

**Cromer Junior School  
Full Governing Board Meeting  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 6pm**

*(via Zoom) AS*

Present: John Simpson (Chair), John Sansby (Vice Chair), Angela Bullock, Adrian Woods, Amy Thompson, John Wollacombe (Link Trustee), Rob Martlew (CEO Synergy), Christine Dancaster (Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

None

**2. The Synergy Trust**

Rob Martlew (CEO & Head of Litcham School) introduced Synergy Trust to the Governors, and explained the structure and potential benefits to be gained from the merger between NNAT and Synergy.

- Efficient and effective
- School Capital Allocation Guarantee due to the size of the Trust
- Strong School Improvement Program
- Trust Heads meet regularly which is integral to the Trust
- Buy into external networks
- Events for Class Teachers
- Maths Mastery
- Combined SENCO network
- VNET support
- Sporting events for pupils
- Governance has a similar structure with Chairs meeting once a term.
- LGBs do not have committees, there is more focus on the quality of education (less administration).

LGBs have key discussion items at each meeting, so the Trust have feedback at key times.

Two way feedback from the Board to the LGB, the clerk to the main board will convey Trust Policies on the intranet.

Finance, Headteachers and LGBs have information at the correct times, there will be monthly finance reports available and regular updates. STAR accounts are available in each school.

**Q & As**

John Wollacombe commented that the process, so far had gone very well and he was extremely confident that we will see benefits from the merger.

The Chair thanked Rob Martlew for his introduction and commented that the Scheme of Delegation, which had been forwarded to Governors had eliminated many questions.

The Chair asked what would be included in the 5% Top Slice.

- School Improvement Program
- Finance team including Payroll
- Governor Services
- Certain elements of the VNET support program
- Maths Mastery
- ICT – Full ICT offer of support
- HR support

Synergy have a 12-15 year Asset Management Plan. There will also be access to the School Condition Fund which eliminates the need for CIF bids, as we will be a larger Trust.

JS asked about Governor Training. This is through Governor Services, but there is also cross Trust training. Training needs are discussed at Chairs meetings.

AB asked whether there were any operational challenges within the first 6 months of Litcham School joining Synergy. RM explained that Synergy worked closely with them prior to formally joining which eased the transition. WdN is already integrated into Heads meetings. Finance had initially been a challenge as the system infrastructure was not there, Heads are now finding it much better, now that they have moved to the STAR accounting system.

RM asked whether there had been any feedback from colleagues about the TUPE process. WdN replied that he had not had a chance to meet with staff, but had not had any negative feedback. The Maths and English leads had been positive about the meetings that they had.

There are Trust wide CPD events through the year.

The Chair thanked Rob Martlew for his input to the meeting.

RM left the meeting at 6.30pm.

### **3. Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Agreed and duly signed by Chair.

### **4. Matters Arising**

- a) Website: This has not progressed due to the move to Synergy. WdN explained that he had spoken with Richard Lord and we will be moving to the Synergy template. We have been given the contact for the IT Manager to have this up and running as soon as possible.
- b) AB asked how comfortable the school was with the financial position. WdN replied that it remains shaky, we don't have enough information yet for September to be able to make any decisions. We need to build a strategy for staffing in September. The

Chair added that we would need to have this information by the end of the Spring Term, to be able to make any decision. JW will take to the Trustees JW

- c) Some confusion around SRB funding which is being followed up through the Virtual School.
- d) The Chair suggested that a Strategy Meeting should be arranged prior to September to support the school in making the transition to the new Trust and so that we are aware of what we need to do. Chair

## 5. Verbal Update from Headteacher.

- a) Following the media whirlwind in January, we went into lockdown school again with remote learning, which went very well. We reopened to all pupils again on 8<sup>th</sup> March, which went very smoothly and all children knew what to do, we have 97.5% of pupils in school. There has not been any negativity from parents and children are in good spirits and eager to get back to how it used to be.
- b) SIDP: The SIDP which was sent out, still stands and will be moved to the latter part of the year. Staff have not been able to meet properly, but it feels like we are on track. Staff Meetings will take place in the hall, weekly going forwards.
- c) Subject Leader meetings with VNET have been put back.
- d) All teachers did an amazing job with the remote learning.
- e) TAs have gained confidence through running classes in school and actually having to teach about 15 children, this is something to look at in the future.
- f) 56 Chromebooks were received from the DfE which completely replaces the first set of Chromebooks that needed replacing. Every child has a Chromebook.
- g) Curriculum: We are more or less continuing as we were, there are no concerns over the new curriculum.
- h) Sarah Walker: has been Acting Deputy Head for over a year and has carried out a brilliant job, due to financial constraints we were not able to advertise the position, and have therefore taken the decision to make this position permanent.
- i) The LA have been excellent over the last year, with Headteacher briefings each week.
- j) JS congratulated the school for 'keeping the show on the road'. It is quite remarkable how schools have kept going and always been there for the community.
- k) WdN remarked that the Scheme of Delegation from Synergy looks good and gives direction where we seem to have lost our way. Everything which has been shared with us from Synergy so far, seems positive.

## 6. AOB

- a) AB congratulated the school, from a parental point of view, for the positive experience which her children had during the recent lockdown.
- b) JW on behalf of the Trustees expressed gratitude to all schools for what has been a challenging time, and hoped that Synergy would address some of the short comings which we have experienced.

Meeting Closed 7.25pm

Signed:  46/6/2021

Chair of Governors

Date:.....