



Company Number: 07977368

## Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 6:30PM on Teams**

Present:

Anthony Cook (AC)- Chair  
 Liz Holmes – Co-Vice Chair (LH)  
 Rev Jason St John Nicolle- Co-Vice Chair (JN)  
 Paul Turner- (PT)  
 Samantha Brady (SB)  
 Adale Bennett (AB)  
 Mark Greenwood (MG)  
 Katie Paxton (KP)

In attendance:

Anne Lynn (AL)- COO  
 Louise Warren (LW)- Director of Education  
 Bob Wintringham (BW)  
 David Wilson (DW)  
 Rosie Phillips (RP) – Clerk

Apologies:

Gordon Joyner (GJ)

<b>Standing Items</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Resignations</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p>AC welcomed the Board to the extraordinary meeting, reminding everyone that this was the first of two sessions that would be held with the purpose of reaching a decision in principle regarding the possible merging of FLT and the VAT (Vale Academy Trust).</p> <p>AC also welcomed the Members, DW and BW, who had been invited to join the meeting, noting that it was important for them to hear what was discussed and also to contribute.</p> <p>Noting that the agenda was an FLT agenda, AC informed the Board that joint-CEO, Richard Evans (RE), would not be joining them.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Trust Board Member, GJ.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Notice, Confidentiality and Quorum Requirements</b>	
	<p>AC noted that the meeting was quorate and reminded the Board of the confidentiality, noting that in this instance it could be considered to be even more so than usual.</p>	
<b>Procedural Matters</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
	<p>No new declarations of pecuniary interest were noted.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Introductions &amp; Agenda Clarification</b>	

	<p>AC introduced the Board to the newest Trustee, KP, whom he noted was a diocesan appointment to the Board. All in attendance welcomed KP and introduced themselves also.</p> <p>AC clarified for the Board how he expected the agenda to be discussed during the meeting and where their decision would ultimately lead, noting that even if they were to agree to proceed with merging the Trusts that nothing would be definite until the legal contracts were finalised, noting that it would likely be several months until that occurred. Whilst recognising that, AC impressed upon the Board that it was, nonetheless, important for them to reach a decision by the end of the two meetings, preferably unanimously, though he noted that a majority decision would suffice. The reason, AC noted, was due to the considerable resources required to proceed with the merger on a more formal basis and not wishing to waste those for either Trust.</p> <p>AC commented that the meeting would be an opportunity for the Trustees to question, comment on and interrogate the collaborative work and the proposed merger, and an opportunity for Members to ratify decisions and table their own questions.</p> <p>AC noted that everyone present was to have an equal voice, including COO AL and Director of Education (DofE) LW, who would be equitable members of the Board for the evening, as the papers were discussed.</p>	
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**Strategic update - Merger Context, papers and Questions**

