



Company Number: 07977368

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday 23 March 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)
 Paul Turner- (PT)
 Duncan Millard (DM)- CEO

In attendance:

Anne Lynn (AL)- COO
 Louise Warren (LW)- Director of Education
 Laura Bunning (LB)- Clerk
 Sharon Farrell (SF)- Exec Head FVP and TEP

Apologies:

Malcolm Sperrin- (MS)
 Christine Price-Smith- (CPS)

| Standing Items | | |
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| 1 | Welcome, Apologies and Resignations | Action |
| | <p>Meeting opened at: 16:36.</p> <p>All welcomed to the meeting and Trustees introduced themselves to SF.</p> <p>Apologies: CPS- noted and MS- accepted.</p> | |
| 2 | Notice, Confidentiality and Quorum Requirements | |
| | <p>LH reminded all discussions are confidential until released into the public domain.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p> | |
| 3 | Compliance- Declaration of interest personal or business | |
| | LH asked all present to declare any declaration of interest- None recorded. | |
| Strategic Matters | | |
| 6a | Executive Leadership Folly View and The Elms Primary School | |
| | <p>SF advised the invite to present to the Board was good timing due to the recruitment of her replacement as Executive Head and a good time to reflect on the role half way through the first year.</p> <p><u>Impact on Leaders</u></p> <p>The role to start with was about developing clear visions and values, working towards improving conditions for teaching and learning across both the Schools. SF wanted to be highly visible throughout both. It was a challenging start due to them having their own identity, visions and values and the need was to incorporate both views in creating one visions. It required working closely with senior leaders and the staff across the two schools as it was important they all shared the vision going forward.</p> | |

The three words that came up during discussions were inspire, believe and achieve. This has required building on relationships with the staff, parents, children and wider community.

After developing a clear vision it was then important to build a strong leadership team who could drive improvement.

PT joined meeting at 16:42

The next step was to create opportunities for the two Schools to work together. Having a leader in curriculum and EYFS helped support the leaders and Schools to come together. It was important to support the senior leadership team to feel empowered to drive their own initiative and this has been successful.

After this it was about supporting the new role of the Heads of Schools and establishing them as operational managers. The beginning was spent gaining clarity of the different roles and responsibilities. Moving forward it has been coaching and producing CPD to support them.

SF explained the challenges both schools faced. TEP were increasing numbers and bring in new age groups and FVP was moving to a new site.

Another requirement was to strengthen the staff teams and align the schools to offer the same quality of teaching and learning in Faringdon. To do this it was important to build the trust of the two Schools and build relationships between them.

Working with Governance was another area to look at due to the new LGB across both Schools. It was important to establish the most effective way for governors to work. This included aligning things like the reporting procedure, development plans and link governors meeting subject leaders from both Schools.

Impact on School improvement

SF spoke about supporting the challenges both Schools faced when moving towards both being an all through Primary School. It resulted in the Executive Head role being more operational.

It was highlighted that empowering leaders to make their own decision and bringing both Schools together with a staff meeting timetable. This meant the Schools had individual staff meeting, joint staff meeting and joint subject leader meeting which focused on aligning the curriculum, ensuring both Schools had a say in this area. Built into the timetable was also year group planning sessions.

The key policies and procedures were decided by using the successful areas from each School. Some great practices were shared between the School for example the good to be green was brought to Folly View which has been a success. It has also helped support behaviour within the Schools. SF has provided intense support to the middle leaders and for teachers that were moving into new areas of teaching and learning.

SF discussed the challenges around being in charge of the School budget for both schools. She confirmed they were out of sync and one School is in deficit due to moving towards the all through primaries. It was agreed with the Trustee's that the School budgets could be managed as one until pupil numbers increased at the Schools. There have been financial restraints and difficulty with staff and SF has supported the Heads of Schools with the challenges this has presented.

The Trustee's need to consider going forward that there is no clear role and some supporting framework may help which includes looking at the function and scope of the Executive Head. SF advised she is currently covering for one of the Heads of

