# Sawston Village College Local Governing Body 2





## 5th December 2023

Present: Priya Schoenfelder (PSC), Jonathan Russell (JRU), Polly Stanton (PS), Alan Sutton (ASU), Eleanor Clapp (EC), Gloria Reed (GR), Isabel Thomas (IT), John Godwood (JG), (Clerk)

Apologies: Rachel Kerr (RK), Colin Sausman (CS)

In attendance: Sue Gelder (SGE), Pieter Wallace (PWA), Jon Culpin (JC), CEO AL

Item No.	Item	Action
1	Standing Items	
1.1	Welcome PSC welcomed all to the meeting with a special welcome to Jon Culpin, CEO Anglian Learning.	
1.2	Apologies As noted above.	
1.3	Conflicts of interest None.	
1.4	Minutes from the last meeting Approved as a true and accurate record and will be signed by the Chair.	
1.5	<ul> <li>Update on actions</li> <li>Training – Clerk to check we are compliant and to email LGB to confirm.</li> <li>Staff Governor advert is live. To follow up end of 2023.</li> <li>Peer review process ('Blueprint Enquiry') – People and Leadership Enquiry, January 11th – Curriculum Enquiry and Inclusion Enquiry tbc and Safeguarding Enquiry has already taken place.</li> <li>Safeguarding training for IT and CS. IT has completed and pending confirmation from CS.</li> <li>ID access card – Clerk to follow up.</li> <li>It was determined that the Safeguarding Quiz, used in-school to check staff understanding and compliance, is too staff focused for LGB. Evidence that training has taken place, KCSIE and all other relevant documents have been read is sufficient.</li> </ul>	Training – Clerk to check we are compliant and to email LGB to confirm.  Clerk to follow up ID cards / lanyards

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signed by the chair	

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## Matters arising Young Carers – information provided later in meeting. 2 Trust / Chair / Clerk's Business 2.1 **Clerk's Business** - LGB to inform the Clerk if they are unable to access SharePoint. Note, all historical Clerk to ensure all folders and files have been moved here. have access to the Going forward, the Clerk will take the minutes remotely either in person on-line or SharePoint drive. via a recording. We are also looking to organise a Team's link for each meeting so that LGB can attend remotely if required. 2.2 Chair's Business - Governors to review new AL IT new policy. 2.3 Jonathan Culpin, AL CEO (JCU) **Key facts** There are 16 schools in the AL Trust. The most recent addition being Wimbish, which joined at the start of this academic year. It was also mentioned that a new school will be established in the new Waterbeach development in September 2025. AL is open to growth including working with other Trusts. AL is comprised of 8,000 pupils and 1,000 staff, £15M funding and has £1.5M in capital funding to spread across schools. AL uses a capacity management plan to see where the money is best spent. SVC hasn't been a recipient of this funding for the last 2-4 years due to the pending rebuilding work. Delays with this means SVC hasn't received any capital reinvestment. Working with teachers The goal of AL is to enable inclusive teaching and learning. This is achieved by focusing on the creation of an environment where this can happen. It was emphasised that the AL role is not to tell schools how to teach, but to create an environment that fosters inclusive teaching and learning. AL work with leaders to give them the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to create such an environment. Community is important to the AL team, and they are committed to working with leaders and the school to give them the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to create an inclusive learning environment. Many Trusts operate differently. Some follow a command-and-control model where the curriculum is determined centrally. However, AL enables its schools a lot of freedom within an overarching framework, giving schools the independence to determine what is appropriate for their school. In some Trusts, the academy council replaces the Local Governing Body. AL schools work in partnership with each other. They are positive environments where people want to work and learn and share and create new knowledge. AL wants no academy left behind and can redeploy resources for academy improvement. AL wants to be an employer of choice.

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LGB asked if the different cohorts and demographic differences add complexity. JCU confirmed it can.

The four AL blueprints set the overall principles and expectations as a framework for all AL academies. These were created by the central executive in consultation with HT/Principals/Strategic Groups and each school evaluates how they are meeting the criteria in their own context.