5	<p><b>Collaborative Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updates on progress of collaboration</li> <li>- Brief overview</li> <li>- Questions invited from Trustees (rounds – each Trustee will be invited to ask questions in turn)</li> <li>- Any further reflection and / or any further information required prior to next meeting (rounds as above)</li> </ul> <p>AC noted that he would move through each agenda point via a series of rounds, allowing each Trustee and Member equal opportunity to voice any opinions, reflections or concerns that they may have.</p> <p>AC reminded the Board that RE had produced three updates on the collaborative work undertaken that demonstrated the value and progress that the partnership between FLT and the VAT had produced.</p> <p>AC invited MG to be first to share his comments.</p> <p>MG noted that he felt there was a good array of responses demonstrated within RE’s updates and that he felt that they were positively weighted, which he noted had left him feeling confident.</p> <p>Next, PT commented that he was happy with all the feedback provided in the reports by RE.</p> <p>JN noted he had no reflections to add, and AC invited LH to speak next.</p> <p>LH commented that she felt the updates provided by RE demonstrated significant areas of collaboration whereby working together was making a positive difference for their schools. LH noted that the updates caused her</p>	
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	<p>to reflect on whether she felt the same traction and positive impact could be produced for their schools outside of a merger as would be within a merged Trust, concluding that she felt the impact and engagement would not be as great without merging.</p> <p>LH commented that, due to this, it indicated to her that a merger would provide them with greater impetus in many areas, most significantly in the secondary school support that would be gained from a Trust with four secondaries collaborating rather than just the one working alone.</p> <p>AC thanked LH for her contribution. SB noted that she had nothing further to add, and so AB was invited to speak next.</p> <p>AB commented that RE’s updates had shown her the significant amount of collaboration that had been possible even pre-merging, noting that it could only further benefit them to enhance the collaborative work via the merger.</p> <p>AC extended thanks to AB for her reflection and invited KP to add her comments to the discussion.</p> <p>KP added that, though she was new to the Board and to the discussion, she felt that she could already see the demonstrated benefits of the collaborative work, though noted at present it was largely operational and that it would be good, going forward, to see more of the strategic benefits too. Despite that, KP added that she was encouraged by some of what had been demonstrated strategically from a central perspective such as the alignment of systems across both Trusts, concurring with LH that though some positive collaboration could occur without merging, much of the benefit could only be realised within the confines of a merged Trust.</p> <p>AC thanked KP for her input before inviting LW to provide any comments or questions.</p>	
6	<p><b>Out of committee activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions arising from Autumn Seminar 2023: held Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October via Teams</li> </ul> <p>AC noted that the Autumn Seminar was a modest success, with representation from across the Trust, however commented on the need to improve attendance at future seminars, particularly from the general members of the Governing Committees; Chair and Vice-Chair attendance was high.</p> <p>AC praised the level of engagement at the seminar, noting that there were high quality questions and discussions pertaining to some of the topics previously discussed at the Board meeting, such as the strategic focus for the Trust and potential changes at local governing level.</p> <p>AC asked RE to share his feedback from the seminar with the Board.</p> <p>RE agreed with AC’s comments on the quality of discussion, noting that the discussions led to some actions he had added to his CEO report, including improvements to the training and appointment of new Governors. RE concurred with AC that the forward strategy regarding seminars was improving the attendance.</p>	

	<p>AC extended thanks to the Trustees who had attended the seminar, noting that it set a good precedent in terms of the debate they wish to have surrounding roles, responsibilities and the desire for a more structured training agenda going forward. AC further noted his aim to make sure the sessions remain concise, which would hopefully result in them being more appealing across the Local Governing Committees (LGCs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions arising from Chair of Governors Meeting 2023: held Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November via Teams</li> </ul> <p>AC then discussed the Chair of Governors meeting, informing the Board that attendance was lower than they would have hoped, with representation from approximately half of the schools in the Trust. More positively, however, AC noted that once again the dialogue and engagement was of a high standard, with discussions surrounding strategic priorities and the new terms of references for the LGCs. AC noted that Governors appeared keen to be clear on the value of their contributions and where they can improve in supporting their schools. Furthermore, AC commented that the suggestion of limiting Governors' terms and moving Governors around the Trust was well received.</p> <p>RE agreed with AC, noting that he felt the Chairs who were in attendance were very committed to their roles, though again noted that the overall attendance was disappointing. RE commented that it is crucial to improve attendance in order to convey key communication.</p> <p>AC extended thanks to LH for her work on the document detailing the changes to Governors' terms of reference. AC noted he would make minor edits to the document before circulating to all Chairs of LGCs, and hoped to engage those who were not present at the meeting and obtain their opinions. - <b>Action</b></p>	<u>AC</u>
7	<p><b>Training and development Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm trustee training and development programme.</li> </ul> <p>AC requested AL remind the Board if any of them were yet to complete their Trustee training and development programme document.</p> <p>AL noted that MG and JN were the only Trustees who had this item outstanding. It was agreed they would complete this as soon as possible to allow interrogation of the data across the Board. - <b>Action</b></p> <p>AC impressed upon the Board the benefit, not only in identifying specific training needs for the Trustees, but also in analysing and understanding the strengths within their Trust. AC explained that The VAT use an identical template and, so, the results would be able to be visualised across the two Trusts to consolidate their strengths should the merger go ahead.</p> <p>AC remarked on how worthwhile it would be to analyse the results at the next Board meeting to recognise the combined strengths and opportunities available across the Trusts, noting this as an agenda point for the next meeting. - <b>Action</b></p>	<p><u>MG &amp; JN</u></p> <p><u>RP / AC</u></p>
8	<p><b>Pupil, Parent &amp; Staff Survey</b></p>	

	<p>RE informed the Board that they currently have a draft of the surveys ready to issue, should the Trustees approve.</p> <p>AL noted that the plan is for the staff survey to be sent this term, followed by one for Governors in the spring term and a parent survey in the summer term. Regarding the Governors' survey, AL commented that this could be an opportunity to feed in questions surrounding improving engagement. AL informed the Trustees that the pupil surveys were conducted by each school rather than through the Trust. Noting that these were not coordinated to fall at the same time in each school, AL informed the Trustees that she would find out when these were conducted in order to bring the results to the Board for discussion. - <b>Action</b></p> <p><i>MG – Is there consistency between these questions and those sent out in the surveys two years ago?</i></p> <p>AL noted that there were a couple of new questions that had been added to reflect the kind of questioning expected during Ofsted visits, however mostly the questions remained the same.</p> <p><i>MG – This will be beneficial, so we can see the trends across the responses.</i></p> <p>All Trustees approved the surveys and AL confirmed she would issue the staff survey the next day. - <b>Action</b></p>	<p><u>AL</u></p> <p><u>AL</u></p>
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**Strategic Matters**

<p>9</p>	<p><b>KPIs progress report on a specific strategic aims</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learners First</li> <li>- Inclusion ambitions</li> <li>- Curriculum Sequencing</li> <li>- Quality of Teaching and Learning</li> </ul> <p>LW led on the KPIs progress report, informing the board that the papers she had uploaded to GovHub had included a level of detail that she hoped would demonstrate the work being conducted, and the reasoning behind its necessity. Regarding the FLT's inclusion ambitions, LW noted that they were finding it difficult to close the gap in attainment between their SEND and PP pupils and those who do not have these additional needs and / or disadvantages, particularly in KS3 and KS4.</p> <p>LW impressed upon the Board the high level of emotional support required for the children noted and their families, further commenting that more children now fell into the disadvantaged category than prior to covid.</p> <p>Conversely, LW noted positive news regarding the disadvantaged children in KS2, whereby good progress was being made in reducing the gap in attainment between those children and their peers. Evidencing this, LW commented that this year there were 50 pupils who were classed as disadvantaged and were achieving 42% in their reading, writing and maths, as opposed to only 14% the previous year. Recognising this achievement, LW commented on the need to maintain a strong focus on KS3 and KS4 to try to achieve similar results which, at present, they are not seeing.</p> <p>In terms of the work being undertaken to drive these results, LW noted that a team, led by Leah Spiers (LS), was targeting the work undertaken with the</p>	
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children and that frequent reviews, particularly at FCC, were being conducted to understand impact and closely track the progress.

Furthermore, nurture groups have been created in KS1 in Watchfield and Year 7 in FCC, which focus on the impact of home-life, negative experiences and trauma on children and their attainment; all staff are trained in supporting the most vulnerable children with the ongoing impact of trauma, though LW noted the attainment and progress made was not something they could expect to improve rapidly and would take continued efforts from all involved.

*PT – With regards to KS4, though their attainment has gone down which is not ideal, it is positive to see that their progress is up by comparison to last year.*

LW agreed, though noted this could merely be cohort specific due to the way in which progress is measured and noted that, despite this, attainment remained a serious concern in KS4.

JN thanked LW for all her efforts, noting that this was clearly an important matter that the Board and the schools must focus on.

*JN – With such a high percentage of children in our schools being PP or having SEND, should we be prioritising the allocation of resources, so it is more heavily weighted in support of these children?*

LW commented that further resources would always be beneficial, however noted that it was the prerogative of each school as to how they allocated their funds. LW noted that further strategy around spend needed implementing and, most importantly, rigorous monitoring of the money spent and where focused spend could be improved, further noting that improving this monitoring was of particular importance at FCC.

*JN – Could you explain why you believe we have seen progress drop for these children?*

LW informed the Trustees that the progress is measured against 'starting points' for each child, many of which were pre-covid and noted that it was imperative the Trust does not underestimate the impact covid had, particularly on the disadvantaged children.

*JN – This is quite concerning, particularly considering these are our most vulnerable pupils who require the most support. Is there more we can be doing for them to support their progress?*

LW agreed it was vital to provide the necessary support to the pupils, noting this would remain a closely monitored item on every agenda and noting that the Quality of Education (QofE) team were to hear from inclusion team leader LS which would hopefully help with focusing on their vulnerable students.

*LH – It is great to see highlighted that in KS2 we are closing that gap in attainment. Is the progress in that area sustainable? Furthermore, for the schools that have not succeeded in closing that gap, how are we sharing best practice with them and feeding back ways in which attainment was improved?*

LW commented that the success in KS2 comes from their strong, nurturing approach to behaviour and relationships. All primary schools have adopted a relationships policy that harbours an empathetic response from staff to all behaviour and has been beneficial in the approach towards vulnerable and / or SEND pupils. As this policy has been adopted in all primary schools and has been the main driving force behind the improved KS2 attainment its sustainability should be achievable.

*LH – How do we maintain the great progress we are seeing at KS2 into KS3 and ensure the progress continues for the pupils?*

LW noted that their current vision for FCC is to get the same shift in staff responses to behaviour and develop the same nurturing, supportive relationships they are witnessing being so successful at primary level. Furthermore, LW informed the Trustees that they have a KS2 to KS3 transition lead who works across year 6 and year 7 classrooms in the Trust, ensuring that she knows who the most vulnerable pupils are and is therefore able to track what happens with them and how they progress when they make that jump from primary to secondary school. LW noted that, though they are putting great efforts into improvements for vulnerable children in FCC and across all schools, they must remain cognisant of the social factors that work against them too.

*LH – Returning to JN’s point, is there something specifically we need to do about resources to assist these children?*

RE responded, noting there were three main ways, at Trust level, in which to support the progress of FLT’s most vulnerable children. The first of these was surrounding attendance, noting the importance of analysing the attendance data for PP and SEND children and highlighting which vulnerable children also fall into the category of having poor attendance and supporting them and their families into getting them back into school and in school consistently. RE noted home school link workers were vitally important in assisting in this and that the Trust would also be funding counsellors to work alongside families that require extra support.

Secondly, RE noted the importance of supporting pupils and families’ wellbeing, explaining that the counsellors would also be focusing heavily on pupils’ mental health across the whole Trust, starting in primary school to work with the pupils and promote healthy attitudes to learning as early as possible and prevent issues once they reached secondary school.

Lastly, RE noted that strong SEND leaders and SEND support was crucial, commenting that FCC has a particularly strong SEND lead who is providing excellent support. RE impressed upon the Board that a strong SEND lead and team was critical for identifying those pupils most in need as early as possible and supporting those needs.

*SF – Do you think that the ‘5-a-day’ approach that we started last year is starting to have an impact for our SEND children?*

LW commented that she did see that it was having a positive impact.

*SF – Is it possible that we would have the opportunity to cascade the training that two FLT schools involved in the Mulberry Project are receiving, so that the other schools within the Trust could reap the benefit also?*

LW responded to inform the Board that the plan was to share the teachings and benefit received from involvement with the project.

*MG – From looking at the paper I can see that SEND is one classification and PP another; are children who fall into both categories being counted twice? How distinct are the two classifications? Further to that, are we using PP and SEND as a classification when it should solely be attendance? We need to be understanding whether the correlations between the two are causative or coincidental.*

LW noted that the children will certainly cross over, with a high number of children across the Trust falling into both PP and SEND categories, though noted that when it came to the attendance data they would not be counted twice. Furthermore, LW commented that Sarah Gristwood (SG) had been working over the past year to ensure that they were reaching and supporting the most disadvantaged, vulnerable children and that no one was slipping through the net. LW noted the cruciality of ensuring all children across the Trust felt safe and loved.

*PT – We must not forget an important group of people when it comes to transition - the parents. Parental expectation of the transition is very low. What are we doing to support the parents? Should we be involving them more than we currently do?*

LW noted that the feedback received was that transition was far better this year than in previous years, commenting that the Head of Year 7 had visited all the primary schools in the Trust before the summer and met with the parents of the pupils moving up, explaining the process and building a relationship with the new cohort and their parents.

*PT – That is great, though it does say here that there is an issue whereby we need to be further supporting parents, what is that alluding to?*

LW explained that was not specific to transition nor to secondary school, but was an issue faced across the Trust whereby they are finding parents have higher levels of anxiety and needs surrounding parenting and their children and they are expecting far more help and input from the school. LW noted that these needs and expectations became harder to meet in secondary school, asking RE if he found this to be the case in the VAT too.

RE noted that he certainly found there to have been an increase in parents' own vulnerabilities and struggles, meaning that oftentimes they had less focus on their children whilst they attempted to balance the higher pressure they felt under in other aspects of life too. RE commented that, despite this, they had also received some positive feedback from FCC this week regarding the high level of parental engagement, so it was important to remember it was not across the board and some parents are keenly involved. RE informed the Board that they have an attendance project running and a disadvantaged pupils project running in an attempt to better understand the issues and how they intertwine and ultimately improve them. RE noted that these issues were a key focus of his at every visit he makes to schools.

LH shared that she felt there were two key points at which the Trust needed to ensure they were getting their messaging out to parents; pre-entry to reception and in year 6 into 7. LH commented that she felt it was important that the Trustees hear about those meetings and that a consistent core set of messages is present so that parents have clarity on what to expect and where they will be supported by the school.

AC extended thanks to LW, commenting that he felt their priorities as a Trust were correct.

Next, LW discussed the curriculum sequence, noting its great success over the past three to four years. LW explained that they target three subjects each academic year and ensure that they involve the curriculum leads in the process, allowing them to then form strong groups amongst themselves and a knowledge-based curriculum sequence for each individual school. LW noted that each school maintained autonomy around how they wanted to build their curriculum, commenting that it is a continually evolving process of what is best practice, led by research and results.

Drawing the Board's attention to the tracker, LW commented that some Headteachers were more reserved than others in their judgement, however noted it was still a useful tool for understanding the progress and impact of the curriculums being taught across the Trust.

LW explained to the Board that they would like to see the core subjects, particularly English and Maths, being 'green' for all schools, though noted that this was not the case for some schools; the Faringdon primary schools,



for example, had yet to have a review of their curriculum so were showing as 'amber', because they have yet to analyse or understand the impact of the changes and see results. They were hopeful, once a review was conducted, to see clear results and ideally this would then be updated to be 'green'. Furthermore, LW noted that Longcot and Fernham were showing as 'red', explaining to the Board that a significant factor behind that was that the school lost key members of staff and, with them, their curriculum expertise. LW informed the Board that Claire Sylvester (CS) had since rebuilt the curriculum on a three year cycle but, as this starts from January 2024, they had remained on 'red', noting that this would be closely monitored and updated as they progress.

*JN – Thank you for your work and for the clarification. Why do you feel we are not showing greater impact than we are?*

LW responded that she felt that it was due to evidencing, rather than lack of impact; that Headteachers can see that the curriculum has been delivered well and so implementation is 'green', but they are awaiting the results that evidence the impact before updating that part. Furthermore, LW noted that some subjects may always be 'red' and 'amber', as schools are continually changing, subject leads are changing, and curriculums adapt. Using The Elms as an example, LW commented on the fact that the subject leads were mostly new to the school, and so it would take a period of time before the Headteacher could confidently say that not only has the curriculum been well implemented, but that the impact is clearly evidenced too.

*JN – Should we not be able to see impact within the schools without waiting on data?*

LW explained that they are seeing impact, however it is at the discretion of each Headteacher to decide whether they think that impact is good enough across each class.

*JN – What are we doing then to focus on The Elms and Folly View where the curriculum has been impacted by the loss of staff?*

LW commented that the Exec Head and Head of Schools are a strong team who have rebuilt the curriculum and have undertaken a lot of curriculum cohesion work to prepare for an Ofsted review and are currently in the early stages of ensuring the curriculum is robust enough.

JN thanked LW for her work and for her explanations and responses to his questions.

*LH – Thank you for this, it is a great set of data and is very informative and will be helpful for Trustees going forward, particularly should we need to face an Ofsted inspector. It would be helpful to also look at how long areas are in transition and how long changes take to translate to evidenced impact. Are FCC in a position to share their data?*

LW informed the Board that FCC would be discussed as a separate agenda item, led by RE.

LW reminded Trustees that each school has access to a curriculum tracker which is given to their LGCs twice a year, with each subject lead expected to rag-rate against their subjects so that the LGC can see clearly how they are doing, noting that it is important for the Link Trustees to look at the tracker when they conduct their visits.

AC concurred with LW on the importance of Trustees focusing on the curriculum tracker during visits.

Lastly, LW discussed the Quality of Teaching and Learning with the Board, noting that they had been gathering and analysing data to understand where the teachers were sitting across each of the schools. LW noted that they had been looking at the 'Learning Principles', which all schools base their teaching on and use for their internal monitoring. LW commented that there were many excellent teachers across the Trust, though further noted there were ten teachers flagged as requiring further support. Remarking that these were mostly ECTs or teachers nearing retirement, LW explained that they were being closely monitored and supported by their Headteachers and their progress was being fed back regularly to LW.

*LH – What can we do, as a Trust, to support more teachers to become excellent, expert teachers?*

LW informed the Board that it was critical that they share good practice across the Trust, reflecting that this is something that they have not done enough of to date. She asserted the importance of knowing who the most impactful, excellent teachers are in order to be able to share their knowledge and expertise Trust-wide.

*LH – Is there some developmental work or additional resourcing that we can do to support this?*

LW explained that she had been collating a list of the most effectual teachers from across the Trust, as nominated by their Headteachers, and that the next step was now a programme of development.

*SB – Is there a buddy system whereby we can match one of our excellent teachers with a teacher in need of extra support?*

LW noted that this is something they have done, however commented that, in general, they found in-house support was more beneficial as it provided continued encouragement on a day-to-day basis.

*SB – At what point would we say that we have provided all the support we can and a teacher is not meeting the standards required?*

LW explained that there would be a policy and process to undertake prior to dismissal if the internal support was not working.

AL further noted that the Trust would firstly undertake a pre-informal process of support over a six-week period, followed by a further six weeks of informal process if the pre-informal had not worked. If, at the end of twelve weeks, the teacher was still seen to be performing inadequately, they would be moved on to a formal capability programme. AL informed the Board that most times the issue was solved informally, and the capability programme was not necessary.

AC requested LW clarify how teaching success is measured based on the data provided, to which she responded that it was based on the number of teachers requiring support – with the aim of that number being zero – and the number of teachers considered excellent.

AC asked LW if they had a benchmark by which to mark excellence in teaching standards.

LW noted that they do, in terms of expectation for Ofsted, personal-social outcomes and outcomes for the pupils.

AC thanked LW for the papers and for her continued work on this, noting that they will continue to pay close attention to this area going forward.

10.

**Briefing and discussion of the targets set across all assessment and exam areas for all Trust Schools**

Request for Sign Off

LW explained that the document showed the targets across all FLT Primary Schools, which are set against predictions based on prior attainment, noting that this is difficult at Watchfield as many students come without any prior attainment.

LW drew the Board's attention to the areas needing the highest concentration. Firstly, she noted that The Elms needed support in ensuring that targets were accurate and based on previous data where possible, as the change of site meant that little data was in place. LW commented data for Folly View was interesting as the targets had been low but were now much higher, noting that over Christmas all staff were to receive Read Write Inc training and, as a result, LW expected them to exceed their target.

