



Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the EPA Directing Board held at Bartholomew School on Thursday 19 January 2017 at 7pm

Present: Frances Bartlett (FB), James Bird (JB), Tony Booer (AKB), Anne Carter (AC), Paddy Coulter (PC) (CHAIR), Hilary Emery (HE), Mike Foster (MF), Andy Hamilton, CEO (ASH), Sarah Kerswell (SK), Jane Osborne (JO), Michael Ryan (MR)

In attendance: Mike Lawes, COO (ML), Beth Bedford (BVB) Company Secretary, Kit Howells (KH) Minutes Clerk

The meeting was quorate.

01/17 Item 1: Present, Apologies, Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items

Apologies received from Pete Reynolds (PR) (Vice Chair), and Jenny Faulkner (JF), and accepted.

Declaration of Interests: JB works for Oxford Brookes University Education Department.

Directors were reminded to ensure their Declaration of Interests forms are completed and returned as soon as possible to BVB or Catherine Barker. *Action: Directors to return if not already done so*

02/17 Item 2: Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2016 - for accuracy

The minutes had previously been distributed, were agreed and were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

Item 3: Matters Arising, where not actioned and/or not otherwise on the Agenda

03/17 Item 3.1: Director vacancies

There are currently 2 vacancies, for a Diocesan Director appointment to replace Morey Andrew, and a Community Primary School appointment. FB updated Directors on the Diocese's recruitment process to this important role. JO informed that PR is arranging to meet a potential candidate for the Primary School nomination.

04/17 Item 3.2: EPA policies

Discussed under CEO report at Item 5 (*Minute 11/17*).

05/17 Item 3.3: LGB meetings: CEO attendance

The CEO has a programme of attending all LGB meetings to update governors on EPA issues and to emphasise their accountability for their school's performance and standards. To date, he has attended Eynsham and Stanton Harcourt LGB meetings.

06/17 Item 3.4: SIO presentation on Primary data

JB gave a presentation on the EPA Primary schools' data, assessment and progress overview, noting the background of new national curriculum in 2014, and new assessment system in place with Target Tracker replacing Levels. He noted good development of standardisation processes for assessment and reporting across the EPA. Directors thanked him for his presentation, which was tabled (and will be uploaded to GovernorHub).

08/17 Item 4: EPA Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) - Update from Primary Director

SK updated Directors on highlights from the most recent SLG meeting held in mid December, also attended by ML. Main focus areas at the SLG meeting were:



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- EPA Headteachers have decided not to attend the Oxfordshire Headteachers Conference this year but to hold an in-house conference on 30 March, with focus on Assessment. Jackie Cousins (who has carried out the Primary School Reviews) will join Heads;
- Assessment to support teacher judgements and the purchase of published tests for all Year Groups to assist more accurate predictions;
- Ensuring there are agreed rigorous core appraisal objectives across the EPA (more work will be done at the Heads' Conference on this, with Jane Watret, EPA HR adviser attending);
- Primary data and trends (as outlined by JB in his presentation under Item 3.4 [Minute 6/17] above);
- Two EPA Lead Teachers for Literacy and Maths are now in place;
- A visit to an Outstanding Gloucestershire school with the aim of increased competency in moderation and assessment;
- The cross-EPA Early Years and SEND groups' sharing of good practice;
- Discussion of and input to an EPA Standards Protocol.

ASH explained that of the two key areas for focus by the DB - Financial Management and Standards - a Financial Deviance Protocol has been in existence since the EPA was established. Having a Standards Protocol is now deemed essential and was also considered at the EPA Standards Committee meeting on 11 January. This follows the same format as that for Finance, having 5 levels. For Standards, Level 3 (where a school's data indicates it might fall into Special Measures or Requires Improvement as determined by Ofsted or the EPA) would trigger establishment of an internal EPA Task Group to support the school. All Standards issues and concerns are reported to the DB through the Standards Committee's schedule of work.

SK informed DB that the two upcoming major pieces of work for the SLG will be to:

- consider the quality and impact of pupil progress meetings/reporting by sharing good practice with the aim of having a uniform reporting format and procedures across the EPA; and
- to agree targets for the EPA schools' status in three years' time in order to draw up a detailed forward plan to commence this year geared to achieving those targets.

Directors commended the SLG for its work, particularly the excellent evidence of schools' leaders working together and moving forward as a team for the greater good of the whole EPA community.

09/17 Item 5: CEO's Report

Report previously circulated, in which the following issues were detailed.

10/17 CEO Job description

The agreed amendments had been made; for review in December 2017.

Action: PC/ASH

11/17 EPA Policy & Document schedule and Policy & Procedures protocol

ASH had previously circulated an example EPA Policy & Document schedule. While most schools have a list of current Policies and their review dates, the dynamic nature and priorities of education often mean that work to review and update policies lags behind. He emphasised the need for all EPA academies to have such a schedule, to ensure their operations are safe and secure within the turbulent environment. His draft schedule indicates whether policies/documents are overarching EPA or individual for an academy (or both), and their adoption dates and review periods. The appendix to the schedule provides an overview guide to the areas of work in which the documents sit. All EPA schools have this schedule as a guide to which they can work.

Directors considered the draft Protocol for adoption by all EPA LGBs, previously circulated. ASH explained the background and that the Protocol would protect each Academy in the EPA and



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ensure each would always have an up to date, appropriate, relevant and comprehensive Policy to guide its actions and which could be pointed to in event of any challenge. This is a similar protocol to that which pertained before academisation in relation to OCC policies taking precedence when necessary. The DB *agreed* the Protocol should be adopted by all LGBs and that ASH's covering note should be amended to include explanation of the precedent which existed before the schools converted whereby OCC policies would take precedence where necessary. All EPA schools must have statutory policies listed on their website to be compliant.

Action: BVB to request all EPA School LGB Chairs to adopt at next LGB meetings

12/17 Partnership Improvement Plan 2015-18 progress: RAG-rated and summary documents
Previously circulated, showing RAG-rated progress on priorities. ASH will place update on GovernorHub. ASH tabled a one-page overview of the EPA priority areas over the life of the PIP, colour coded to indicate their current position, for ease of reference. Directors complimented ASH on the usefulness of this compression.

Action: ASH to place updated PIP on GovernorHub

13/17 EPA organograms

EPA structure and partnership structure organograms had been circulated to LGBs.

14/17 Website compliance

Compliant. ASH had received compliments about the design and content.

15/17 SALT update

SALT is the essential driver for EPA moving forward with the individual members taking responsibility for delivery of progress: BVB for governance, ASH for leadership and management and LGBs, SK and JB for quality of teaching, learning, outcomes and behaviour, and ML for finance and wider service provision. ASH/ML are also responsible for marketing and clients, a current gap in work which is recognised and due to lack of capacity to date.

16/17 Standards in EPA Academies

ASH referred Directors to the content of his written Report, which was noted.

17/17 Future expansion update

Discussed under Item 7.

Item 6: Committee reports

18/17 Item 6.1: Finance & Resources Committee: Meeting held 5 January 2017

Minutes previously circulated and noted; MR highlighted the main issues discussed, including noting that succession planning remains the highest priority with regard to reducing risk and that the EPA continues to consider potential expansion options.

Directors discussed the DfE's recently issued **National Funding Formula proposals**, noting that the Consultation is issued with deadline for responses being 22 January. The proposals would result in an overall reduction of funding to Oxfordshire schools, completely against expectations that the lower-funded Authorities such as Oxfordshire would be brought up in line with others. The Oxfordshire Academies group and the Oxfordshire Secondary Heads group will be responding as well as individual school responses being submitted. It was *agreed* that the EPA will respond by the deadline, indicating that funding cuts do not enable or support improvements to standards.

Action: ASH to formulate EPA response



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It is essential to ensure that all EPA school stakeholders are aware of the grim financial prospects for schools and Directors will share the information and encourage parents and governors to put pressure on the Government to reconsider the Formula proposals. *Action: All Directors*

19/17 Item 6.2 Standards Committee: Meeting held 11 January 2017

(Minutes to follow). JO reported on the major points discussed, including:

- the excellent EPA support of schools with School Reviews and Task Groups (which are attended by SK and JB, who work closely with Chairs of Governors and Headteachers);
- JB will present an overview EPA 'data dashboard' to the DB twice a year;
- Standardisation of pupil progress meeting procedures to encompass good practice is welcomed;
- Bartholomew School standards data report;
- the intended implementation of a Standards Protocol across the EPA;
- the necessity to ensure improved communication with LGBs and Headteachers – JB and BV are working hard to ensure systems are put in place.
- working with the Diocese and the relationship of SIAMs to supporting school improvement: this will be brought to Directors for further discussion as a strategy is drawn up.

Directors recorded appreciation of SK's and JB's work to support school improvement in the Primaries; this work is also known to be appreciated by the Primary Headteachers.

20/17 Item 6.3: Audit Committee: Meeting held 10 January 2017(immediately prior to this meeting)

In the unavoidable absence of the Chair of the Audit Committee, FB briefed Directors (Minutes to be circulated in due course) as she had chaired the meeting. The Committee is satisfied that financial procedures are being carried out effectively and correctly. The issues discussed included those of the Finance & Resources Committee, including the proposed new National Funding Formula, reviewing the Risk Register (also reviewed by SALT), and also the Auditors' formal response to issues raised in the Audit in terms of any risks identified. All risks have been responded to, including putting in place formal internal reviews of all EPA schools' financial processes, which will commence this month and will take place annually. The Committee is satisfied that the EPA has all the EFA's required financial principles and requirements in place.

FB was thanked for deputising for PR. Directors congratulated all EPA schools on the hard work that has ensured that they finished last year in surplus.

21/17 Item 7: Future possible Expansion of the EPA

The draft confidential note of the MAT Expansion Task Group's meeting on 8 December had been previously circulated. PC summarised the discussions and noted that, due to the current dynamic nature of building development planning in the local area, it was not yet possible to bring a proposal to the DB for adoption. Intelligence-gathering continues, and discussions and consultations are in hand about possible collaborations with various third parties in the vicinity. In addition, ASH will meet the Regional Schools Commissioner next month to discuss the EPA's interest in applying to run a new (Free) Primary School in Eynsham which will be necessitated in the relatively short term by upcoming development. The EPA will attend the upcoming OCC forum attended by Academies, Academy Trusts and Maintained Schools to discuss expansion and other forms of linking.

Directors agreed that there is no need to rush to a decision currently, and that continued information-gathering and care in decision-making are vital. Any concerns should be raised with PC and a further report will come to the April DB meeting. *Action: PC/ASH*



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22/17 Item 8: Agreed aims for the EPA: where to now

The current Vision & Values Statement had been previously circulated by ASH. The DB discussed and reaffirmed these, noting the stand-out values of Community and Partnership, as well as the retention of the distinctive nature and identity of the different schools within the EPA. This partnership sharing a common vision and collaborating closely together is what makes the EPA very special and indeed in terms of the mix of VA and VC (Church) schools as well as Community Schools unique in the country. The DB noted the relation of the vision and values to the current expansion discussions and discussed the definition of community. Directors agreed the importance of emphasising the aim of the EPA to move towards an overarching agreed range of principles and a sensible approach to gaining increased efficiencies without losing the distinctive identity of the constituent schools. Directors also agreed that a reference to this 'mixed economy' of the EPA with its differently sized schools should also be included in an update to this Statement.

Action: ASH to circulate redrafted Statement to all Directors for final comments and approval

Item 9: Standing Items

23/17 Item 9.1: Safeguarding & Prevent Duty

The EPA is compliant.

24/17 Item 9.2: New LGB Governors for DB appointment

DB had received 'pen portraits' of applicants and approved the LGBs' nominations for appointment of Jane Eagle and Rachel Elliott (Stanton Harcourt CEPS) and Jo Godsal (Eynsham CPS).

25/17 Item 9.3: EPA Committee Chairs feedback

The Committee Chairs, PR, JO, MR and PC, had met informally with ASH on 16 January, to identify key priorities of the EPA for the year ahead, including succession planning, options for expansion, standards protocol, EPA aims, director vacancies, AGM formats and other issues as brought to this DB meeting.

The Directing Board agreed the priority to prepare a contingency plan for succession and asked the CEO to prepare a recruitment package for the posts of CEO and COO, including person specification, copy for advertising purposes and which media to use, as well as suggestions for an interview panel would look like so that we have contingency if needed.

Action: ASH

26/17 Item 10: AGM on Thursday 4 May – format

The DB discussed options for the format of this year's AGM and agreed that, as last year, invitations should be extended to LGB governors as well as Members and Directors. Over and above the 'standing items', it was agreed that there should be opportunity for small groups to join together to discuss specific issues, with only a minimal plenary session (perhaps centred on EPA vision and values), and the AGM should finish with refreshments and more informal networking opportunity. Various ideas were mooted; it was agreed that PC, ML and ASH will consider all these, bearing in mind the overarching need to ensure good attendance from the LGB governors, and circulate a draft proposal to LGBs for comments and suggestions.

Action: PC/ASH/ML

27/17 Item 11: Items of Urgency (*Standing Item*) - None.

28/17 Item 11.1 Item of other business

MR noted increasing expressions of anxiousness from community and parents about busy and sometimes dangerous parking around the Primary Schools.

29/17 Item 12: Date of Next Meeting: 6 April 2017 at 7 pm, at Bartholomew School.

5 Chair's signature..... date.....



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To include Presentation/explanation of Secondary School data and assessment *Action: ASH.*

[Upcoming Committee meeting dates

Audit Committee: Wed 14 June, at 6 pm, at Bartholomew School, Eynsham

Standards Committee: Wed 22 March, at 5.45 pm, at Bartholomew School, Eynsham

Finance & Resources Committee: Tue 14 March, at 5 pm, at Bartholomew School, Eynsham].

The business having been concluded, the meeting ended at 9 pm

Kh/31.1.17

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