AL is one of eight national Creative Collaborative hubs. This explores how to encourage creativity across the curriculum. SVC's focus has been on critical thinking and curiosity, piloted by the Geography department. The national importance of this and our other work in the arts has been recognised by The Arts Council in a memorandum of understanding.

AL invests in schools which are struggling through additional staffing and leadership so that schools can stand on their own two feet.

#### - Challenges in SIP and as an organisation

Across all 16 schools, the situation in schools has never been so tough in terms of behaviour, inclusion, SEND, parental complaints, etc. This is a national picture, well recognised by the unions. AL are supporting the leadership and wellbeing of the workforce and finding ways to invest in specialist support for SEND and vulnerable pupils. AL move knowledge around schools and address workload issues but recognise more work needs to be done, within the difficult financial and societal context. In Cambridgeshire, traditionally one of the least well-funded counties in England, the situation is challenging, particularly with regards to SEND and BAIPs; in addition to working with the Local Authority, AL and SVC are finding solutions independently.

LGB asked if AL could share the development of an alternative model that could be used by all schools. Many children don't learn as well in traditional classrooms. Is this an option? JCU agreed that SEND is hugely costly and doing something together as a Trust is an option.

LGB asked if SVC has funding for the additional SEND staffing needs or an enhanced base just to meet SEND/SEMH needs. JRU confirmed that SVC does not have the funds, expertise or staffing for this as there is a significant set-up and running cost and an enhanced base requires capacity in addition to what else the school is trying to achieve.

#### - How LGB plays a part.

Schools are aligned with AL but have independence on how they operate. Overtime it is hoped schools and the Trust will work closer together, but we need to ensure the balance is right.

The Trust Board is the ultimate authority in the governance of a school. However, as the Trust grows, it becomes increasingly difficult for the Board to constantly take responsibility for shaping, and championing school improvement and values. Therefore, the Local Governing Body (LGB) takes on this responsibility. The LGB supports leadership and is fundamental to the Trust as a whole.

The LGB and Trust Board have a two-way communication process, but it is not as effective as it could be. To improve the communication process, a feedback loop is

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needed. This feedback loop should be improved and better ways to communicate can be explored. Additionally, AL are considering organising a Governor Day in the Summer to share best practices, but finding an agreed time for this is difficult. LGB confirmed it was good to hear AL is acknowledging better communication is required. JCU added the AL is still a relatively new Trust and is continually learning and improving. LGB asked how success is measured. JCU explained this is through staff satisfaction, retention, and parent questionnaires. It's important to note that the AL is not driven by Ofsted outcomes. While academic outcomes and fundamental levels of literacy are important, AL focuses on the enriching experiences young people have and leadership for young people. JRU thanked Jonathan Culpin for attending tonight. 3 Principal's Update 3.1 Principal's Update (verbal): staffing, premises, results, culture Summary of activities that took place this half term: **Photographic exhibition**: A photographic exhibition was held tonight. Chess academy: The AL chess academy is up and running and well **DoE successes**: There were lots of Duke of Edinburgh's Award successes. Visits: There were 13 visits this term. Young Carers event: A Young Carers event was held. Active week: An active week was held. Anti-bullying week: An anti-bullying week was held. Black history week: A black history week was held. Children in Need: Children in need was celebrated. **December Sawston Give:** December Sawston Give was celebrated. **Arts council England**: Arts council England is hosting an event at SVC on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November. Clubs: There are 50 clubs that are well attended. According to the GCSE results paper, Sawston College has achieved record-breaking results this year. The College measures up very favourably for national averages and is in the top 7<sup>th</sup> percentile of schools nationally overall and in the top 1% in certain areas. However, the College still seeks to improve the results of the PP pupils. The school has just had mock exam results and with Autumn term data, it is estimated that 50% of pupils will achieve grades 7+ at GCSE and estimates overall are strong. LGB thanked JRU for the excellent report and congratulated all the College on the results. The report is clear and comprehensive. It celebrates strengths and identifies areas for improvement. 3.2 **Staff Report** Interviewing an English teacher tomorrow and will likely need a further English teacher for September next year. LGB asked if the College is in a better position than previous years or if the school is still being overwhelmed by recruitment and retention issues? JRU feel recruitment is

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more manageable although applicants remain very low. There is a strong HR and, as a result. we are in a different position than previously. There are still gaps in terms of recruitment.

#### 3.3 **Premises Report**

The College received a strong report which has been validated by the AL Director of Operations. The College capital build will be put to public consultation by the DoE hopefully on 23/01/2024.

LGB asked if the Facilities Manager will be given more responsibilities with the new build. JRU confirmed, yes, this team member will take on operational management of the new build such as liaising with the contractors.

#### 3.4 Risk Register

JRU and SLT were asked to identify 3-5 risks to focus on this academic year:

- Recruitment and retention are an ongoing risk.
- The new build project has taken a lot of time to develop, but it has created a strong and encouraging project. However, there is a risk this year in terms of development and the future risk is capacity to deliver the project without changing or impacting negatively on the College culture.
- Behaviour, which is nationally a challenge and a significant challenge on a day-to-day basis, is a current risk. The main issue is around cohort in year 9 who don't engage and dataset in year 9 is not as strong as other year groups. This is not completely new but starker than before. There is a potential to see a decline in results in 2025 and 2026 unless the Y9 cohort improve and respond to the College interventions.
- In terms of PP and SEND in years 7 and 8, there is an increasing number of cases

JRU requested LGB feedback if these are the right risks. Are there others that should be included? These will be reviewed in Spring 2024.

LGB agreed this is a good way to focus efforts on specific risk areas particularly those which will affect learning of children. LGB agree these are the risks which will impact the outcomes of learning.

LGB asked how as a group if we could look at the new scheme of delegation and any fundamental changes. PSC to follow up with CS and JRU.

LGB asked if the College is finding parents are supportive of behaviour measures. JRU confirmed yes in general, but it is possible for parents to say the right thing but are unable to impact changes to behaviour. The College hasn't seen an increase in formal complaints but is seeing an increase in number of pupils with challenging behaviours.

#### 3.5 **GDPR audit**

A couple of areas were highlighted from the audit including the potential differences in software download licensing between Europe and US companies. Team members to check with IT before downloading software. The second point raised was to always keep the culture of GDPR visible. Both have been highlighted to staff.

JRU requested LGB feedback if these are the right risks. Are there others that should be included? These will be review in Spring 2024.

PSC to follow up with CS and JRU the fundamental changes in the scheme of delegation.

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4	Safeguarding, Behaviour and Welfare	
4.1	Safeguarding Executive summary and blueprint enquiry outcome Safeguarding at Sawston is effective and has a lot of good practices that are shared with other AL teams. It is worth noting that staff are expected to check on IAP pupils (by ringing them) if they are on part-time hours, even if they are not expected to be in. This advice was provided by the AL Safeguarding Director.	
	LGB asked what staff are expected to do if they can't contact the pupils. Are they supposed to carry out a welfare check? JRU confirmed that safeguarding and welfare checks are carried out in cases where there is a concern.	
	LGB suggested the school should consider the AL advice to register pupil attendance at after school clubs, so they are aware if vulnerable pupils are in attendance. SGE to further explore if required.	
	LGB asked if the safeguarding postcards have started. SGE confirmed, yes these are happening and being used using sensibly so far.	
	LGB thanked the school for what they have set up for young carers.	
4.2	Attendance Report - SGE Attendance is currently at 93.26% putting the school in a (relatively) strong position but still below the target figure of 95%. The Trust average is 92.26%. Most cases are pupils with persistence absence and there has been some improvement in this area.	Clare Greaney is
	The LGB has suggested exploring the topic further. While the implemented measures have had an impact, attendance could be a key factor in improving academic performance. Clare Greaney is expected to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss attendance.	expected to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss attendance.
	LGB asked if the school tracks truancy at home and within school i.e. onsite but not attending lessons. Yes, this is tracked and acted upon.	
	SGE explained that there are fewer IAP pupils than spring term last academic year. Many previous IAPs were when we came back from COVID. In pre COVID younger year groups the school is not seeing behaviour and truancy at the same level. In the younger years, the school are seeing fewer children who are struggling to attend school but more children who are attending but have challenging behaviours.	
	Trust software can be used to compare SVC year 9 and year 10 cohort suspensions with other schools in the Trust. Additionally, SGE is interested in visiting Bottisham and Netherhall to learn about their suspension management and the approaches they have taken. It is worth noting that Netherhall uses different pathways and alternative provision for suspensions.	
	The school is planning to develop Compass House into a more formal teaching space with a set timetable, which can offer more personalised and targeted learning specific to the individual. The duty room will be moved to a bigger space with greater capacity to deal with on-site truancy and defiance. The school has reported an increase in the number of pupils who refuse instructions.	

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On an individual level lots of resources are being allocated to children. Some receive PSP reports to the end, and IAP (alternative provision). The school is working with all resources they have available to them.

There has been a significant increase regarding to safeguarding concerns and social care welfare referrals. Once referred, many don't meet the required criteria to be taken forward. There are more EHA being written and, again, some pupils don't meet the needs for the referrals.

LGB suggested it sounds like welfare are interested at the point of risk to life and limb otherwise a referral goes to a differently trained staff. SVC is using all resources available to them to support pupils including home visits especially to those pupils whose parents don't know what to do next. The school is investing to do as much as it can including redeployment of resource and trying to buy in more resource including staffing.

#### 4.3 **SEND**

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There are more SEND coming in each day as needs assessment comes in.

#### Quality Assurance

#### 5.1 **QA Update**

JG reviewed summary of LGB responsibilities which can be found in the LGB handbook re. the LGB should ensuring the standards and quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory and monitor the processes that go into this. The report listed the monitoring processes and outcomes.

A great number of QA processes have happened this term so far. The school has a rigorous QA system and will deliver what it says it is going to do.

The mock results with staff report are stronger than last year which is great to see. Comparing the results FFT estimates shows SVC is in the top 20% for most of the subjects. Full analysis of mocks is yet to be completed.

LGB queried the Further Maths listed. This is a class taught after school which pupils express an interest in attending at KS4 outside of options. Whether this is to be long-term class offered is yet to be confirmed, but it does give pupils an advantage if they wish to continue to study maths after KS4.

LGB asked if the school looks at variance. Do you take into consideration the number of pupils doing each subject. PWA and JRU confirmed yes, this is important, and patterns are looked for and reviewed. This year's mock performance remarkably higher than this time last year. This needs to be understood through conversations with subject leads. The pupils' approach to the mocks was impressive and followed by an afternoon celebration.

LGB asked if further analyses are carried out to look at the performance of different pupil groups. JRU confirmed yes, a lot of this carried out at estimate grade not around mocks. If there is a disparity, then the teaching staff look at why.

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# 6 Governance 6.1 Governor Day 07.11.23 Feedback PSC asked LGB for any further feedback on the Governor Day in addition to their feedback on the report provided. All agreed, the day went incredibly well and was very informative, enabling the LGB to see in action what is discussed at LGB. It was a well thought out and organized day providing LGB with visibility of the school in action. This included a Pupil Senate meeting and a staff meeting. The latter provided an opportunity to see how open, supportive and collegial the team are, with lots of energy, clear modelling from SLT which runs through how all staff present and everyone feeling part of. All were very welcoming of governance in attendance and the camaraderie was obvious. The LGB enquired about how to communicate the school's activities with parents and whether more could be done. Last academic year, LGB launched Parent Engage in the Autumn to follow the school's parent survey in the summer. This first event received positive feedback from parents. This emphasised the need to keep engaging with both prospective and existing parents. Previously, the parent survey ran in Summer Term as part of this engagement and the LGB were planning for a termly Engage event calendar. We now need to take into account the new AL parent survey (currently running). During the meeting, the LGB suggested (continuing to) share how the school uses parental survey and feedback (as JRU has previously done). JRU suggested waiting to see how the survey changes and what information it provides. As above, LGB are keen to organise another parent engage day, but the best time needs to be thought through. The LGB discussed potential ideas: the Fountain magazine could interview some of the LGB members/have a section for LGB updates or the LGB presence could be made more formal at open evenings 6.2 At the Governor Day, one member of the LGB was pleased to hear a pupil mention that 'there is a club are for everyone in school, and if there isn't, you can just speak with a teacher and start one' and another who commented on missing out on all rich opportunities if you choose to attend school and not partake in any of the clubs on offer. This was great to hear. The College encourages different pupil groups to attend clubs. As mentioned above, further discussion is required on the best way to register attendance at these. Further work is also required to encourage more pupils to attend. **Developing the CIP 2024-27** JRU is planning the 2024-7 CIP, which will be divided into sections around the AL blueprints and the college's areas of responsibility. The plan will also include the college's own drivers, mission, and care values, which have underpinned everything the college does and have worked well. JRU does not intend to change them. The CIP will be developed with an eye on making sure we fit with the mission and vision of the Trust. There is clear alignment between the Trust and the College values, therefore maintaining the CIP focused on care values and further developing how these link with AL values makes sense.