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| | <p>Schools which has made the roles cross over more. It was highlighted it is important to trust the Heads of Schools and offer support and guidance to them. Finally finance will be an ongoing issue as the Schools develop and the staffing implications of this.</p> <p>A question was asked about reviewing the job description alongside the Heads of Schools. It was asked if the Executive Head of SHR and WAT had similar issues. SF advised this would be beneficial at the end of the year. The view was to be able to take away the paperwork side of the Head Teachers job however this has not been possible due to the Heads of Schools need to keep a hand in this area. SF advises there is no area of the job description that could be removed and she has been carrying out different aspects of the role at different times throughout the year. It was confirmed SF has had a couple meeting with the other Executive Head and the issues arising are similar.</p> <p>LH advised they will look at doing a session at the end of the year for reflection and to hear everybody's view. LH thanks SF for her work and for attending the meeting.</p> <p><i>SF left the meeting at 17:08</i></p> | |
| Standing Items | | |
| 4 | Accuracy of Minutes of main Board meeting held on 19th January and 7th February including any confidential minutes | |
| | <p>Before the minutes and action tracker was discussed LH advised on the below points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was discussed that MS is aware he has been unable to fulfil his commitment as a Trustee currently for this Academic Year, this has been due to his work load. LH asked the Trustees to vote if they were happy to accept MS apologies until the position with his work load changes. <p>Trustees voted to ACCEPT this course of action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new Trustees are in the process of joining the Board. They will not be joining until the next academic year. The first appointee is Samantha Brady, she is just going through the interview process and is giving up her role as chair of Buckland LGB at the end of this year. The second is Sharon Farrell who is just starting the application process. These two new Trustees will offer support on the Quality of Education Committee. <p>Approved Minutes from meeting on 19th January including confidential minutes and Extraordinary meeting on 7th February</p> <p>Action: LH to sign all minutes</p> | LH |
| 5 | Carried over Items | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Heads presentations have been concluded • Exclusion and Suspension is on the agenda (item 8) • Trust attendance is scheduled for July's meeting • Members/Trust to visit FVP to be arranged for the Summer Term • Pupil Premium figures is on the agenda under AOB | |
| Strategic Matters | | |
| 6b | Executive Leadership Folly View | |
| | <p>It was advised the panel have appointed a new Executive Head for Folly View and the Elms Primary School.</p> <p>There were six applicants, four of which were shortlisted. Of these four, one pulled out and three attended the first day of the interview process. On day two, only two applicants were taken forward.</p> | |

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| | <p>The successful candidate is Tracey Smith and she has a lot of experience and is a research driven leader. She was very clam, measured, reflective throughout the process. It was noted that she will add value to the Faringdon Primary Schools but also to the Trust. Her background consists of being a teacher and leadership trainer at a university, a Head Teacher of three different schools which also included an Executive Headship of a School that was in special measures which she improved back to a good rating. Other roles include a National Leader of Education and a systems leader at OCC. She is all about empowering people, developing staff and leaders, child centred and has high values.</p> <p>In terms of the role she will be able to develop the leaders and staff across both Schools and keep strategic, however aware when an operational requirement is needed.</p> <p>It was suggested that she could attend a Board Meeting in the autumn term to give an update.</p> <p>A question was asked regarding when the formal appointment will take place.</p> <p>It was confirmed a meeting between DM and Tracy is scheduled for after Easter and this will be an opportunity to arrange some extensive work with SF and the Trust. It was confirmed the staff will be informed next week and wider publication following on.</p> | |
| 7 | Confidential items | |
| | <i>Please see separate minutes</i> | |
| Ensuring Accountability | | |
| 8 | Policies and New Statutory Guidance | |
| | <p><u>SEND Policy</u></p> <p>This policy is based on the OCC model and minor amendments have been made from the previous version by Helen Cox. It has been discussed at Quality of Education Committee where it was highlighted roles needed clarifying and appendix 1 was added which is the three tier approach. Brought to the Board for questions and awareness.</p> <p>A question was asked as to whether the policy needed to be amended to be School specific.</p> <p>It was confirmed this was the case and when the policy is sent out this needs to be made clear.</p> <p>Following this a discussion was had around the format of all policies and whether a corporate brand and style could be adopted to allow users to understand what is guidance and what is mandatory. An example given of splitting a policy down into the actual policy, the procedure of how it is to be carried out and then annexes of good practices and guides.</p> <p>A further point was raised about looking at how they fit within the strategic vision and governance not just looking at the presentation of them but strategically too.</p> <p>It was highlighted that a strength to the Trust policies is that they are written by the experts in the certain areas.</p> <p>Going forward this needs to be considered for policies and for the way the Trust Board reviews policies.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Suspensions and Exclusions</u></p> <p>Highlights were given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2022 guidance is more explicit about how governors and Trust Boards monitor and review this area. • Going forward, LGBs to monitor and scrutinise at school level and Trust Boards to receive a report through Quality of Education who will be responsible for the overall assessment of the compliance and trends. • The Trust Board need to have oversight of the following: | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Schools operating a no exclusion policy. • Setting out clearly how and where suspensions are recorded. • Show how they comply with the 45 suspension rule. • How they evaluate the impact of the provision they have to support pupils at risk of suspension. • How effective the behaviour policy is. • Is the reintegration strategy being applied and is it age appropriate. • Evaluate the use of any off-site provision monitoring its impact and costs within the appropriate time scales. • The Trust Board need to monitor the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of movement when pupils move Schools, what is prompting it and whether it is at a specific time of year • How effective the Schools policies are in respect of behaviour, bullying, suspensions and exclusion. • Any variations in rolling averages in regards of when suspensions and exclusions are happening across the school year. • Trust Board to review and reflect on the above areas at the end of the academic year or in the autumn term of next year <p>Action: Update Trust and LGB activity planner. Provide guidance to LGBs in regards to areas they should be monitoring</p> | LH/LB |
| 9 | Visit Reports from Link Trustees: | |
| | <p><u>Folly View Primary School Visit</u></p> <p>SF directly gave input in item 6a, however two things to highlight from the visit are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- The financial position however AL and finance are working hard on addressing the deficit. 2- The transition to the all through Primary School. There are a couple of children with high needs who need a lot of support and this is a challenge for the School, this is not helped by the fact that OCC support is slow in providing alternative provisions. <p>It was noted that a letter has been sent to OCC raising concerns about their SEND provision and practice.</p> <p>Action: AC to follow up with SF after the Executive Head input</p> <p>A question was asked about the provisions from local surgeries to help with early support. It was confirmed that SF feels positive due to the preschool provision allowing this to be picked up with the support of Helen Cox. All schools expect John Blandy now have a preschool provision attached. If children are transferring in from another provision it is important to asses them as soon as possible.</p> <p><u>WAT Governors meeting</u></p> <p>An overview was given at the last Board meeting and the document has been uploaded to GovernorHub. It was highlighted again how positive the experience was and how the governors were good critical friends. It was noted that safeguarding was not a standing item agenda and this has been communicated to them. A discussion was had around the new site and whether it was possible to choose an appropriate time for the move. It was confirmed this is not in our remit.</p> <p><u>ALT meeting</u></p> <p>PT attended an ALT meeting and highlighted how positive the meeting was especially in regards to the Heads and subject leader having the time to come together. This meeting focused on reading and this was good to see.</p> | AC |

