon learners. DR welcomed the suggestion.</p> <p>LE commended all three summaries and asked how familiar staff in each school are with the three Is. VP confirmed that staff were fully abreast of the intent of the curriculum but advised that because of where the school is in terms of implementation, staff would be less confident in describing how intent translates to implementation. She reassured Governors that this is simply because of where the school is on its journey which has been disrupted by the lockdown, but plans have been revised to ensure progress is swift next year. DR confirmed that for Brantridge, all staff have full ownership of the curriculum and participate in its regular review.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Calendar</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Calendar of LGB and Portfolio Meetings</b>	
	Governors approved the calendar for 2020-21.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<p>At his last meeting as a Governor, PK commented on the transformation he had witnessed of the three schools from the days of the Radius Trust to where they are today, with three very competent Principals at the helm, all of whom have real grasp on schools. He noted both his and AL's regret at retiring from the LGB at this stage as they will not see next stage of evolution but that they were confident they were leaving the schools in such capable hands.</p> <p>On behalf of both he and AL, PK extended thanks to all three Principals for their welcome and support. He also extended thanks to KC. PK and AL wished all Governors and schools the very best for the future. In response, KC thanked PK and AL for their hard work.</p>	
<b>9.2</b>	KC wished all Governors and staff a pleasant and happy summer holiday.	

The meeting closed at 6.02 pm.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Ken Cowdery, Chair of LGB**