

**MINUTES OF THE CAREW LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER AT 4.00PM**

Members: Mr P Chambers (Chair)  
Mrs J Sherborne (Vice Chair)  
Mr R Watkins (Principal)  
Mrs A Acik  
Mr S Brooks  
Mr E Murphy  
Mrs S Butcher  
Mrs J O'Connor  
Mr K Leggatt  
Ms R Duggan

Also present: Mrs H Morris – Vice Principal  
Mrs B Scott – Head of Finance (Academies)  
Ms S Challenger – Clerk (standing in for Mrs Ganderton)

***The clerk chaired the meeting until item 5ii).***

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

Governors **WELCOMED** the two new governors, Kevin Leggatt and Ruth Duggan. Mr Leggatt will hold the portfolio for finances and resources, and Ms Duggan will hold the portfolio for teaching and learning.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- i) There were no declarations of interest.
- ii) Ms Challenger asked any governors who had not already done so to please complete and return the annual declaration of interest form. Blank forms were circulated to governors.

**4. Skills Audit Analysis**

Ms Challenger asked any governors who had not already done so to please complete and return the annual skills analysis form. Blank forms were circulated to governors.

**5. Constitution and Appointments**

- i) Ms Challenger asked governors to propose the appointment of the Chair of the LGB until autumn term 2017. Mr Chambers indicated that he was willing to stand again. Other nominations were invited and none were forthcoming.

Governors unanimously **APPROVED** the reappointment of Mr Chambers as Chair.

***The meeting was chaired by Mr Chambers from this point.***

- ii) Governors were asked to propose the appointment of the Vice Chair of the LGB until autumn term 2017. Mrs Sherborne indicated that she was willing to stand again. Other nominations were invited and none were forthcoming. Governors unanimously **APPROVED** the reappointment of Mrs Sherborne as Vice Chair.
- iii) Governors **NOTED** the appointment of Mr Leggatt and Ms Duggan, who will both serve a three year term of office.
- iv) Governors **NOTED** that Mrs Acik has taken on the role of HR and Organisational Development portfolio governor, and that her term of office ends on 15.12.16. Governors unanimously **APPROVED** her reappointment for a further term.
- v) Governors **NOTED** that Emmet Murphy's appointment expired on 06.11.16 and unanimously **APPROVED** his reappointment with effect from 07.11.16 for a three year term of office.
- vi) Governors **NOTED** that all appointments are subject to ratification by the OHCAT Board on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## **6. Minutes of Last Meeting**

Governors **NOTED** a minor amendment to the minutes (change of meeting date from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 9<sup>th</sup> November). Mr Chambers amended the minutes by hand, after which they were agreed and signed as a correct copy.

## **7. Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda**

- i) Further to minute 3ii), Governors **NOTED** that 131 students had taken part in the most recent survey, a strong turnout. Mr Chambers asked Mr Watkins to convey governors' thanks to all participants.
- ii) Further to minute 3ii), Governors **NOTED** that House Captains are being appointed and that their role will include reporting to governors about the school. Mr Chambers asked what form this would take. Mr Watkins said he envisaged House Captains meeting with portfolio governors during visits, as presenting at meetings can be daunting for students. Mr Chambers acknowledged this but requested that fellow students also be asked to attend LGB meetings as they have done in the past, noting that this provides opportunities to coach and mentor students and help to build their confidence and skill set. Mr Watkins agreed but said that transport can sometimes be an issue, given that governors' meetings are held after school hours. Mr Brooks suggested that students could meet with a smaller number of governors prior to the full meeting, in order to make it less formal. Governors **AGREED** that

going forward both strategies should be tried, in order to maximise the input of student voice.

Mr Watkins said that other recent opportunities for student feedback had included an assembly this term, the outcomes of which will feed into the school improvement plan, and a pre-Christmas student survey which is currently underway.

- iii) Further to minute 6iii), Mr Watkins updated governors on the Carew Travel Plan. He has recently met with Karen Cunningham (OHC&AT) and the Travel Plan Advisor, and road safety awareness has been embedded into the curriculum e.g. an upcoming 'Be Bright, Be Seen' mufti day themed around visibility. However, Mr Watkins said he was keen to avoiding doing too much until further details of the free school roll out were known.

Mr Chambers asked whether parents were involved in the Travel Plan and Mr Watkins said yes, that it was crucial to secure parent/carer buy-in.

- iv) Further to minute 7), Mr Watkins said that after discussion with Mrs Ganderton they had agreed that a general letter of introduction should go to parents this term.

**Action: Mr Watkins to write to parents this term, introducing Mr Leggatt and Ms Duggan as new governors.**

## **8. Principal's Report**

### Pupil Matters

Mr Watkins noted the increase on roll and said that London Borough of Sutton have agreed to increase the PAN to 185 from next year. He commended Lisa Nagle for her excellent work in managing admissions and enquiries.

### Budget

Mr Watkins noted the challenging situation with regard to school finance, both locally and nationally. Progress on the National Funding Formula has stalled for now and local authorities are increasingly stretched in terms of both finance and resources. He welcomed the appointment of Mr Leggatt as finance and resources portfolio holder, saying that this would support the strong working partnership between Carew and the OHC&AT Finance team.

### Staff and Personnel

Mr Watkins said that five new TAs have been appointed this week, all of a very high standard. The interview process included a safeguarding interview with Mrs Morris, who is Carew's Designated Lead for Safeguarding, and a pupil panel which gave pupils a chance to ask questions as well as testing interviewees' interactions with pupils with varying additional needs. Mr Watkins said he was very impressed at the

calibre of all those appointed, noting that as some funding is only on a termly basis it is useful for the school to have some measure of flexibility with supply.

Four new teachers have also been appointed and will be starting in January 2017. There has been some long term sickness absence this term which has impacted on the school, however Mr Watkins noted that OHC&AT HR had provided useful supporting in managing this.

Staff wellbeing has been high on the agenda this term, with Wellbeing Wednesdays proving a hit with staff. Mr Watkins said that the staff survey for the first half of the term showed that staff feel well supported. Mr Brooks said that there is a noticeably positive feeling in the school which is great to see, especially during this crucial time where the school is working towards becoming Outstanding. Mrs Morris agreed that morale is high. Mr Chambers commended Mr Watkins for placing such emphasis on staff wellbeing, saying that it plays a central part in the retention of quality staff, particularly in special schools which can be harder to recruit to.

### School Improvement

Mr Watkins outlined the ongoing work within school to improve the quality of teaching, saying that use of the Teacher Evaluation Schedule is going well and that weekly monitoring of areas including behaviour, communication with home, learning walks, displays and the quality of feedback continues to provide useful data. This term there is a particular focus on reading skills, and Mr Watkins reported that he can already see great progress being made.

Improvements made to both Upper and Lower School curricula are bedding in and working well for pupils and teachers. Mr Watkins noted in particular the sterling work done by Carly Skilton in leading the Upper School English groups, and by Mike Wood in developing maths provision throughout the school.

### Continuing Professional Development and Training

Mr Watkins outlined the CPD currently being undertaken within the school. He is completing his NPQH and has taken part in a Sutton Schools' Review of Wallington County Grammar School. Four members of the extended leadership team are taking part in the NPQSL. Teaching staff are encouraged to share good practice both within Carew and by visiting other schools, and there is coaching, mentoring and SLT support available to help develop teaching and learning practice.

Carew has appointed five Senior Learning Leaders (HLTAs) to help train and develop the TA team, and TAs have been offered the opportunity to take Level 2 and Level 3 courses in Supporting Teaching.

### Health and Safety

The recent Health and Safety Audit went very well; details will be shared with governors in the spring term. Mr Watkins praised the hard work of Lawrence Taggart, the Carew Site Manager, and Louise Milton, OHC&AT Facilities Manager,

who Mr Watkins said had provided exemplary support throughout the preparation and completion of the audit.

### Safeguarding

Mr Watkins asked Mrs Morris to update governors on safeguarding at Carew. Mrs Morris said that even with 30 more pupils, the number of reported safeguarding concerns has reduced this term. There were no MASH referrals made in September, as against the spring term when referrals were being made weekly. Mrs Morris said she felt this showed that children are being better supported and processes are more efficient. Mr Brooks said that this was good news, particularly in light of the high caseloads reported by social workers.

Mrs Morris said that Carew could benefit from a full time family support worker, to pick up the minutiae, as families in crisis often respond better to someone who isn't part of the teaching staff.

### Compliments and Complaints

There have been no complaints received so far this half term. Relations with stakeholders remain positive and Mr Watkins drew governors' attention to a comment from one of the transport escorts who said "Every child leaves your school happy". Additionally, Mrs Morris said that one of the TA interviewees had commented on how warm and welcoming she had found both Mr Watkins and the school in general.

### School Events

Mr Watkins circulated details of Carew's upcoming events. Mrs Butcher asked when parents would be notified of dates and times, and Mr Watkins confirmed that letters would be going out that day.

Mr Chambers asked that governors support the school by attending school events wherever possible.

### Dashboard

Mr Watkins explained that typicality judgements are made through observing a number of areas including pupil behaviour, observations of learning and teaching, engagement with families, displays of work etc. Some new teaching staff have joined the school this year and thus will require further observation, but overall the picture is a positive one. Mr Watkins stressed that for those teachers needing support, this may only be in one area of their practice.

Observations are carried out between three staff, with one teacher having a coaching conversation with the teacher being observed, while the third member of staff mediates. This ensures that observations are positive and constructive. Unqualified teachers are taking up placements at other schools to further their experience and skills.

Mr Chambers said he was impressed at the support available to teaching staff, and asked what typicality will look like in March. Mr Watkins said that staff across the school are always aiming for Good to Outstanding, but that with new staff starting in January he would keep an open mind as to what will be achieved by March. He noted that Ofsted's incoming Chief Inspector may choose to remove the Outstanding grade altogether, but said that this would not remove the responsibility of all staff to deliver what they know to be outstanding teaching.

Mr Watkins noted the relatively high incidences of behaviour across the autumn term, saying this was to be expected to some extent as children tire towards the end of term but that the SLT is clear on the need to ensure that school remains a calm and orderly environment. Exclusions have reduced this half term and the Behaviour Team are working effectively within the school. Ms Duggan said that her recent learner walk confirmed that Carew is a calm and positive school: during her walk she saw no incidents occurring and had been very impressed at pupils' engagement with their learning, particularly in cooking and art classes.

Mr Chambers asked Mr Watkins to explain the rationale used in deciding whether to exclude a student. Mr Watkins said the bottom line was always the safety of fellow pupils and staff.

Mr Chambers invited questions and comments from governors. Mrs Acik said that the presentation of staff sick days could be misleading and didn't reveal much about overall trends. Mr Watkins agreed, saying that any long term sickness absence will skew the figures quite a lot. Mrs Morris said she had noted a marked decrease in the amount of planned absence requests she had received. Mrs Sherborne said that the dashboards were still in development for all OHC&AT provision and agreed that it would be beneficial to separate out long and short term sickness absence. Mr Brooks asked whether a comparison against the same point in previous years would be possible and Mrs Sherborne said she would take this back to the MIS team in her capacity as Executive Director of OHC&AT Services.

**Action: Mrs Sherborne to feedback to OHC&AT MIS team.**

Mr Chambers congratulated Mr Watkins on behalf of governors for what has been a great start to the year.

Governors **RECEIVED** Mr Watkins' report including the Dashboard.

## **9. Portfolio Governor Visits**

Mr Chambers thanked governors for their portfolio reports and invited each to summarise their reports in turn.

Ethos, Vision and Strategy: Mr Chambers said that he had greatly enjoyed his own visit, in particular being guided to a lesson by a happy and confident student who clearly took great pride in being part of the school. A productive conversation had been had with Mr Watkins regarding the development of the sixth form provision. Overall Mr Chambers said his impression was that staff at Carew are well motivated and students well engaged and positive about their school. Mr Chambers particularly

noted the good communication systems put in place by Mr Watkins during his first term as Principal.

Teaching and Learning: Ms Duggan said that, as previously discussed, her impression of teaching and learning at Carew was very positive. Mr Watkins noted that Ms Duggan is Deputy Head at Eagle House School and said that as such her endorsement was particularly welcomed.

Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding: Mrs Sherborne said her visit this term had focused on child protection and highlighted the excellent progress made at the school over the last few years, in that there are no concerns at all. The next visit is planned to focus on health and safety and attendance. Mr Chambers asked about the school's approach to the Prevent duty. Mrs Morris said that staff training has been updated and that pupils' online activity is monitored very closely using Impero, which flags anything and everything that might be of concern. The whole staff Prevent training will be repeated in the spring term. Mrs Morris also said that she had recently gone through the Prevent protocol for a pupil after a teacher had flagged a possible risk, and felt reassured that the teacher had raised this with her as it showed that the training has been effective. Mr Watkins also said that the work being done towards Rights Respecting School status fed into the work around Prevent.

Mrs Acik asked about tightening up signing in procedures and Mrs Sherborne said that recommendations had been made.

Finance and Resources: Mr Leggatt acknowledged that, while he is an accountant, school finance is a new area to him. He said that it would be helpful to have some further guidance regarding the expected content of portfolio visits and reports. His main concern was regarding some issues around the numbers, which he would like to see resolved. Mrs Scott acknowledged that some of the numbers had not been consistent, saying that as the accounts had not been signed off by auditors at that time the numbers had been subject to change. Mr Watkins said he and Mr Leggatt had been in close contact with Mrs Scott and that he was grateful for her continuing support.

Human Resources: Ms Acik said that she would also welcome further guidance on what governors, and the OHC&AT Board, would like to see in portfolio reports. Regarding her visit, she said that her meeting with Jane Easton (Interim Head of HR at OHC&AT) had given her a real sense of change across the whole family, how the HR team is growing and how they support schools across the Trust. Points of discussion included what is needed to support Outstanding within Carew, an overview of HR policies and procedures, understanding what is available to support staff with wellbeing and team building, and ensuring that the school continues to be supported through the change process around the free school. Mr Watkins said that Carew now has a dedicated link HR representative (Shamani) who has already proven to be very helpful.

Marketing and Business Development: Mr Brooks said that he and Mrs Butcher had looked at the Carew website, which they found to be generally much improved, with just a few areas to be updated. Mr Chambers agreed that the website is looking

great and noted the regular communications from SLT as a particular improvement. Mrs Butcher said she would like to develop a Carew Friends page. Mrs Sherborne asked that staff continue to send good news stories to Alice Irvine, OHC&AT Marketing Manager, as they provide a wonderful snapshot of school life. Mr Leggatt asked whether web hits etc. are tracked and Mrs Sherborne confirmed that Alice manages the metrics for all OHC&AT websites. Mr Brooks said he would pick this up with Alice at their next meeting. Ms Challenger said it would also be interesting to follow up in the next parent survey, as previous surveys had revealed a substantial proportion of Carew parents and carers did not regularly look at or explore the website.

Mrs Butcher said that Carew Friends had enlisted parents to help with promoting events e.g. leafleting local homes. Mr Brooks agreed that Carew Friends are really raising the profile of the school and that this will help when the free school transition gets underway. Mrs Butcher said that the Friends are also getting great engagement from local businesses e.g. providing prizes for raffles etc.

Regarding concerns over the lag in purchases, Mr Brooks said that Mr Watkins was proactively managing this and things had improved. There is also now a Finance representative (Magdalena) at OHC&AT which has helped. Mrs Scott acknowledged that there had been problems and said that the Finance team has experienced staffing issues which have impacted upon performance to some extent. Mr Watkins asked that governors note the superb support provided to him by Mrs Scott and her team, and by Magdalena.

Governors **RECEIVED** the portfolio visit reports.

## **10. Finance and Funding**

- i) Mrs Scott updated governors on both the final and management accounts. Carew remains in a very healthy financial position, with a great cash balance and good reserves. With regard to the inconsistencies noted by Mr Leggatt in his portfolio visit report, Mrs Scott confirmed that the prior year accounts had not been signed off at that time and thus the numbers had been subject to change. Audited accounts will be made available to governors shortly.

**Action: Mrs Scott to update Mr Leggatt with regard to the audited accounts.**

Mrs Scott said that staffing issues within the Finance team have now been worked through and she continues to work closely with Mr Watkins to smooth out processes. Purchasing will shortly migrate to an online portal system, which should improve visibility. Mr Watkins has agreed that this will be in place by January. Mrs Acik asked whether staff would receive training in this regard and Mrs Scott confirmed that full training would be given.

Mr Chambers asked whether there were any particular details of the management accounts to which governors' eyes should be drawn. Mrs Scott noted that the increase in pupil numbers to above the PAN meant that LAs are being invoiced for place funding and top up, and that there are no issues

with this so far. Staffing is also currently under budget. Mr Watkins said they are working hard to reduce the agency spend. Mrs Scott said that supply has now been divided into cover for sickness and cover for vacancy, which allows for closer scrutiny. Mrs Sherborne said that OHCAT is currently tendering for an agency supplier to drive down cost, but acknowledged that sometimes one supplier cannot meet every need in such a varied organisation.

Mr Chambers thanked Mrs Scott for her report and for her ongoing support of Carew.

Governors **RECEIVED** the End of Year and Management Accounts.

- ii) Mrs Scott requested governors' approval for the OHCAT invoice for Core Services Contribution, confirming that the contribution rate is worked out on a sliding scale relating to each school's Ofsted grade. Mr Watkins said that the contribution is much lower than the top slice paid by certain other schools, and that as such it offers good value for money.

Governors **APPROVED** the invoice.

## **11. Pay Committee Recommendations**

Mr Chambers reported that the Pay Committee had been impressively well prepared by Mr Watkins, and the rationale for each pay decision clearly and persuasively presented. He had been very pleased to approve all the recommendations which have now been actioned by Payroll.

## **12. Policies and Procedures**

Governors **NOTED** the policies and procedures that were approved by the OHCAT Board on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Ms Challenger informed governors that policies and procedures will be available via the governors' portal which is soon to go live.

## **13. OHC&AT Documents for Information**

Governors **NOTED** the OHCAT Programme of Work 2016-17. Mrs Sherborne confirmed that the OHCAT Scheme of Delegation and Schedule of Responsibility are both going to Board on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

## **14. Any Other Business**

- i) Mrs Butcher asked when parents would find out the overall examination results for the school. Mrs Morris said that parents have also been asking her for this information. Mr Murphy said that with regard to accredited outcomes, the school has hugely increased the breadth of choice available for pupils over the last two years. Mr Watkins said there are three classes in Year 11, two of which are taking Entry Level accredited courses and one which is taking GCSEs in English, maths and science. Mr Chambers confirmed that he has visited these classes and they are excellent.

All governors agreed that it is crucial to shout about successes such as exam results and outcomes if ambitions for children with additional needs are to be raised.

Mrs Sherborne said that governors usually receive an executive summary of the SEF at the autumn term LGB meeting, which contains useful information on trends and average point scores. Mr Watkins acknowledged this point.

Mrs Acik suggested writing to parents with an overview of the range of provision and 15-16 exam results and governors **AGREED** this would be useful. It would also be helpful to include some information on the website.

**Action: Mr Watkins to write to parents.**

- ii) Ms Challenger notified governors of the requirement for all schools and multi-academy trusts to supply up to date governor information to Edubase.

**Action: Ms Challenger to request the necessary information from governors via email.**

- iii) Mrs O'Connor asked about the school's approach to pets on school premises, specifically dogs accompanying parents onto the premises at drop off or pick up times. Mr Watkins said that Carew is looking into getting a school dog, but that other dogs represent an unknown quantity and as such it is safest to enact a blanket ban. Governors **AGREED** this rationale.
- iv) Mr Chambers congratulated Mr Watkins on behalf of governors for the success of the free school bid, saying that Carew students deserve to have the best and most fit for purpose accommodation in order to further their learning. Mr Brooks asked whether governors would convene a working party to have input into the new build. Mrs Sherborne said that this would be the case once planning permission is granted; at that point governors could begin to receive an update on the build at each LGB meeting, and there could also be a rolling update on the website. Mrs Acik asked when planning permission was likely to be decided. Mr Watkins said it would be going to LBS committee in January, and that in the meantime councillors from Sutton had visited Carew in order to get a sense of the issues with the current building.

## 15. Date of Next Meeting

The following dates were agreed:

- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 4pm
- Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 at 4pm
- Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 4pm

## 16. Confidentiality

There were no items of confidentiality.

Mr Chambers closed the meeting by congratulating Mr Watkins and the Senior Leadership Team for a strong team effort in exciting times.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.

CHAIR\_\_\_\_\_

DATE\_\_\_\_\_