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| 10 | Report from Q of E | |
| | <p>It was highlighted the potential disconnect between Quality of Education (Q of E) Committee and Resource Committee in regards to sharing information. A discussion was had about the way forward and it was highlighted that sometimes we are more reactive than proactive however a view was shared that reactive is a positive as this is usually evidence based.</p> <p>It was noted the report highlighted the staff turnover however the information was not clear. The Trustees we reassured the report has been written in a discreet way to summarise the content and any potential patterns or issues were being dealt with under the correct process.</p> <p>It was agreed that AC and PT would make contact to work out a way forward to line up Q of E and Resources. It was advised that the report does not need to be discrete so Trustees have a clear picture.</p> | |
| 16 | Any Other Business | |
| | <p><u>Pupil Premium</u> Sarah Gristwood has amended the figures and uploaded the document to GovernorHub. It explains how to follow the guidance in writing the report and it is misleading because the numbers of pupils are the current numbers of pupils that are within the year that you're writing the report. But the funding comes in from the previous year census based on those pupil numbers. It has been confirmed that there is no way of matching the two. The focus needs to be on what the funding has been used for.</p> <p>It was advised that a set of specific expectations to unsure good practice and robust reporting, monitoring and evaluation needs to be shared. It was confirmed that this is part of Sarah's role and will be working with the PP leads to develop this. Longcot and Fernham (LAF) and Faringdon Community College (FCC) reports are still not on the website. LAF will be update as soon as possible due to capacity and PT was due to follow up with FCC.</p> <p>PT confirmed he was awaiting FCC chair of Governors email address.</p> <p>Action: LB to send PT FCC chair of governors email address</p> | LB |
| 11 | Report from Resources | |
| | <p>Highlights were given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficit at the Faringdon Primaries and Shrivenham. • Electricity renewal due in the next four to five months. • Gas renewal due in the next sixteen months. • Catering cost and sustainability of contract with Caterlink- proposal to put meal prices up after careful consideration. • Taking advantage of beneficial interest rates. Potential to generate 15k-20k of interest. <p>A discussion was had around length of contracts it was confirmed that the usual process of looking at three providers and look at balancing the risk to achieve the best outcome.</p> <p>In regards to renewables AL looked at what the Schools currently have and it's confirmed they have a combination of brown and green but not blue for nuclear. A discussion was had around solar panels for the Schools. It was confirmed it could be considered however it was highlighted that a lot of Schools would not be able to have them. This is due to the Trust not owning the building and having to rent and hand over the roof to the companies. FVP have moved into a high energy efficient building with solar panels however their electricity has increased by 75%. The hope is in summer their electricity cost will drop.</p> | |

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| | <p>It is important to balance the right sustainability and green agenda with the right affordability and value for money. This is something that is going to be monitored.</p> <p>AL has met with the Heads at Shrivenham (SHR) and the Faringdon Primary Schools in regards to the deficit. SHR are looking at staffing going forward and in their P6 report the deficit has dropped from 45k to 14k. So the risk is now minimal however there is potential for a high level needs student to return which will cost them 1.7k a week. Folly View Primary (FVP) and The Elms Primary (TEP) are in a better place. In P6 FVP deficit has dropped to 150k, the reason the figure is still high is due to the fact they have a heavy senior leadership team for the current size of the school so this will affect the figures until the school is full. In P6 TEP surplus has increased by almost double. Therefore FVP and TEP are being look at together and there will only be a deficit of 25k.</p> <p>The Central Trust are holding the reserves that are allocated for the growth of FVP and TEP so their figures are not affected but this means the Central Team are shown to have a deficit.</p> <p>SCA project are underway. The money is being moved from the Central Team as these are capital projects and should be identified against the schools.</p> <p>Overall as a Trust we are cognisant that there are high reserves and using these to support the schools is a good step.</p> <p>It was noted Ashbury is missing still from P5 as this was before they joined the Trust. Their figures should be shown in P6 however some adjustments need to be done to their budget.</p> <p>The budget assumptions for next year and subsequent years are not particularly healthy due to the increase in utility and staffing costs. Currently not projecting any further income to pay for those staff increases therefore the balance of budgets is going to be tough.</p> <p>It was confirmed this information will be shared with the Finance Leads and LGB Chairs. They have been asked to share the good and the challenges in regards to the latest budget.</p> <p>LH thanked the team for keeping the Trust on track with financial reporting.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>Health and Safety Matters</p> | |
| | <p>It was noted that the aim is to resolve most issues by Easter however some may go into term 5.</p> <p>It was highlighted that we need to keep this behaviour change and not allow the cycle to drift going forward. The Trustee's need to make sure they hold the Schools to account and act upon the important issues quickly.</p> <p>It was advised to raise and remind the LGB Chairs at the Chairs meeting after Easter.</p> <p>Action: LB to add to agenda.</p> <p>It was noted at the last meeting an investigation was to take place to determine if it was possible to record when a record had been looked at but no further action was required at that time. It was confirmed this was not a possibility.</p> | LB |
| 13 | <p>Risk Register</p> | |
| | <p>A discussion was had around amending the risk register in regards to utility costs in particular fuel prices. It was confirmed the current rating is accurate as this is difficult to mitigate.</p> | |

| Procedural Matters | |
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| 14 | Out of Committee activity |
| | None |
| Trust Board Matters | |
| 15 | Events in hand |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 April Joint Board meeting: 20 April venue Shellingford Community Hall at 6.45 p.m. • Chairs and Vice-Chairs meetings 1:1 meetings and annual meetings |
| Any Other Business | |
| 16 | As notified to the Chair before the meeting |
| | <p><u>FVP and TEP Safeguarding Audit</u></p> <p>Gemma Rogan (GR) has conducted a safeguarding audit at both schools. Sophie Dors (SD) has been attending to check the Single Central record (SCR) and personnel training records. There is a backlog at both of these Schools however the Heads are aware of the updates that are required. There are also additional updates needed at the other Schools in regards to SCR and personnel records. They will all be monitored over the next term.</p> <p>It was asked if there is a resource implication and whether extra hours over the holidays would help. It was confirmed that for most schools the SCR needs an extra column adding. FVP and TEP had a big piece of work to do however progress is being made. This will be reviewed after Easter.</p> <p><u>LAF update</u></p> <p>The external review of LAF following the Ofsted has been completed and the report has been looked at. It was useful, had some really good advice and was very thorough. This has been incorporated into the action points of LAF's post Ofsted plan that's due to be shared with all of the staff on Tuesday of next week alongside Claire Silvester, who's doing some headship work there as an interim measure as well as the Chair of Governors. This will be a useful meeting to show the community how far things have moved. It was confirmed there is still more work to be done however CS will now move this forward. Her first job is to look at the time line of the actions that need to happen up to next Christmas to make sure the School is progressing and tackling them in a logistical way.</p> |
| 17 | Future Board Meetings |
| | <p>Uploaded to Governorhub</p> <p>Joint Board Meeting- 20th April 2023- In person</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 18:43 |

Signed and Approved by: