



Company Number: 07977368

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday 19th January 2023 at 4.30PM on Teams

Present:

Liz Holmes (LH)- Chair
 Rev Jason St John Nicolle- (JN)
 Anthony Cook (AC)- Vice Chair
 Mark Greenwood- (MG)
 Christine Price-Smith- (CPS)
 Paul Turner- (PT)
 Duncan Millard (DM)- CEO

In attendance:

Anne Lynn (AL)- COO
 Louise Warren (LW)- Director of Education
 Laura Bunning (LB)- Clerk
 Jude Scutt (JS)- Exec Head SHR and WAT (up to item 6)

Apologies:

None

Not Present:

Malcolm Sperrin- (MS)

Standing Items		
1	Welcome, Apologies and Resignations	Action
	Meeting opened at: 16:37. LH,AC,PT,DM,AL,LW,JS in attendance LH welcomed all present and advised CPS will be joining late.	
2	Notice, Confidentiality and Quorum Requirements	
	The meeting was quorate.	
3	Compliance- Declaration of interest personal or business	
	LH asked all present to declare any declaration of interest- None recorded	
4	Accuracy of Minutes of main Board meeting held on 17th November and 9th December including any confidential minutes	
	Approved Minutes from meeting on 17 th November, 9 th December and all confidential minutes Action: LH to sign all minutes	LH
5	Carried over Items	
	LH advised action from May 2022 'development of due diligence reporting to trustees' is now in draft form and will circulate wider by next week. This will be used with Ashbury as a trial. Action: LH to circulate draft report MG and JN jointed meeting at 16:41. LH welcomed and asked them to declare any declarations of interests- none recorded	LH

	<p>LH requested action from September 2022 meeting of ‘trustees to develop knowledge of link school to support inspection process’ to be completed by February half term.</p> <p>LH gave an update on her meeting with the Chair at Watchfield (WAT) & Longcot and Fernham (LAF) and will visit the schools after February half term. Which is linked to action from September 2022 ‘support school Local Governing Bodies (LGB) understanding of role and engagement with the Trust’</p> <p>WAT- supported chair is gaining confidence in her role on the local governing body (LGB) and answered some questions she had.</p> <p>LAF- discussion around some of the challenges and any questions the chair had.</p> <p>PT gave an update on his visit to Shrivenham (SHR) LGB stating there was good questions asked at the meeting and it was mainly educational based. Felt that Governors were proactive in arranging linking up with WAT LGB to share best practises.</p> <p>JS confirmed it was the newest governor’s suggestion to link with WAT LGB. They have fresh eyes and confirms the new governors training is helping support them.</p> <p>November action ‘trustee recruitment plan’ was discussed. Only one person interested so far. This person has great skill and experience in governors and would give the board and additional perspective.</p> <p>Action: All to update LH on action tracker update and LH to circulated to all</p>	<p>ALL/LH</p>
Strategic Matters		
6	Executive Leadership Shrivenham and Watchfield	
	<p>LH introduced JS and all present introduced themselves.</p> <p>JS advised last year was spent supporting WAT with coaching, giving advice and sharing ideas around procedures. This has helped with the role as already had experience with different schools.</p> <p>Going forward JS sees the role as supporting the Trust vision of support, challenge and collaborate but also about having a clear vision with SHR and WAT and maintaining ethos and individuality for the schools. JS will work on building relationships, modelling good practices, be innovative and taking things forward.</p> <p>The challenges faced with the role are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term lack of stability however, this has started to be overcome with the appointment of the Heads of Schools. - The fact it is a new role for the Trust. However, DM met with JS and Sharon Farrell who is Executive Head for The Folly View Primary School and The Elms Primary School. Discussions took place about supporting each other and agreement was made that the roles will evolve over time. - Community cohesion and engagement as it is a big change for both schools. It’s the staff and the parents that need to understand the journey the schools are on and that the outcome is that everyone wants the best for the pupils. 	

- Finances, which is about making sure both schools can support the rapidly changing needs of the children.
- Recruitment and retention of staff especially in regards to Teaching Assistants due to the change in role with the change in needs of pupils.

A question was asked about how the challenges measured up to what was expected and whether anything caught JS by surprise.

JS confirmed the biggest surprise was how hard the change was for both schools and herself.

Questions were asked whether anything can be done to help with recruitment, whether it has an impact on children's and how are the children's needs changing.

Confirmation was given that Teaching Assistants have to work with children with higher needs much more quickly and have no increase in pay but offering a good package with CPD could improve the situation. The impact on the higher needs is that the children cannot learn to the best of their abilities because their basic needs are not being met and the wider impact is the disruption to the other children in the class. The schools are managing the change in children's needs well and there is very little disruption however it takes a lot of work and logistics to achieve this.

A final question was asked whether the Executive Head model could be used elsewhere.

Once the policies and procedures are in place to support the current Heads of Schools, then another school could be brought in under the same Executive Head and/or a new Executive Head could be brought in. The model works as it allows for a more dynamic collaboration.

DM supported the model by discussing the power of shared leadership and work.

JS spoke about the impact on the role so far which creates support for the leadership teams. It helps to develop and build relationships. The staff at both schools have had inset training days together and joint staff meetings. They are using the options that come with having an Executive Head to their advantage. Processes are being shared from SHR to WAT and working on Health and Safety. The situation allows for identifying common priorities and working on collaborations. Senior leaders can see the impact the Executive Head role is having.

The plan for the year ahead is to look at the five-year plan for both schools and give leadership and management support.

Specifically WAT needs support with teaching and learning and pupil outcomes, especially for SEN children.

SHR will be having a drive on achieving an outstanding Ofsted report and focus on the new building. They will also look that he engagement with families.

Both schools are going in different direction but will produce the same outcome for all pupils.

	<p>JS thanked PT for coming to the SHR LGB meeting and is looking forward to LH attending WAT LGB. It was highlighted that good collaboration with the Trust Board is essential.</p> <p>LH and DM thanked JS for coming along and all the hard work done across both schools.</p>	
7	<p>Determine Admission Arrangements for 2024</p> <p>The request to consider introducing a further oversubscription criteria to support staff employed at schools within Trust was discussed. Confirmation was given that Head Teachers had been asked at the ALT meeting and agreed it should be placed before the final criteria of all other children.</p> <p>Discussion was had around the priority of the criteria. It was proposed to come higher due to attracting staff to jobs at the schools. However a counter argument was given due to the fact children from outside the designated area may ended up higher than local children. It was agreed that more investigation was needed ahead of next consolation exercise in October 2023.</p> <p>Action: LB to add to July agenda for discussion</p> <p>Admissions 2024 APPROVED</p>	LB
8	<p>ICT Strategy</p> <p>The principles set out in the document were developed from the meetings held with staff across all trust schools. The Trustees were requested to confirm the principles reflect what the trustees believe are the key drivers when it comes to IT.</p> <p>Questions were asked about service level provisions, strategic principles and assets. It was confirmed that these areas would be picked up in the next part of the IT strategy.</p> <p>Discussions were had around the current variances in terms of the IT within the schools and whether going forward there is going to a central or school approach.</p> <p>The outcome was that it will be a mix based on what the end user needs and the finances available. There will be some consistency in regards to desktops used but other devices in school will differ between key stage and departments at the secondary school.</p> <p>LH confirmed the key principles were captured however bullet point 3 should be changed to 'provide the opportunity for innovative teaching which enhances the curriculum for all pupils and maximises the opportunities to support disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>After the amendment is made the Trustees APPROVED ICT strategy principles.</p>	
9	<p>Confidential items - please see AOB</p>	
Ensuring Accountability		
10	<p>Evaluation of Statutory Reporting of SEND, PP Funding and Sports Premium by Trust Schools</p> <p><u>Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) report</u></p> <p>Currently within the schools, 86 children have EHCP's and 507 children on SEND support. Nearly a 5th of the children in the Trust have some form of</p>	

special educational need or disability. Meeting these needs are difficult due to retention, wellbeing and training of staff and this has an implication of our budgets.

The annual report has been done for governors apart from for FCC but Helen Cox (HC) is supporting Faringdon Community College (FCC). The focus is on an action plan for SEND in the short, medium and long term to improve structures and systems.

The report explores the reason for the increase in SEND; this is due to parents being very anxious and gaps in learning due to COVID. There is a lack of support from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which contributes to the issue. The Executive Team are drafting a letter to OCC to request support for funding. HC has put in a tiered provision map, which focuses on equality of access, inclusion and provision across the Trust. There are CPD sessions for TAs via Teams.

A question was asked whether the school not using the provision map software meant there was a detrimental impact on the support given to SEND pupils and whether the Board should remove the option to have it and make it a requirement.

It was clarified it has had a detrimental impact in terms of training for staff however the school has a new SENDCo who is doing the qualification currently. The software would help them move forwards in terms of identifying more SEND needs and it is in budget. Need to get the school to embrace change.

It was agreed this should be part of the action plan for the school.

A discussion was had around the financial risk and budgets for SEND children. The schools get their delegated budgets and they choose how to spend it. The central team is resourced by contributions from the school. If there is going to a central fund to support SEND the money would have to come from contributions from the schools. It was confirmed that it is exceptionally challenging in Oxfordshire at the moment in regards to SEND.

A real positive is five out of our eight schools have nurture provision and looking at putting in a nurture based provision for secondary pupils as a next step for FCC.

Pupil Premium (PP) report

Sarah Gristwood (SG) is supporting FCC due to the level of needs and she is working closely with HC and Gemma Rogan (GR- safeguarding lead) SG and GR and also working on short, medium and long term actions plans.

The report shows the national number of students classified as PP is now 27% the only school in our Trust that meets this is the Elms. However only 4 of the schools have completed the statutory report by December. The four remaining schools have assured SG/LW this will be completed by end of January. Going forward need to be tighter on telling schools to complete the forms and guidance is needed on the quality of the reports.

A question was asked around the school specific figures in the table on the report not being correct.

Action: LW to ask SG to check figures and report back to Board

LW

	<p><u>Sports Premium</u></p> <p>Only our seven primary schools receive sport premium. It has been reported that the level of engagement in sports has increased due to the funding. Students have an increase in confidence and broader experience of a range of different sports including more competitive sports. There was positivity around forest schools at all primary schools. Play leader students are being trained to support physical activities. The two Faringdon primary schools have invested in a good scheme with their funding called Real PE.</p> <p>The next steps are to continue to increase pupil's physical activities and making sure that all children can swim 25m before leaving school which was the initial reason for the funding. The funding will also be used to continue to upskill the teachers.</p> <p>AC confirmed good progress is being made in all schools in terms of physical activity.</p> <p>LH asked LW to thank everyone who contributed to the reports. Acknowledgement given to the effort and work that is going on and that it is good to see the improvement since last year's reporting.</p>	
11	<p>Policies and New Statutory Guidance</p> <p><u>Suspension and Exclusion board level involvement</u></p> <p>Document was available for all attendees to see. LH asked for questions to be raised and an update will be given at the next board meeting.</p> <p>Action: LB to add to March agenda and LH to give an update</p>	LB/LH
12	<p>Visit Reports from Link Trustees:</p> <p>None</p>	
13	<p>Report from Q of E</p> <p>Decembers report highlighted that there is still a concern around governors and board communication</p> <p>Januaries report highlighted the concerns around FCC including SEND and the maths grading.</p> <p>It was confirmed the mock results pre-Christmas are looking more positive. Interventions are being set up for anyone with 4 minus grades.</p> <p>FCC is in a process of growth and being supported by different members of the central team.</p> <p>CPS jointed meeting at 18:24</p> <p>A restructure of the LGB is being looked at and the Headteacher is attending the next Quality of Education meeting.</p> <p>It was highlighted the importance of Trustees visiting their link schools at least three times a year and one being an LGB meeting.</p> <p>Confirmation the charge and remissions policy was approved. Children with health needs was sent back to look at some of the wording.</p>	
14	<p>Report from Resources</p> <p>Two areas to focus on which are financial risk and health and safety audit (covered in item 15.)</p>	

	<p>There are financial risks and in particular Folly View Primary School. On a positive note the SCA funding is committed. There is good evidence of CPD done through the pay committee reports. AC congratulated the senior leadership teams in the school and all the commitment of the staff.</p> <p>All except, The Elms and Watchfield, are in deficit as of period two, this is mostly to do with the pay awards and the high-level needs in the schools. EHCP funding is not coming through from OCC to support the schools.</p> <p>Period 3 report will be sent out of committee due to needing to complete the capital.</p> <p>Action- AL to send period 3 financial report out of committee.</p> <p>Government have announced last autumn there is additional funding in the form of a capital grant to be used for energy efficiency. Jo Ray is undertaking a Trust wide project to install LED lights which will hopefully lead to a reduction in electricity costs.</p> <p>There is another additional pot of money called mainstreams schools additional grant that we will receive. ESFA have given an estimate using a calculator, so against the deficit of 331K in period two there will be the additional funding of 221K for this year. This will be broken down by school, so some schools will benefit more than others. This funding also rolls forward into next year where the additional funding will be approximately 530K.</p> <p>The Trust are in a fortunate position due to carry over so there are reserves to cope currently but not on an ongoing basis. This means ensuring that the deficit is mitigated going forward.</p> <p>A question was asked if the schools or LGBs have been approached to look at reducing spend.</p> <p>Confirmation was given that a piece of work is being done with the Heads currently. Finance should be a standing item on an LGB agenda and governors should be challenging the Heads. In period four, there is a meeting with the finance governors and Heads. The financial issue is the same across Oxfordshire.</p>	AL
15	Health and Safety Matters	
	<p>Progress is being made in reducing audit actions although still a slow process. Need to look at a tighter process as a lot of resources are being used on chasing actions. Need to be more accountable and work on training link governors on health and safety. The way progress is shown and tracked on the system needs to be looked at as currently there is no way of monitoring this.</p> <p>Varying expectations and reporting to meet current levels of competency and compliance was not seen as a way forward. A discussion was had around compliance and the importance of creating clear deadlines.</p> <p>A summary was given highlighting the need to make rapid progress and holding Head teachers to account.</p> <p>Action- Out of committee health and safety report to be circulated - Investigation of an additional system code to show when an action has been looked at and outcome is no action will be taken.</p>	JR/DM

16	Risk Register	
	The rating “three or more of the current Trust schools rated requires improvement or inadequate” has been changed to reflect the situation with Longcot but also the situation around the concerns for the other schools awaiting Ofsted. This has meant it has moved up the table to number 3. Trustees APPROVED revised risk register.	
Procedural Matters		
17	Out of Committee activity	
	It was shared that a school within Oxfordshire was looking at joining a Trust.	
Trust Board Matters		
18	Events in hand	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2023 Board meeting: Thursday 23 March Via Teams at 4.30 p.m – 6.30 p.m • Board meeting 2023 to include a slot from Exec over the two Primary Schools from SHR & WAT Chairs and Vice-Chairs meetings 1:1 meetings and annual meeting 	
Any Other Business		
19	As notified to the Chair before the meeting	
a	<i>Extra confidential item discussed regarding an incident at Faringdon Community College- see confidential minutes</i> DM left meeting at 18.59	
b	<i>Confidential- Board options (see confidential Minutes)</i>	
20	Future Board Meetings	
	<p>Uploaded to Governorhub</p> <p>Term 4: Board Meeting – 23rd March 2023 – via Teams</p> <p>Term 5: Board Meeting – 18th May 2023 – In person</p> <p>Term 6: Board Meeting – 6th July 2023 – In person</p> <p>In person meetings will start at 6pm Via Teams will start at 4:30pm</p>	
	MEETING END 19:45	

Signed and Approved by: