

Board of Directors

Minutes: 20 May 2019
19/2019

Present: Isabel Cherrett (in the chair)
Peter Bethel Tracey Cleverly Nicola Dunford
Michael Fisher Roy Gillard Jason Hayward-Jones
Cheryl Mathieson Simon Niles Fiona Walters

In attendance: Becky Ames – Clerk

On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed Mr Fisher to his first meeting, following the Members' approval of his appointment as a Foundation Director. Mrs Cherrett also welcomed Ms Becky Ames to her first meeting of the Board as the newly appointed Clerk.

Apologies: Matt Matthew – Trust Business Manager

Declaration of Interest:

- Tracey Cleverly declared that she is employed by the Learning Academy Partnership and withdrew from the discussion on the schools currently in a Management Partnership with the Trust and Growth.
- Simon Niles declared an interest in relation to Growth within the CEO Report, agenda item 6.1 and withdrew from the discussion relating to the Raleigh Federation.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – 18/2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2019 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

2. Matters arising

Item 3.3 – Trust Data Protection Officer role

The CEO reported that Mrs Walters currently supports the Trust with this role but could not do this in the long term. Mrs Walters suggested that the Trust could use a firm of Solicitors, but there may be a cost implication. It was also suggested that an administrative post holder could fulfil the role for another Trust on a reciprocal basis.
Action ND to investigate further.

3. Audit Committee

The Board received and noted the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 8 May 2019. Mr Bethel, who had chaired the meeting pending Mr Fisher's appointment, reported that each school requires a secure storage area for confidential papers or one central area for the MAT to use. TBM to investigate further. Mr Bethel asked whether the Griffin report actions were completed at the F&GP meeting; IJC confirmed F&GP had recognised the need to minute more clearly the interrogation of financial performance. Mr Bethel suggested a further column should be added to the Single Central Register (SCR) to accurately record when actions relating to Safeguarding are completed.

4. Finance and General Purposes Committee

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2019 – 1/2019

The Board received and noted the Minutes from 29 March 2019

4.2 Issues arising from the meeting held on 17 May 2019 – 2/2019

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May were tabled. Mr Gillard reported that much of the meeting had focussed on the current financial position where the Trust was expected to achieve its budgeted surplus and the preparation of the 2019-20

budget which would come to the Board in July for final approval. There continued to be concerns regarding the Payroll provider, contracted in 2018 but these were being addressed.

Ms Mathieson, Mrs Cherrett and he had met with the CEO on 10 May to discuss the staffing for each school in the next academic year, likely moves between schools in the Trust as well as the staffing of the schools joining the Trust in the autumn. Further interrogation will include discussions with Academy Heads to confirm staffing and training, the catering income and expenditure estimates and update the budget for the Board in July. All changes to income and expenditure had been identified and implemented.

The Committee was disappointed that the bids to the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) had been unsuccessful; appeals have been submitted for three schools. ND advised the structural survey in relation to the temporary classroom at Bearnas School has been started; this had been identified during the discussion of the Risk Register. The Committee also spent time reviewing the *Staffing and Employment, Finance and Financial Sustainability* and the *Infrastructure* sections of the revised Risk Register (item 10 of the Board's agenda).

5. Standards and Curriculum Committee

5.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2019

The Board received and noted the Minutes of 1 May 2019. The Chair welcomed the proposal to create a 'virtual school' so that the progress of children attracting Pupil Premium (PP) funding could be tracked more accurately against a larger cohort. The Board noted that the Committee will increase the number of meetings from three to five next academic year.

Miss Cleverly advised that reporting of data was inconsistent and therefore it was difficult to assess performance at Trust level and compare schools. The CEO reported that the SIMS reporting package will be started in September through every School within the Trust and would be developed further during the year. She is liaising with the Local Board Working Party group to identify reports that will provide them with the data needed. Miss Cleverly agreed that once this is in place we should have more accurate reporting systems and the data will be much easier to analyse. In response to a query, the CEO confirmed that all data is stored correctly within current regulations.

5.2 Ofsted Report – Hennock

The Board formally received the Ofsted Report arising from the Short Inspection of **Hennock Community Primary School** on 6 February 2019. The inspection found that the school continued to be 'Good'.

Directors were pleased to note the Inspector's comments on the engagement of the pupils in their school, the positive relationships between the school and the community, the effective Safeguarding arrangements and the positive comments by parents as well as pupils. The Board congratulated **Mrs Clarke**, staff and pupils of Hennock on the excellent report and asked the S&C Committee to monitor how the school addresses the next steps, namely:

- Improve the quality and breadth of the mathematics curriculum
- Governors continue to develop their roles, given the high turnover of the last year.
- Develop reading further, particularly for the most able pupils.

5.3 Ofsted Report – Harbertonford

The Board formally received the Ofsted Report arising from the Short Inspection of **Harbertonford Church of England Primary School** on 5 March 2019. The inspection found that the school continued to be 'Good'. The Inspector commended taking over the management of the nursery which resulted in children being well

prepared for Year 1. Strengths included the support provided for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

The Board congratulated **Mrs Lethbridge**, staff and pupils of Harbertonford on the excellent report and asked the S&C Committee to monitor how the school addresses the next steps, namely:

- Strengthening the teaching of writing to further develop pupils' skills, particularly in spelling and to raise the proportion achieving higher standards at the end of Key Stage 2; and
- That the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in mathematics continues to increase.

5.4 SIAMS Report – Harbertonford

The Board of Directors formally received the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) report following the visit to Harbertonford CofE Primary School on 12 February 2019. Directors were pleased to note the Overall Judgement that the school's distinctive Christian vision is effective, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, and enables pupils and adults to flourish is **Good**. The impact of collective worship and the effectiveness of Religious Education were also graded **Good**. The Board congratulated Mrs Lethbridge on this outcome and thanked Ms Lord for her support of the Trust's Church schools in ensuring they adhere and promoted their Christian ethos.

In response to the Key Findings, the Chair asked Ms Cleverly to ensure that the Local Boards discuss how they can ensure the monitoring of the schools' Christian distinctiveness is effective. This could be considered by the Local Board working party in the first instance.

6. Chief Executive's Report

Mrs Dunford presented her report summarising activities and achievements since the Board last met.

6.1 Growth

The Board noted that the Management Partnership with Broadhempston Primary School was working well and conversion to the Link was on track for 1 October 2019.

Significant time was being invested in the two Raleigh Federation schools (RF) – Otterton and Drakes – in terms of overhauling the Safeguarding arrangements and records which were now compliant. The Executive Head, Peter Halford (PH), previously at Yeoford, was now focussing on the teaching standards and discussions with staff were underway about raising their performance.

OFSTED had inspected three pilot schools using the new framework. This can be done with no notice required. Maths and English are always key areas that are inspected, alongside other areas such as SEND and Safeguarding. Ms Dunford reported that there was heavy questioning of Teaching Assistants and students as well as Teachers and Academy Heads.

The CEO added that the first Ofsted MAT inspection has taken place in Truro. The inspection gained good feedback. The Chair would familiarise herself of the criteria of such inspections.

Expressions of interest in two other schools had not been successful but the Link was supported in its growth by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and the Diocese.

6.2 Staffing

The Remuneration Committee had discussed the proposed staffing changes arising from the pilot Distributed Leadership Model (DLM) during 2018-19. It was proposed

that Mrs Clarke would lead school improvement next year; Mrs Waterman would continue her successful leadership of Safeguarding and SEND provision and a Data and Standards Lead would be appointed from within the Trust.

6.3 Local Boards

The Board noted the issues discussed at the recent Working Party meeting and, in particular, the improved reporting to Directors as the number of schools continues to increase. The Board noted with regret that Ms Saffin had resigned as Chair of the Woodleigh Local Board and thanked her for her contribution during the process of joining the Trust in particular.

Ms Dunford reported that it was difficult to recruit local governors for the Newton and Teign Board which is affecting how much reporting the local board is able to do. This would be addressed during the next academic year.

6.4 Fund raising

The Board was pleased to note the successful grants achieved recently and the progress with the Community Farm being led by Mr Hayward-Jones as Chair of Friends of Stoke Gabriel. Directors recorded their thanks to the PTFAs for their support with the purchases of new laptops and Interactive Whiteboards so that all schools were now considered to be at a Bronze level by the Trust's IT Champions.

6.5 School Improvement and CPD

The CEO presented the new CPD opportunities document which identified all training and development for all staff across three areas:

- Individual Career Development
- Strategic Trust Improvement Priorities and
- Mandatory Training (Safeguarding, Health and Safety etc)

The CPD model informed the Trust-wide School Improvement Model and plans were being developed for a CPD event for all staff at the beginning of the next academic year on an INSET day. It was reported that there are staff members completing numerous training programmes. The 5 steps within the Improvement plan are:

1. Quality of Education
2. Quality of Education - Science
3. Quality of Education - Computing
4. Quality of Leadership & Management
5. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

This is the next step to making the schools consistent within the MAT. Each school will select one additional area alongside focusing on the 5 step Academy Trust Strategic Improvement Plan.

6.5 Pupil Numbers and Attendance

The CEO tabled an updated grid indicating pupil numbers by school and their respective attendance figures; all academies aimed to be above 96 per cent attendance. The Board noted with concern a drop in pupil numbers at one school which had occurred for a variety of reasons. Directors asked the CEO and the Local Board working party to ensure Academy Heads informed Local Boards of pupil numbers so this could be monitored; this would then feed through the S&C Committee to the Board.

7. Safeguarding

The CEO presented the Safeguarding Summary Sheet for the Spring term (7 January to 5 April 2019) for the nine schools. A detailed report in respect of Bearnas Primary School had been circulated which demonstrated the challenge to manage and support the needs of pupils.

8. Local Boards

8.1 Newton & Teign Local Board

The Board of Directors received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2019 and thanked Mrs Carter from the Woodleigh LB for her support.

8.2 Totnes Local Board

The Board of Directors received and notes the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2019. It was noted that it was well attended. Rev Tom Benson had resigned leaving a vacancy for an ex-officio. This vacancy will hopefully be filled in the next academic year.

8.3 Woodleigh Local Board

The Board of Directors received and noted the Minutes of 6 March 2019

9. Governance

9.1 Academies Governance Handbook 2019

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes an Academies Governance Handbook which is updated from time to time. The latest version was published in March and was circulated to the Board for the meeting. As this important reference is 130 pages, the Chair had prepared a summary of the key changes relating to Accountability, People, Structures, Compliance and evaluation which was noted.

. Mrs Cherrett confirmed the Trust is compliant and there are no issues to be raised.

9.2 MAT Review – 2 May 2019

Summary of meeting between the Chair and CEO and Sophie Turner of the Regional Schools Commissioners. Ms Dunford and Mrs Cherrett had discussed the recruitment of Directors, Governance, School Pupil Tracker changing to SIMS and the virtual cohort of Pupil Premium children. The annual meeting also discussed opportunities for growth. The RSC will issue a report which will be available within the public domain.

9.3 Diocesan Review meeting - 15 May 2019

As a Member of the Link Academy Trust, the Archdeacon of Totnes is required to report on the Trust annually to the Exeter Diocese Education Committee (EDEN). The Chair had met with Archdeacon Dettmer on 15 April 2019 and the Board noted her summary of the discussion. In general, the Trust was performing well in terms of the Diocese's requirements although there was work to be done to increase Members' involvement. Mrs Cherrett summarised the annual report completed with Douglas Dettmer and confirmed he felt we had a very positive MAT.

An action for CEO was to ensure that the Ethos Committees feed into the Local Boards, S&C Committee and to Directors.

9.4 Devon Association of Governance – Effective Chairs

The Summer 2019 newsletter published by DAG had been circulated for Directors' information. The Chair had asked the CEO to investigate options for conducting an evaluation of the Board and its operation to identify where we could improve. Mr Niles asked whether Babcock could conduct the evaluation and produce a report at no cost. The CEO confirmed she was reviewing a number of options and would report back to the Board.

10. Risk Management

Arising from the discussion on 11 February 2019, the Chair had revised the Risk Register into the following sections (circulated on 23 April):

ES&A	Educational standards & achievement	<i>Standards & Curriculum</i>
S&E	Staffing & employment	<i>Remuneration</i>
F&FS	Finance & Financial Sustainability	<i>Finance & General Purposes</i>
Q&R	Quality & Reputation	<i>Board</i>
R&LC	Regulatory & Legal Compliance	<i>Finance & General Purposes</i>
G	Governance	<i>Board</i>

A Safeguarding *Standards & Curriculum*
 I-E/IT Infrastructure – the Estate, IT, business systems etc. *Finance & General Purposes*

The Audit and F&GP Committees had discussed their specific sections and the Chair had implemented suggested changes. The Board was asked to test/challenge the Probability and Impact scores, comments, mitigating actions etc.

Action: Chair to add Diptford to the Trust Risk Register.

Action for all Directors to send any other amendments to Mrs Cherrett to amend.

Action: Clerk to ensure final version is added to agenda for the Board meeting in July.

11. **Policies**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy was due for review; the Chair noted that the Policy referred to a post no longer in the Trust and asked for the Policy to be considered further and submitted to the next meeting for approval.

12. **Dates of future meetings**

20/2019 – 15 July 2019 at 4.00 pm

21/2019 – 22 July 2019 at 6.00 pm – Annual General Meeting

The following dates are proposed for agreement or amendment:

Full Board

22/2019 Monday 7 October 2019

23/2019 Monday 9 December 2019

24/2020 Monday 10 February 2020

25/2020 Monday 18 May 2020

26/2020 Monday 13 July 2020

27/2020 Monday 20 July 2020 – Annual General Meeting

Meetings to commence at 4.00 pm

Audit Committee

03/2019 Wednesday 13 November 2019

01/2020 Wednesday 22 January 2020

02/2020 Wednesday 13 May 2020

Signed as Approved Copy

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Date 15.07.19

Drafted: 23 May 2019

BA/IJC