

**MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
PART 1 MINUTES**

Date:	Monday 11th January 2021 at 4:30pm	
Venue:	Virtual Meeting using MS Teams	
Present:	Colin Price (CPR) Julie Brandreth (JBR) Heidi Thurland (HTD) Mike Finney (MFI) Mike Taylor (MTA) Alan Dixon (ADI) Stuart Mayhead (SMA) Simon McGrory (SMC) Catherine Broadhurst (CBR)	Parent Governor (Chair) Co-Opted Governor (Vice Chair) Head Teacher Co-opted Governor Staff Governor Co-Opted Governor Co-Opted Governor Local Authority Governor Co-Opted Governor
Apologies:		
Absence:		
In attendance:	Rebecca Dale (RDA) Debbie Carter (DCA) Angela Deakin (ADE) Kerry Kirkwood (KKI) Alan Redley (ARE) Matt Snelson (MSN)	Clerk Strategic Business Manager (SBM) Observer Exec. Principle, The Sir John Brunner Foundation Chair of The Sir John Brunner Foundation Principle, The County High School, Leftwich

The meeting met its quorum and started at 4:36pm

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES
Discussion:	<p>The chair opened the meeting and welcomed the governing body.</p> <p>There were no apologies received.</p> <p>MTA was welcomed to the meeting as the new staff governor. ADE was welcomed as an observer to the meeting considering being a prospective co-opted governor.</p> <p>The chair also welcomed the Sir John Brunner Foundation Team ahead of their presentation on the Trust.</p>
Decision:	The apologies of the above-named governors were accepted by the governing body

AGENDA ITEM 2	DECLARATION OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE)
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JBR declared that she is a governor at Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College • SMA declared that he is a Governor at Middlewich Primary School and an Exam Invigilator at Middlewich High School. • CBR declared that she works in the Finance Department at Sir John Deane's College.
Decision:	The governing body resolved to accept the declarations above.

AGENDA ITEM 3	ACADEMY CONVERSION: PRESENTATION TO GOVERNORS BY THE SJBF
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>KKI / ARE / MSN presented to governors on the SJBF, and addressed questions raised as a result of MHS's due diligence process.</p> <p>Key points from ARE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition will be a seamless process and parents will not see a change to the school. • The trust contains two Academies currently – Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College & The County High School, Leftwich. MHS will be the second Secondary School to join the Foundation. • The Foundation has a very clear vision; The three schools will be equal partners within the trust. • There are currently nine trustees on the Foundation board, all of whom have been subject to a rigorous recruitment process. • The Foundation has one Chair and two Vice Chairs for continuity purposes. • There are two established sub-committees, each chaired by a trustee. These are the Audit & Compliance committee and the Achievement & Progress committee. • In addition, there are two Executive Groups (KKI is the Chair of both). These are the Forum for Heads of Schools and the School Representation Group. Two representatives from each Local Governing Body meet regularly with ARE / KK & the clerk of the Foundation. This provides the opportunity to share info across the foundation. • The Foundation has a Scheme of Delegation for each Academy – the central organisation of the Foundation remains as small as possible, with maximum delegation given to the schools that join. An appropriate level of delegation will be assigned to each school. There is a shared ambition throughout the Foundation that each school achieves the maximum autonomy possible (over time, if necessary). • The top slice of the Trust 2.5% (some Trusts take up to 10%). The Trust has a clear vision to keep this as small as is sensible. <p>Key points from KKI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a reciprocal relationship across the Foundation with each of the Academies. • The Foundation is nuancing policies and business planning as it gets to know each school within it. It is not a one size fits all process. • The headteacher would join the executive leadership team to help drive the strategy of the Foundation and is answerable to the trustees. The voice of all academies within the Foundation will be equal. • Best practise can be shared between the academies within the Foundation and modelled where appropriate. • The Foundation's strategic plan is currently based upon a secondary experience; however, trustees are currently working on a 3-year plan to include primaries and Sixth form in order to grow the Foundation. <p>Key points from MSN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHSL's identity as a secondary school has been maintained. • The school has also retained its autonomy. • MSN still feels that he is the head of his own school. • MSN still has the authority to make his own decisions in line with the scheme of delegation provided by the Foundation. • The school's uniform, badge etc have remained the same; they have not changed as a result of joining the Foundation. • Is held accountable, but for the correct things and was part of the process to decide this. • The sharing of information / best practice between the academies within the Foundation allows more eyes and minds to look over things.

- The Foundation provides a collaborative relationship between its Academies. The schools can do what's best for stakeholders whilst having the support of the foundation.

The chair thanked the Foundation for presenting and invited questions from governors if they hadn't already been addressed.

Q) You refer to all academies within the trust being equal. Will this still be the case as the Foundation grows, for example if there are six or seven academies with a mixture of primary, secondary and sixth form? At what point will it no longer be possible to have an executive team?

A) Whilst I do not have the answer to that specifically, regardless of whether you are a small primary or large secondary you require a senior leadership team who can communicate effectively. Should the Foundation grow to more than six academies and the leadership team start to feel too cumbersome then the trustees will need to review the leanness of the executive team, along with the skills and attributes that each member brings, and the direction in which this allows the Foundation to grow. We have always been very cautious, and your insurance is that currently this Foundation is small and agile. The Foundation looks to establish a very clear strategic plan to move forward in a measured, considerate and thoughtful way for all its academies. The next step is to look at secondary school development within the Foundation, followed by that of primary partners when applicable. The executive team will make decisions based upon recommendations to/from the governing bodies and the board of trustees.

Q) I've read several articles from the NGA where people refer to MATs failing, and it appears that the biggest problem is communication from the trustees to the governing bodies. Currently the SJBF consists of only two academies therefore this is relatively easy. You referred in your presentation to the School Representation group. Has this started? If not, when is it due to start?

A) The trustees agreed the structure of the School Representation group with the group back in April and we are currently setting up the first meeting, which will take place in the next two or three weeks. We have drawn up a draft Terms of Reference for that meeting, which will go to the first meeting where governors present will have an opportunity to amend them. The Foundation always needs to be open to listening to ideas from its members and the meetings will be shaped to meet the needs of the governors present; it is to ensure that the governors themselves are getting the information they need about the Foundation and the Foundation gets to hear first-hand views of the local governing bodies. The meetings will provide the opportunity of talking across the Foundation as well as governing bodies of each of the schools to learn from the others, share experience and to help each other. For example, one school may have a problem that somebody else has already dealt with and, can provide advice on finding a solution

Q) I know it's quite common for a 4% or 5% top slicing, therefore the 2.5% top-slice does sound very reasonable. What will this be used for?

A) The 2.5% top-slice covers the full cost of the staff who are working 100% for the foundation, for example the time that Kerry spends as CEO and the time that Andy spends the CFO. We also have a clerk and a personnel consultant, so it covers their costs. It covers the statutory regulatory audit that we must do as well as internal audits carried out by the Foundation across all schools. It also covers costs such as annual licencing support, operating costs of software, payroll processing, central legal costs, hosting the central website and things like ad hoc consultancy, tax advice, maintenance advice, building surveys and due diligence. There may be items that individual schools may require that need to be funded separately, but we'll cover costs like those items I've just outlined.

Q) The DfE sometimes refers to the size of a MAT through the number of organisations within it and sometimes by the number of learners within it, and there is a difference. Joining a MAT was always perceived as providing greater financial stability for all if there were around 5000 learners (rather than worrying about whether it was eight schools or two schools). How does this relate to the 2.5% top-slice and what the Foundation receives as numbers increase? Does the Foundation have in mind the number of learners it would like, bearing in mind this is the source for most of your financial funding, and would you press pause at 5000 learners because of losing the ability to communicate effectively?

A) You are right to raise this in terms of what makes a sound and robust MAT. The definitions of this vary slightly, however there is a consensus from the Regional Schools Commissioner that the size of the of a robust MAT is the size of the total number of students within a multi Academy trust, not the number of academies. A Sixth Form College in a Multi Academy Trust provides a great deal of stability simply in terms of its size. There are approximately 1750 students attending Sir John Deane's and approximately 1000 students attending the County High school Leftwich, so already there is a good base. If we got to a point of having 5000 students within the Multi Academy Trust that would absolutely be a trigger to press pause. Our aim is not to grow; we do not have an aspiration to take over the world. It has always been about a geographical sense of identity and our mission is to contribute to Cheshire Schools and to our local communities. We do not aspire at any point to become a national Multi Academy Trust, nor do we aspire to grow beyond where we can reasonably understand and know that our schools have a sense of connection and a sense of a purpose. The size of the MAT is determined by the trustees however the Executive Leadership Team are very clear about how to best look after our academies and how to best look after our children, our teachers, our professional communities and ultimately how do we make a contribution to our local communities. I think there is a size beyond which that becomes very difficult to maintain. In terms of the strategic plan moving forward it is about being able to manage in a highly effective way so that we can work collaboratively and have a reciprocal relationship. It is important that this is not about personality and nor is it about individuals within the multi Academy trust. The core principle a clearly integrated geographical MAT that makes a good purposeful contribution to its community.

There would come a point whereby the MAT would not want to grow any further because it would not be able to maintain its core values in its culture across all the schools. Over time we will get a better sense of what that number is. It is very important that it is not growth for growth sake, and we would only continue to grow if we could maintain our core values.

Q) With regards to the 2.5% top slice, what about any additional income that the school gains from other sources (for example hiring out rooms). Does that go straight into the Academy pot or does it stay within the school?

A) It stays within the school. What we do not want to do is disincentivise a school from looking for additional sources of income.

Q) The trust has now been running for two years, and [CHSL] has been a part of it for a year. Has anything gone wrong, and what do you foresee as your biggest challenge with a third school (MHS) joining the MAT?

A) One of the things that we are still struggling with are the policies - deciding which policies need to be Foundation policies, which should be CHSL policies and which should be SJD policies. Whilst it would be good to have policies that fit across all, there are some that clearly need to be different. This is a large piece of work and probably the biggest challenge that we need overcome.

Q) How will the MAT impact positively on the development of the school from an infrastructure basis, based upon the growth of the school and local housing – the school is at capacity now. How can the MAT help to deliver what is needed for the town?

A) One of the things that is very clear on your headteacher's agenda is raising standards. From a curriculum perspective there is a wealth of experience in both academies within the Foundation to support this both by the sharing of knowledge and as a quality assurance process. It provides benchmarking within the Foundation; however, you are benchmarking with people that you trust because they are part of the same family. Whilst benchmarking may cause a slight tension in terms of how much to reveal to other headteachers locally, when you are working in a Multi Academy Trust there is an openness that comes by necessity because you are all accountable to the board of trustees. I feel that this will assist MHS significantly.

Within the Foundation there is a strong financial basis and we have experience of new buildings, experience of estate management and certainly we've got some very strong experience around shared technologies and how to develop them, therefore the MAT can be viewed as a safe haven for MHS, who will become a part of shaping what the Foundation will look like in the next three to five years. There is an opportunity for MHS to really grow and develop itself as a school and to and shape its role within the wider Cheshire community. I am confident that the expertise within CHSL and the expertise within SJD will enhance not just the questions that you currently have but will prompt new questions in terms of moving the school forward.

There will also be opportunities for CPD for staff which would not be possible outside of MAT community.

The chair thanked the trustees for their time and for answering the questions raised by the FGB.

The Foundation will now present to MHS staff on 18th January 2021 and answer any questions.

Q) Is the Regional Schools Commissioner still working?

A) Yes, they have made contact today to ask a couple of questions regarding the paperwork submitted. This will be with the Headteacher board by March, with a September 2021 conversion still possible at this moment in time.

The trustees left the meeting at 5:36pm

Governors discussed the presentation in detail.

A governor remarked that whilst the school is now in consultation and is communicating with parents, staff and other stakeholders, the headteacher should be mindful that they have already received some communication during consultation under the previous head, and whilst that it was a couple of years ago it is important that stakeholders realise that this is a continuation of those plans and do not think that something different is happening.

The headteacher confirmed that communication had already gone out to update parents with references made to the previous consultations to ensure they knew it was a continuation.

	<p>Q) As the head of MHS, have you had an opportunity to speak to the principle of CHSL about his experiences of being a part of the Foundation?</p> <p>A) Yes, the principle visited MHS before Christmas and we were able to talk quite openly and honestly about his experience of joining the Foundation. He was genuinely complimentary. Also, I have worked with the CEO of the Foundation since day one of being appointed as headteacher and the support she has provided has been fantastic and she is genuine. I have also seen first-hand the way in which she works with her own colleagues in her own school. I have done my own due diligence and carried out my own observations. I do not feel that we will enter this and then find it a completely different experience to what we are expecting. I feel that we are well informed, and I have both confidence and trust in the decision to join the MAT.</p> <p>Q) CHSL joined as an “outstanding” school, whereas MHS will be joining as a “good” school with an ambition to be outstanding. Do you feel that [the Foundation] have a plan in place to assist us in getting to that outstanding rating and do you think that they are the right partners to help us achieve this?</p> <p>A) The support currently being offered within our science department is testimony to this. If we can improve the science curriculum and outcomes this will have a massive impact on progress 8 score for school, which is currently a limiting factor.</p> <p>I have had conversations with the CEO about quality of curriculum, quality of staffing and leadership within my own SLT, and whilst advice has been offered this is still very much my school and my decision, and that autonomy will remain. The decisions will always come back to the best interests of the children. The foundation has worked with MHS since day one and have provided support costing nothing but time. They have also facilitated a member of staff (who we are paying some money for) to provide us with high quality support. They could have waited until we were part of their MAT to do any of that, and many trusts would have done or would have charged an SLE rate of between £300-£500 pounds a day. If they are providing this support now, then I am confident that it will continue. There will be subject specific work that we will do across schools and a collaboration that will improve results. There will also be infrastructure work that will streamline the organisation.</p> <p>I feel that their support shows their intent to work with us. The outcome of our last inspection was not unexpected; however, the CEO can see the strengths of the leadership team and the vision for our curriculum. She understands that these things take time to embed and continues to want to work with us despite this. I have confidence that the school is moving in the right direction and that my staff have got the quality required to move things forward, which is a huge indicator for the Foundation.</p> <p>An update on the MAT will be provided by the headteacher at the next FGB on 22nd March 2021.</p>
Decision:	Governors resolved to accept the answers to the due diligence questions raised at the extraordinary meeting held on 14.12.2020.
Action:	1. Any further questions regarding the Foundation / due diligence are to be forwarded to HTD via the clerk by: All governors

AGENDA ITEM 4	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
Discussion:	<p>Approval of the minutes from the following FGB meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGB Meeting 19.10.20 • Additional FGB Meeting 02.11.20
Decision:	Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the above meetings

AGENDA ITEM 5	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES / ACTIONS OUTSTANDING
Discussion:	<p>There are no items outstanding from the previous FGB meetings.</p> <p>Agenda item 13, from the meeting held on 02.11.2020: Link-governor roles have been amended to reflect the changes to the board membership. The updated information has been uploaded to GovernorHub.</p>
Decision:	Governors resolved to agree that there were no items outstanding from the previous minutes.

AGENDA ITEM 6	CHAIR'S ACTIONS
Discussion:	<p>1. The chair approved the minutes of the extraordinary FGB Meeting held on 14.12.20</p> <p>This action was discussed at the meeting and governors agreed at the time to accept this.</p>
Decision:	Governors resolved to approve the chairs action as noted above.

AGENDA ITEM 7	CHAIR'S UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>The chair stated that given the current national lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic, to avoid duplication the headteacher would refer to any updates regarding this as part of her report (for example mass testing, remote learning and Y11 GCSE examinations).</p> <p>The chair wished to reflect on the first term under his chairmanship. During this period the school has seen almost a new full governing body be elected, and he reported that he was very happy with the direction in which the body is moving, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Terms of Reference have been agreed for the Governing Body and its committees. • The Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed and updated. • Link governor roles have been allocated, and all bar one link has met with their SLT partner. • Governor visit forms are being completed and submitted for the link meetings. <p>Subject to the election under AOB, this will leave the FGB with vacancies for one parent governor and one co-opted governor. The chair stated that he did not intend to run another election for parent governor during the current term. The governance section on the school website will be updated to show current governor vacancies and will state the skills that the FGB require; the thorough and rigorous recruitment process will continue in order to fill any gaps.</p> <p>Last term governors completed training on the School Development Plan (SDP). The School Evaluation Form (SEF) has now been completed and training around this is to be arranged.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to accept the chairs update
Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governor vacancies page to be created on the school website by: clerk 2. SEF training for the FGB to be arranged by: headteacher

AGENDA ITEM 8	GOVERNOR TRAINING UPDATE (APPENDIX A)
Discussion:	<p>The chair reported that governor training so far, this academic year is a great achievement, however some training has not yet been recorded and is therefore missing from the GovernorHub report.</p> <p>The chair formally requested that governors update their own training after they have completed it in order to keep the record up to date so that any gaps can be identified quickly.</p> <p>Governor training is in place for the spring term; this is an excellent opportunity to complete any training whilst it is being offered virtually.</p> <p>The “Modern Governor” Finance for non-finance governors’ course was recommended. Prevent Training for governors was also recommended (this has already been completed by the Safeguarding Link).</p> <p><i>Q) CEC are currently offering “Safer Recruitment” training. This is at an additional cost to the school, but who authorises this?</i></p> <p><i>A) The head felt that this was not a priority right now; Governors are only required if recruiting at senior level, and the FGB currently has an adequate no of governors who have undertaken this training.</i></p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to agree to update their own training records going forward.
Action:	1. Outstanding training to be updated on GovernorHub by: clerk

AGENDA ITEM 9	GOVERNOR VISITS / REPORTS
Discussion:	<p>Link governor reports were circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting.</p> <p>There were no questions arising from the reports.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to accept the link governor reports.

AGENDA ITEM 10	REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Discussion:	<p>Draft minutes from the Resource committee meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. The committee chair gave a precis of the committee meeting.</p> <p>Draft minutes from the Progress & Achievement committee meeting, along with a written report were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The FGB did not offer any questions following the reports.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to accept the reports from the committee meetings detailed above.

AGENDA ITEM 11	APPROVAL OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXCLUSION PANEL AND COMPLAINTS PANEL
Discussion:	<p>The Terms of Reference for the Exclusion Panel and Complaints Panel were circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting. Governors did not have any questions or feedback regarding the TORs.</p> <p>The chair stated that Terms of Reference were not required for a staff disciplinary panel as this would comprise of the headteacher, a representative from CEC HR and a union representative. There would only be one governor present if required, therefore TOR are not relevant in this instance.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to approve the TOR for the Exclusion Panel and Complaints Panel
Action:	1. The updated TOR document to be uploaded to the school website by: clerk

AGENDA ITEM 12	FINANCE UPDATE (APPENDIX B)
Discussion:	<p>The budget report and budget forecast were circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting. Governors submitted questions to the SBM ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>The SBM ran through the questions as not all governors have had the opportunity to read them prior to the meeting (appendix B)</p> <p>The SBM reported that guidance had been received from government today, 11th January, regarding free school meals and the voucher scheme; vouchers will be on offer again during the current lockdown. The government strongly advises that schools use the food parcel scheme instead of offering vouchers, however Chartwells have furloughed the canteen staff which means that it is difficult to do this – the school does not have the capacity to put the boxes together. Also, there has only been a 25% uptake by parents for the food parcels, leaving 75% of FSM students without help. The option of the schools buying vouchers from the supermarket and claiming back the costs is also not practicable due to staffing levels. Currently, food parcels remain best option despite the low uptake.</p> <p>The SBM reported that further to the last budget report she has been unable to evaluate the school bus due to staffing issues within the finance team, therefore the figures have not been updated in the amended report.</p> <p>Key points from the report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ledger 31351: Domestic and cleaning. This figure includes an additional expenditure of £2800 over the next 3 months. As a result of the roll out of mass testing in schools the sports hall has now been set up as Covid testing site, and whilst the government have supplied PPE for this there are additional cleaning products required at the school's expense. • Ledger 36412: Telephone rental. The LA provided an estimate until the end of the year, however we have not used their IPT system since Aug 2020 but are still being billed. The SBM is chasing why this has happened. • There is an error on the income figures under item 10, internal recharge, under the pupil premium income. We are £7,000 to the good in this category but the figures have not been recalculated. • The school meal contract figure remains the same as the November figure – the school reopened for just over a month before lockdown therefore it is difficult to re-evaluate these figures currently. This will be unpicked once the finance team is back to full capacity.

	<p>Prior to Christmas an additional 13 devices were provided under the DfE “Get help with Technology” Scheme. Another 50 were provided last week. The spec of these laptops is very low, and the operating system is windows 8; the laptops are not fit for purpose, which is an utter disgrace. Novus (School IT Support) are currently working to update the laptops in order for students to be able to use them.</p> <p>There is a dedicated scheme for laptops to be donated by local businesses and people who may have spare devices, however there is a lot of work required to ensure that these devices are safe for students (for example wiping them clean and reinstalling software, factory resets etc.).</p> <p>The governing body discussed in detail the recent DfE communication regarding how many hours of learning schools must provide and what the learning should involve.</p> <p>The PTFA are also looking at how they can provide support at home for those students who cannot currently access remote learning.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to accept the updated finance report.
Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the school bus and school meals income by: SBM 2. Investigate how the PTFA can offer additional support to those students in need in order to provide access to remote learning by: chair of governors

AGENDA ITEM 13	HEADTEACHER’S REPORT
Discussion:	<p>The headteacher’s report was circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting.</p> <p>In addition to the report, the headteacher wished to thank the personnel officer and admin team who were involved in supporting track and trace for six days after a Y8 pupil tested positive for Covid, and the SLT for being on call during that time. Fortunately, there were no additional cases reported within the school.</p> <p>On Monday January 4th over 40 Support staff were trained in various roles to deliver mass testing across the school, as per the government directive. This was due to start on Wednesday 6th January. At 8:00pm that evening the Prime Minister took the decision to close secondary schools to all students other than the children of key workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s remote learning platform was already in place and having worked online previously the headteacher had confidence in the delivery of remote learning. An audit of key worker and vulnerable children had already taken place; therefore, the school was aware of the number of students requiring the provision (25 in total). • Work packs have been sent home to every child who has not got access to a computer and the school is continuing to provide laptops where possible. • Students requiring additional support have been identified and daily online registration with form tutors is taking place -every child in school has access to an online check-in session with their tutor and contact with home is being made where students do not attend this. The Safeguarding team are also involved with checking student welfare. • A blended approach to learning has been agreed. Period 1 and Period 5 consist of work set for students in advance, periods 2, 3 and 4 are “live” lessons. The school found that five live lessons each day overwhelmed children and families, resulting in students only buying in to approximately 20% of the curriculum. A blended approach results in a much better engagement from students. • There is no expectation for “live” lessons from staff – in some circumstances this may not be possible due to individual circumstances at home.

- The community have provided positive feedback on the school's approach to remote learning on social media. There has also been a constant flow of emails including positive emails to Ofsted.
- Staff welfare is also paramount. Several staff members have felt overwhelmed by the situation however there is an open-door policy where the staff can speak to either the headteacher or personnel officer to discuss and concerns.
- The headteacher made the decision to postpone the OCR GCSE PE exam, which should have taken place at 9:00am on Monday 18th January. Many of the invigilators are in high risk group and would have been exposed to over 52 students. There was also the possibility that students attending may be asymptomatic. The DfE portal for testing was not live until Thursday afternoon therefore the school could not physically test the students for an asymptomatic test before the exam, as the test requires repeating after 3 days.
- Lateral flow testing is available, but not compulsory, for all staff on who are on site for the key worker provision. The first lot of tests have been conducted and all staff were negative, which was great. The process went smoothly and sets the school up for mass testing when the students can return to site.
- The headteacher met with Mark Bayley from the Local Authority this morning regarding funding for the school's Resource Provision (RP). A £50,000 funding allocation had previously been agreed for the school to invest in SEND support, however this has now been increased to £150,000. The plan is to repurpose and move rooms about, for example the food technology room is in the wrong place and will be moved to provide additional space for the RP. The school will project manage the work, which gives more control and prevents issues arising like those with the reception build, however it does mean that the costs for architects' fees and planners will also come from the funding

Q) That's great news, but for clarification are you saying that the school will self-manage the project and go out to tender itself?

A) Yes, the headteacher and SBM will meet with the Simon Hodgkiss from the LA to discuss the framework we have to work with, but we will project manage the work it so we won't have the issues we had with the previous build which wasn't project managed effectively. Any additional support from the LA Governor will be welcomed.

With reference to the laptop provision, a governor suggested that the headteacher write to Fiona Bruce outlining the problems that have arisen so far.

The deputy headteacher gave a brief summary of student attendance (the full report was circulated to governors prior to the meeting)

- Student attendance is looking positive against both local and national figures. However, there is still some work to do around our vulnerable children.
- Pupil Premium and SEND students have a core group of staff linked as key workers to provide support to both them and their families.
- Attendance plans are now in place to make sure non-attending students are engaging with school

The DHT will provide a short paper for governors regarding how the school is ensuring that students are engaging in home learning. This will be published to GovernorHub.

	<p>Q) When you took the difficult decision to pull the PE exam, did you have parental backlash over this?</p> <p>A) A letter went out to parents providing a very detailed rationale showing my initial considerations and then my decisions against each of the points. The response received from families was positive, including “thank you for being decisive”, “you shouldn't have been put in the position” and “you've taken the anxiety away for our children”. We have had students contact the school because someone in their family was shielding and they were trying to decide whether they put their exam or their family member first. We did not receive a single negative response. I think families were just relieved that somebody had decided. Had I decided to run the exam I think I would have had a similar response from families in terms of them understanding why we were running it. Again, I would have provided the rationale for the decision. I tried to explain it clearly and purposefully, and I know that it was the right decision in terms of where we were at that point and in terms of fairness for students. I think it was the only decision that we could have made.</p> <p>Q) What support is the school receiving from external agencies during the lockdown?</p> <p>A) During the first lockdown the school did most of the work usually provided by Social Care. We have a very positive relationships with social care and we've obviously worked hard to learn from the first lockdown. Due to staff isolating Social Care have not been conducting in-house visits for months and have only ever been working online and remotely. As a result of this, in the first term back the school looked at ways in which we could get them using our MS Teams facility to support the school more effectively and we did have some site visits. It is very much about building partnerships with them and getting as much as we possibly could from them. We now have external support in place through counselling therefore we have a caseload for students within school and is addressing mental health anxiety concerns. There is an increased number of students who are exhibiting mental health issues and the Safeguarding Lead has now got several appointments that he can use over a six-week plan to offer support. It is realistic to say that it is my safeguarding team carrying out the social support and the care. This is said with respect as the social care team is incredibly stretched; The LA has limited resources there are increasing caseloads across Cheshire East. Parents have told us just how well supported they feel, therefore I would suggest that the work with partnerships is going well.</p> <p>We have a core group of staff who are in daily / weekly contact with vulnerable children, checking in with them. The counselling service starts tomorrow so the most vulnerable have been given access. We are aware that many children are struggling nationally, therefore a message is going to go out tomorrow to offer support for children where workload is an anxiety. We understand that there are barriers in homes where there are either shared ICT resources or none, so it is very much a balancing act between being ambitious with what we ask children to engage with from home learning and their wellbeing. Either way I am confident in the school's investment into the pastoral team and the increased capacity, having not ever predicted that the Covid pandemic would happen. The school has a good strong team of experienced staff supporting children virtually.</p> <p>The chair formally thanked the SLT and staff for the work that they are doing currently, and the quality of the work being set for remote learning.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to accept the headteacher's report and the Covid update.
Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A short paper on home learning to be provided for the FGB by: Deputy Headteacher 2. Paper to be uploaded to GovernorHub by: clerk

AGENDA ITEM 14	HEADTEACHER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW
Discussion:	<p>The performance review was conducted by the Headteacher's Performance Review committee and the decision is made by them; however, it is best practice for the headteacher's objectives for the upcoming year to be shared with the FGB.</p> <p>The objectives are confidential therefore they cannot be published to GovernorHub. The chair will send out to all via email once IT issues have been resolved.</p> <p>The chair stated that due to the confidentiality of the email it should not be downloaded by any governor and requested that once the email had been read governors were to delete it.</p>
Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ticket to be raised with Novus Support regarding email access issues by: any governor currently experiencing problems

AGENDA ITEM 15	POLICIES FOR REVIEW
Discussion:	Standing item: There were no policies to be reviewed

DCA, MED and ADE left the meeting at 19.09

AGENDA ITEM 17	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	<p>The chair wished to discuss the election of Angela Deakin as co-opted governor.</p> <p>ADE has been through a rigorous interview process. She is an ex-pupil of MHS and also SJD. She currently works for Barclays bank and has a STEM / ICT / HR background, and also project management experience. The chair, vice chair and headteacher all agree that ADE has a good skill set to bring to the FGB and would be an asset.</p> <p>ADE is happy with a 4-year term of office.</p>
Decision:	The FGB resolved to elect ADE to the FGB as co-opted governor.
Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Induction and welcome pack to be circulated by: clerk 2. GIAS, GovernorHub and School Website to be updated by: clerk

AGENDA ITEM 18	STATEMENT OF IMPACT
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomed MTA to the governing body as staff governor • Received a presentation from trustees of the SJBF as part of the consultation phase of Academisation • Approved the minutes from the FGB meetings held on 19.10.20 and 02.11.20 • Received, and approved the Chairs Action from the extraordinary meeting held on 14.12.20 • Received and accepted the Chair's update • Received and accepted the training update • Received and accepted the governor visit reports • Received and accepted the committee chair reports • Received and approved the Terms of Reference for the Exclusion panel and Complaints panel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received and accepted the updated budget report• Received and accepted the headteacher's report and Covid update• Appointed Angela Deakin as a new co-opted governor
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MTA left the meeting at 19:14

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19:27pm

**The next meeting of the Full Governing Body will take place using MS Teams on
Monday 22nd March 2021 at 4:30pm**

Julie Brandreth (Vice Chair / Co-opted Governor)

The target-setting process and intended impact	30 Nov 2020
Leading the Team of Governors	25 Nov 2020
MHS School Development Plan: 3 hours.	16 Nov 2020
The Governors' Role in Monitoring, Supporting and Challenging	11 Nov 2020
The Strategic Role of the Governing Board	21 Oct 2020
What is "Effective Governance"?	13 Oct 2020

Catherine Broadhurst (Co-opted Governor)

Target setting training (1 hour)	30 Nov 2020
CPD on SDP 3 hours delivered by Headteacher	16 Nov 2020

Alan Dixon (Co-opted Governor)

PLEDGE Careers Virtual Meeting	4 Jan 2021
Training on Target Setting	30 Nov 2020
A Governors Guide to Being Visit Ready	26 Nov 2020
Improved Career Opportunities for School Students Organised by The PLEDGE	25 Nov 2020
Middlewich High School SDP Training Monday 16th of Nov 3 Hours	16 Nov 2020
The Governors' Role in Monitoring, Supporting and Challenging	11 Nov 2020
The Strategic Role of the Governing Board	21 Oct 2020

Mike Finney (Co-opted Governor)

MHS Target setting Training	30 Nov 2020
A Governors Guide to Being Visit Ready	26 Nov 2020
CPD Training on SDP - 3 hours delivered by headteacher	16 Nov 2020

Stuart Mayhead (Co-opted Governor)

Target setting training 1 hour by SLT	30 Nov 2020
CPD School Development Plan, 3 hours delivered by HT in school on Teams	16 Nov 2020

Simon McGrory (LA Governor)

A Governors Guide to Being Visit Ready	26 Nov 2020
Leading the Team of Governors	25 Nov 2020

Colin Price (Chair / Parent Governor)

NGA Learning Link - Safeguarding: The Governors Role	15 Dec 2020
Prevent Online Training Course	12 Dec 2020
Prevent Referrals Online Training Course Part Two - Channel	12 Dec 2020
Emotionally Healthy Schools	2 Dec 2020
Target Setting Training - 1 hour by SLT	30 Nov 2020
A Governors Guide to Being Visit Ready	26 Nov 2020
Leading the Team of Governors	25 Nov 2020
Understanding Assessment and Data	18 Nov 2020
CPD Training on SDP - 3 hours delivered by headteacher	16 Nov 2020
Headteachers' Performance Management	12 Nov 2020
Cared for Children	6 Oct 2020

Heidi Thurland (Headteacher)

The Governors' Role in Monitoring, Supporting and Challenging	11 Nov 2020
The Strategic Role of the Governing Board	21 Oct 2020
What is "Effective Governance"?	13 Oct 2020

Middlewich High School
Full Governing Board Meeting
Monday 11th January 2021

Budget Position – Questions raised prior to the meeting

1. Sorry to see the dramatic changes to staffing in Finance of late - what is the impact? (concern over additional pressure on you!) Future plans/ needs for replacing staff?
 - A. We are temporarily without any Finance Staff, other than myself, and some limited support from Laura Platt, our Personnel Manager. Denise was successful in her application to become a Business Manager, at a large primary school in Didsbury, and her contract with MHS ended on 31.12.20. We have recruited Athene Atkinson to replace Denise's position, and she starts at MHS on 18th January. Athene is currently the Business Manager at Ruskin High School. Sarah Dean, Finance Officer, was successful in her application for a post at Hebden Green Special School, which provides her with more flexibility to manage her home commitments, Sarah finished at Christmas too. Denise has worked at MHS for 16 years and Sarah for 5 years, so staff turnover hasn't been an issue, thankfully, but it is unfortunate for us that they both have secured successful career progression at the same time! Sam Kerr, Finance Officer, joined us in September 2019, but felt that finance wasn't a career path she wanted to follow. She was successfully appointed as a Teaching Assistant, at The Oaks, from January 2021. We advertised for the Finance Officer's post just before Christmas, but have had a limited response, so will re-advertise.
We don't propose to replace Sam's position currently (20 hours per week), but will re-evaluate once new staff take up their positions.

2. What is the impact of changing the phone/ bb provider - or is it early to evaluate the investment? Will this have to change again if/when joining SJBF?
 - A. The immediate impact of changing the broadband provider has been an improved bandwidth speed and connection. The previous LA phone system, had to be changed at the same time, as it is was VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), therefore linked. It is too early to evaluate any financial benefits achieved from the changes, but from a systems perspective, both are significantly improved. It will not have to be changed if/when we join SJBF but will be considered as and when contracts are renewed, going forward.

3. What is the position ref. school meals? Have staff been furloughed? How are any FSM payments dealt with?
Chartwells, our school meals contractor, have furloughed their staff, except for one person, who has prepared a weekly lunch pack for our FSM students last week and this week. 25% of our FSM families opted to collect a lunch pack. The following Government guidance on FSM was released on Friday 8th January ...
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

The national voucher scheme will be reopened shortly, but no date is given. The Government are encouraging schools to provide food parcels, or buy vouchers for local

shops, but with the canteen staff on furlough, and the difficulties experienced when trying to buy the number of vouchers we required previously, it makes more sense to use the national scheme. This will also ensure that ALL families receive the same support.

We are invoiced for the food parcels provided by Chartwells, but according to the latest Government guidance, we can reclaim this. If/when we move to the national voucher scheme the costs are met centrally by the Government.

4. Educational visits / fees is the figure o/s figure finalised - are there any ongoing costs? I assume this is for cancelled trips etc?
 - A. These figures have not changed since the November meeting. No further trips and visits are planned for the foreseeable future.

5. Why is there a shortfall in the SEN SF grant heading? (income)
 - A. The original budget -£222,753, which was set in March 2020, included assumptions about the students likely to join us in September 2020. The forecast income -£216,635 includes confirmed students who joined us in September 2020, plus any in-year adjustments e.g., change in funded hours, new EHCP's, in-year student transfers (in and out).

6. National Tutor Programme – mentioned the £13K expenditure no longer being incurred due to Lockdown – have we received the related income? If we have will this now be due back or is it being used once lockdown ends?
 - A. The income is in the Covid Catch-up Grant on code 81136. At the end of the financial year, any unspent grant income will form part of the underspend. Catch-up funding planned/incurred expenditure details attached.

7. Bus – I know you have stated you need time to review this fully, but do you have a rough estimate of the damage the lockdown may cause?
 - A. No – I have not had time to investigate this further. Once I have a Finance Team in place, we will assess the impact of the lockdown.

8. Domestic & Cleaning – Anticipating £2.8K for 3 months to March? This seems quite high compared to spending to date, is there a reason for this?
 - A. The sports hall is now set up as a covid test site for staff and students. I have assumed additional cleaning costs, bins etc, as part of this operation.

9. Telephone rental – will the LA provide a credit for this before the end of the year?
 - A. I will continue to chase this.

10. Internal Recharge – the report totals £22,408 but this is £7K lower than the value included in the budget at £15,408 – can I just ask why?
 - A. It is an error – apologies. The total year-end forecast for income on ledger code 87101 Internal Recharge should be £22,408. Therefore, an additional £7000 income should be included in the carry forward figure, taking it to £271,542 (£142,019 underspend in 2020/21).

11. School meals contract £7.4K higher than budget – what is the reason for this?
- A. This figure has not been updated since the November Governors meeting. Given the uncertainty of the currently lockdown, and staff shortages in the Finance Team, I have not had time to do a full evaluation of possible impact. This will be re-validated once I have additional Finance staff to support.
12. The computers being received through the DfE scheme are low spec – are these suitable and able to keep up with the remote learning demands?
- A. No – the machines have very little memory, so we are unable to load the Microsoft office suite, the IT are providing workarounds to enable students to access it via the web browser. The operating system is Windows 8, released in 2012.
If you “Google” search the question “Can I still use Windows 8 in 2020?” This is the answer you receive: -
With no more security updates, continuing to use Windows 8 or 8.1 can be risky. The biggest problem you will find is the development and discovery of security flaws in the operating system. ... In fact, quite a lot of users are still sticking to Windows 7, and that operating system lost all support back in January 2020.17 Jun 2020
13. Do we now have enough laptops?
- A. No – we need another 40 to meet demand.
14. How many work packs did we have to send out?
- A. Approximately 120
15. COVID catch up grant is instead of Year 7 catch up grant – correct? So far, we have only spent it on salary costs – what would we normally spend it on & has anyone asked for monies to be spent on anything else
- A. The income is in the Covid Catch-up Grant on code 81136. At the end of the financial year, any unspent grant income will form part of the underspend. Catch-up funding planned/incurred expenditure details attached.
16. Have we received the LA Capital costs now?
- A. I assume you are referencing the costs incurred by the school, as part of the reception/office rebuild/refurbishment? No, I have not received confirmation of the amounts yet. I have spoken to Jo Prophet, from the Capital Team, this morning, who said they have had a meeting about our school project, and she will get someone to confirm the figures for us.
17. Are we insured for losses regarding the Astro & the drama hall?
- A. No – we do not buy “Business Interruption Insurance”. Having looked at some of the headlines, a lot of the policies do not cover global pandemics.

Debbie Carter
11th January 2021