

Minutes of the Uffculme School Local Governing Committee Meeting held at 5.30pm on 11 February 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Caroline Wigley (Chair)	CWI	Matt Pearce	MPE
Alan Blackburn	ABL	John Roberts	JRO
Jill Larcombe	JLA	Martin Syvret	MSY
Leo MacKenzie	LMA	Cameron Tonkin	CTO
		Andrew Woodward	AWO

Apologies / Absence (reason if required)	Initials	In Attendance	Initials
		Paula Holbrook	PHO
		Liz Mitchell (Clerk)	LMI

Signed as a correct record of the meeting:

Date:.....

Prior to the meeting Lyndsey Poortman, Assistant Headteacher, Curriculum, delivered a training session on the Remote Learning provision for students.

1. **Welcome to new Governors**

CWI welcomed CTO and MSY to their first meeting.
It was confirmed that the meeting was being recorded.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

None.

3. **Declaration of Business Interests**

3.1 No business interests relevant to agenda items were declared.

4. **Budget Update – presented by Dr Paula Holbrook, Head of Business Support**

PHO talked through the papers she had provided and explained the importance of careful monitoring. The school is well resourced with healthy reserves. The biggest cost is staffing (about 78% of income) which is actively managed. A small end of year deficit is currently forecast. The costs of managing the pandemic have been a big challenge. Covid catch up funds are included in the income and have to be spent. The spending plan will be flexible depending on demands when the school reopens fully.

Capital projects were explained. The major safeguarding project is being completed and the next major work needed is repair/replacement of the flat roofs. A Condition Improvement Fund (CF) bid for £700,000 has been submitted to pay for this work. In future Uffculme will not be able to bid for CIF money as capital improvement funds will be allocated to the UAT to then disburse to the schools based on highest need and impact on learning for students.

In response to questions, PHO explained the General Annual Grant (GAG) which is driven by pupil numbers on roll in October. Additional grants from DfE, EFA etc may give in year changes to income.

LMA asked that the LGC be assured that Uffculme School will continue to receive appropriate funding from UAT for example for roof repairs. This is the biggest capital challenge and if CIF bid to replace them is not successful, UAT will need to look at how they can be repaired.

Working across the whole trust can open up economies of scale and opportunities to invest in better systems.

ABL explained that currently the school is heavily oversubscribed, however changing demographics in the catchment area and falling rolls at partner primary schools indicate that in coming years Uffculme School will have to increasingly recruit from outside the catchment in order to remain full and maintain income. Therefore, it is critical that the reputation of the school is maintained. The Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 216 for current year 7 and this will roll through the school.

PHO was thanked and left the meeting.

5. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 19 November 2020 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. **Matters Arising from those minutes**

6.1 ***Progress with actions from the last meeting***

6.1.1 Attendance figures for SEND will be included in future Headteacher's reports, once students return to school.

6.1.2 Covid Catch-up Plan is now completed and is on the website. Clerk to distribute to governors.

6.1.3 Portfolio meetings with SLT lead have been difficult under lockdown. Some reports in item 9.

6.1.4 Induction – document in preparation and will be circulated shortly.

6.2 Any other matters arising from the last meeting

None.

7. Safeguarding

7.1 Annex A to the Safeguarding Policy – updated

This had been ratified by the Chair as it had to be distributed to staff as a matter of urgency. The LGC confirmed their approval of the annex retrospectively.

7.2 Safeguarding Audit and Action Plan

7.2.1 JLA talked through the items on the Action Plan, which is produced following the Safeguarding Audit. Some Level 2 training had been delayed because of the initial lockdown, but will now have been completed. All items are due for completion by the end of the summer term, before the next Audit.

7.2.2 JLA had spoken to CLE about the main issues currently facing the safeguarding team, which are:

- Many more students are in school than during the first lockdown, including nearly all the Looked After Children and those adopted from care. This has made monitoring these pupils easier.
- Students disadvantaged in education are the biggest challenge. These families are frequently hard to reach under normal circumstances. They have patchy engagement with learning and most safeguarding issues.
- Issues being dealt with range from domestic violence to mental health.
- Before lockdown a group of students developed a pattern of running away from school and home.

In response to a question ABL explained that the staff have extensive wellbeing support. There is a Director of Wellbeing services who works across the UAT schools and staff can access a range of facilities and support for both physical and mental wellbeing. There is a strong HR department and a robust Line Management system (which is about wellbeing as well as accountability). Staff feedback shows that the school is seen as putting a high premium on wellbeing. This contributes to the outcomes for students.

7.3 Behaviour and Attendance Review – Autumn Term

7.3.1 The last term was more challenging than for some time owing to a variety of reasons, such as the impact of first lockdown (students missed key events that are important in developing the culture of the school), a number of local students who are very unsettled and are having input from other agencies, a few high tariff individuals about whom the school is very concerned.

7.3.2 There has been an escalation in incidents of bullying and the use of homophobic and racist language. Staff are having to work very hard to address these issues and they have increased the pressure on Mr Lepper and the other members of the pastoral team. As soon as all pupils are back in school, work on culture and buy-in will resume immediately as ensuring that students want to be part of the school community is the best way of reducing behaviour incidents.

7.3.3 LMA questioned whether this analysis will inform return to school plans. ABL confirmed it would. Already a number of additional Year 10 pupils have been invited into school for a couple of days a week to establish and strengthen relationships. Staff are monitoring students and working with their families to put in place strategies to address issues. All of this is increasing the pressure on staff, particularly on the pastoral team.

The situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic as some of strategies that would normally be used to address the issues (enrichment and extra-curricular activities, rewards etc) cannot be used.

However, the vast majority of the pupils remain invested in the school.

7.3.4 LMA asked if SLT have access to resources and studies on how to work in the virtual environment. ABL confirmed that extensive resources are available but that a lot of the research will be longer term. Unfortunately outside agencies are very overstretched so have little capacity to assess students and provide support.

7.3.5 JLA asked if the racist incident that involved the police was reported as a hate crime. ABL confirmed that all racist incidents are reported to DCC. The one incident was reported to the police

following discussion with parents as it was felt to be the best way forward to reinforce that the behaviour was not acceptable.

8. Headteacher's Report

8.1 ABL highlighted a number of points in his written report:

- Remote Learning has been covered by Lyndsey Poortman's presentation. Information has been put on the school website in line with DfE requirements.
- Level of student engagement has been identified from the numbers logging into the system. 91% across the school are actively working. Some are struggling and Heads of Year are working very hard to help these pupils. Engagement levels are very high in Year 7, but some are struggling to return work, possibly because they are newest to our systems.

8.2 Coronavirus security measures

8.2.1 ABL spoke about the Coronavirus cases that occurred from the end of November. Both Public Health England and the local authority carried out reviews of the cases and the school's Covid safety measures and found that these were as strong and robust as they could be. No transmission between students in school was identified, so measures in place were very effective.

8.2.2 High numbers had to self-isolate, predominantly due to contacts on school buses. Lateral flow testing protocols are now in place and ABL explained the serial testing pilot study, led by the Department for Health, the NHS and Oxford University, that Uffculme has been chosen to take part in. This will enable students and staff who are identified as a close contact to a positive case to be tested daily and stay in school (as long as they remain negative) rather than self-isolating. This is immensely reassuring as it will minimise the numbers out of school.

CWI questioned the accuracy of the tests that will be used. Daily testing picks up positive cases with 89% accuracy. Students in school are currently screened when they first attend, and staff are tested twice weekly. When school reopens fully students will be offered testing to identify any asymptomatic cases. ABL believes that with this testing and the maintenance of all the protection measures put in place previously, the school is in as strong a place as it can be.

8.2.3 The Coronavirus Risk Assessment was presented to governors.

8.3 Data – Years 11 and 10

8.3.1 Year 11

This is a hardworking year group, and indications are positive. They were well motivated when they returned in the Autumn Term, engaged well and have kept going through lockdown, with home learning being very positive, supported by a strong tutor team. There is a good evidence base for when the school has to submit their final grades and the data is looking strong. The Head of Year and JRO have been in close contact with a large number of parents through the lockdown. The Careers Advisor has been working with a targeted group of students on their aims for their next step in education.

Spring reporting data is very strong on average Progress 8 and Attainment 8.

8.3.2 Year 10

The first cycle of data reported to governors in the autumn term was low, with low progress figures, and the second cycle reinforces these concerns. The majority of the year group are making exceptional progress but a significant minority are struggling and their lack of progress adversely affects the whole cohort data. The majority of those struggling are boys who are not engaging with remote learning. There are serious challenges ahead and staff will have a bigger group of students causing concern to work with than in other years. This is a cohort specific challenge which had been identified previously. However the situation is making it harder to work with these students as strategies usually used to address lack of buy-in and build relationships are restricted.

Year 10's have early entry GCSE English Literature and RE this summer. Staff will work with students until the data is submitted to help them reach their potential. However, students need to understand the correlation between effort and result.

LMA asked if the high achievement of girls is dropping. ABL responded that these figures depend on the ability of the cohort and in Year 10 the girls are weaker than in Year 11.

9. School Improvement

9.1 Governor Visit Reports

Two meetings took place at the end of the Autumn Term.

9.1.1 Teaching and Learning – Lyndsey Poortman’s presentation has demonstrated that the things LMA discussed with Katie Francombe (mirror curriculum etc) are now in place. Staff and HoDs have taken huge strides forward and IT tools already in the school system are being used to their maximum potential.

9.1.2 SEND – AWO met with Liz Hawkins and focussed on the wellbeing of students and of staff post lockdown 1. They looked at how students had returned and the erosion or otherwise of their learning habits, impact of not having had PSHE etc. This links with the behaviour report in terms of use of inappropriate language. The Learning Support team is tight and supportive and was working well. AWO felt reassured that the measures in place were effective and that staff felt their wellbeing was valued. The agreed next step was a visit to school which AWO hopes will take place after Easter.

9.2 Review of Portfolios

Some portfolio allocations were temporary until the LGC was back up to strength. It was agreed that portfolio areas should be reviewed then shared with governors and expressions of interest invited.

10. Uffculme School Trust

10.1 Presentation of Accounts and Report for 2019 -2020

10.1.1 ABL explained the Trust, its history and purpose.

10.1.2 The report relates to the period before Covid lockdown and the trustees have repurposed the fund this year to provide access to learning activities through purchase of Wi-Fi dongles and other equipment.

10.1.3 In the year April 2019 to March 2020, £4070 was raised and £1430 spent. The aim is to ensure all income is spent to the benefit of the school and its students whilst maintaining appropriate reserves, which were £7670 at the end of the reporting year. Income will be reduced for the next reporting year as there have been limited opportunities for fundraising. The trustees are satisfied that the financial position of the charity is satisfactory.

11. Policies

11.1 Pupil Medication Policy (LGC approval):

Governors agreed this policy.

12. Governor Development

12.1 Report on any training/development undertaken

- CWI, JLA and ABL attended online permanent exclusion training provided by the Trust’s Solicitors, Browne Jacobson.
- AWO has undertaken training in lateral flow testing.
- AWO has level 3 DSL update on 1 April.
- LMA has undertaken training on GDPR and on Equality, diversity and inclusion.

12.2 Training needs to be addressed

The UAT intend to provide Trust-wide training opportunities for governors. If governors would like a particular topic to be covered, please inform the Clerk.

A ‘new governor’ module will be developed. Ben Brookes (Financial Director) is to be asked to put together training information including delegated financial responsibilities. A programme of training needs to be developed to help new governors integrate into their LGC and become effective quickly.

CTO and MSY to be issued with access to ‘Every’ online training.

13. Any Urgent Business Brought Forward by the Chair

None.

14. Items for the next agenda

- Reports on other year groups' data.
- Year 11 update.
- Careers – potential training session on Information Advice and Guidance.

15. Impact of this meeting

15.1 Impact on outcomes for pupils

- Governors received good feedback on Year 11 data and have confidence they will do well.
- This data will help to ensure continuation of the school's reputation for excellence, which is vital with changes in the local demographic.
- Work by the Headteacher and SLT to learn medical processes and put testing in place will keep students and staff safe.
- There has been a huge leap forward in remote learning since the last meeting and LGC recognise what this means in terms of work of staff and the impact it has on students. It has been a hard journey for some and the LGC thanked staff for their tremendous efforts.
- SLT have supported ABL by taking responsibility for different aspects of the school and keeping them running. The thanks of the LGC were recorded to the SLT.
- The percentage of students submitting work online is extremely high and a credit to staff and students.
- Communication from school is excellent.
- Work done by SLT and ABL in particular to secure extra laptops to assist students in remote learning reflects good planning and use of Covid catchup funds.
- The team of Headteachers within the UAT has worked very well together and ABL's support for the less experienced HTs has been appreciated. This is a real benefit of the MAT.

15.2 Risks and Concerns

- Year 10 data – must continue to be reviewed at LGC meetings.
- The fabric of the building (particularly roofs) and the need to secure significant finance to replace them. LGC will do all it can to support the CIF bid particularly as in future years capital money will come from the UAT.
- The challenge that working remotely poses to SEN and welfare support staff with responsibilities for children who need additional wrap around care was noted as was the pressure put upon these staff. This is the second meeting at which this pressure on a small number of staff has been a concern.

16. Dates of next meetings

29 April and 24 June 2021.

There being no further business the Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting ended at 7.45pm.

ACTIONS

Item	Action	Who	Deadline
6.1	Covid Catch-Up Plan to be distributed	Clerk	ASAP
6.1	Induction document to be finalised and distributed	Clerk	ASAP
9.2	Review of Portfolio Areas	Chair/HT	Next Meeting
12.2	Topics for UAT governor training to clerk	All	Ongoing