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Our College outcomes are strong with only PA and open PA are below 90%. Our PP pupils do as well as all pupils average nationally. This is impressive. There is currently a 0.76 gap between PP and College overall score. ISDR uses this which shows (inaccurately) SVC PP pupils are significantly well below College average and do not take into consideration that PP are doing as well as national average. The College is tasked with reducing this gap. The easiest way would be to stop doing so well with all so the gap reduces, but this doesn't make sense. The results are one aspect of what the College does well and collectively open doors for what the pupils do next.

The Ofsted report from May asked for further clarity of explanation as an area to work on in addition to attendance.

JRU suggest the below as key drivers for the next year.

- Finances
- Recruitment
- Retention
- SEND needs and chronic underfunding at national and local level.

The College has a waiting list for year 7. These prospective pupils are already in another school pending a place at SVC. If the College is filled with pupils from the catchment area and not nearby villages outside the catchment area, this will change the demographics of the school. Currently, most year groups are below the maximum class size, and the total number of pupils is 1170. However, there is a risk that the college won't meet 240 pupils in year 7 each year, especially if there is a fall in demography in the future. All schools in Sawston are at their maximum capacity, which the local authority is reviewing.

LGB agreed that the CARE values are well embedded in the school and bring together everything we do. So much work has been invested and dropping this would not be good. JRU agreed that the CARE values fit with the College's identity within (and apart from) AL and work well.

JRU clarified that PP outcomes, participation, and engagement are already incorporated and attendance is baked in. There is more we could do on academic outcomes and with SEND as needs are rising. What we do now with inclusive with classrooms will disproportionately advantage the disadvantaged.

JRU explained we could look to do more work on recruitment and retention but locally we are doing as much as we can.

JRU went through the areas of the blueprints which are not yet fully embedded in the school. Could we do more on these areas in the CIP (e.g. focus on porosity, oracy and love of learning, be more radical and take bolder risks)? We are already achieving good grades and at one end pupils are very enabled and articulating and explaining what they are learning.

JRU asked LGB for feedback on what could be another priority? What would Governors like to see?

Following a breakout session into small groups, LGB presented the below ideas:

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8	AOB	
	None raised. The LGB thanked Jon Culpin again and PSC thanked all of the LBG for their continued commitment to the college, and JRU, his SLT and the staff team for their continued hard work this year.	

## Actions

Agenda Item No.	Action	Responsibility
1.4	Training – Clerk to check we are compliant and to email LGB to confirm.	Clerk
1.4	Clerk to follow up ID cards / lanyards.	Clerk
2.1	Clerk to ensure all have access to the SharePoint drive.	Clerk
2.2	Governors to review new AL IT new policy.	LGB
3.4	PSC to follow up with CS and JRU the fundamental changes in the scheme of delegation.	PSC
3.4	JRU requested LGB feedback if these are the right risks. Are there others that should be included? These will be review in Spring 2024.	JRU
4.2	Clare Greaney is expected to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss attendance.	JRU
6.2	JRU and the SLT will further the develop the CIP over the Spring term and bring to LGB Summer 1 LGB	JRU
6.4	SEND report link governor report – RK to take questions at the next meeting.	RK

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