LW remarked that Maths required closer scrutiny across the Trust, but particularly at The Elms and Folly View as they were not meeting national average at KS1. She informed the Board of the need to support KS1 pedagogy, particularly at The Elms as KS1 is new to them.

*LH – One ambition that we set across the Board is that all our pupils should be achieving at least the national average. Understanding that the targets are based on prior attainment, how are we challenging those schools whose targets are significantly below the average national to bring them up to that level?*

LW informed the Board that in September all Headteachers met with their teachers to look at their previous targets and attainment and to set new targets together. Each target is based on the individual child's attainment, their attendance, and their previous year of work. Recognising the importance of being aspirational, LW commented that it was critical they were also realistic in their target-setting and were ambitious on an individual basis, which would look different for each pupil, teacher and school. LW noted that in January and April she would again look at the prior term's results to understand the progress.

RE commented that it was important to focus heavily on attainment in the earlier years so that once the pupils are in year 6 they are already hitting their targets and progressing as seamlessly as possible.

*LH – Should we be doing a focus group looking at the progress for each year group at least once a year?*

PT noted that it was something undertaken in the past but had not been implemented since covid.

*PT – It would be interesting to understand, where we have a child with what seems like a low target, how much progress has that individual child had to make to reach that target; that child may have had to put a lot of work in and we need to recognise that.*

*SF – Is there not an expectation for the LGCs to look at this in more detail so that we understand it has been forensically examined at school level?*

AC concurred that this was one of the critical roles of the LGC and needed to be done in each school.

	<p>The Trustees agreed to sign off the document.</p> <p>AC extended thanks to LW for her work.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Confidential items</b> <i>see separate agenda</i>  <i>Items to go into the confidential agenda</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Future engagement with VAT</i></li> <li>b. <i>FCC Action Plan</i></li> <li>c. <i>LAF Action Plan</i></li> </ul>	
12.	<p><b>FLT strategic plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forward strategy for the Trust</li> </ul> <p>AC commented that the plan and strategy were clear and unchanged since October's meeting therefore, in the interest of efficiency, this would be deferred for discussion until January's meeting.  RP to add to next agenda. - <b>Action</b></p>	<b><u>RP</u></b>
<b>Ensuring Accountability and Monitoring</b>		
13.	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted areas arising from EYFS, KS1, KS2, Phonics,</li> <li>- KS4 and KS5 assessment</li> <li>- Exam outcomes</li> </ul> <p>LW noted that, regarding the primary schools, the targeted areas were chosen from data outcomes from the summer, with the outcomes that were not as expected highlighted in the document.</p> <p>LW highlighted that Folly View's GLD prediction was higher this year, bringing them in line with the national average, and that this year's cohort were higher performing on entry. She noted that the EYFS lead was meeting fortnightly to encourage this continued progress and commented on the progress expected from the additional Read Write Inc training.</p> <p>With regards to KS1, LW noted that several schools were closely examining their reading progress and how to translate success in year 1 phonics into fluid readers by the end of year two, with an increased focus on fluency rather than comprehension.</p> <p>LW commented that the Headteachers had been strategic in ensuring that the right support was in place in each class to try to reach their targets.</p> <p>LW informed the Board that Longcot and Fernham school were moderated in writing by OCC and that they had received lots of information about sharing good practice and encouraging consistency, and they had seen the benefits of this within the school already.</p> <p>Moving on to KS2, LW noted that writing targets at John Blandy were below the national average, further noting that the Headteacher was working closely with two teachers to moderate the writing and ensure their targets were focused.</p> <p>LW informed the Board that maths results did not hit target last year at Shrivenham, and that an analysis of the papers had been undertaken to understand where the weaknesses were and to focus on improvement. Furthermore, there was now one year 6 teacher, rather than a job-share, which had improved consistency in teaching standards.</p> <p>LW explained that RE was looking at FCC as a package and working holistically with the school to improve results and targets across the board.</p>	

	<p>RE informed the Board that there was a new assessment lead in place at FCC to aid in tracking the data, to instil aspiration into the target setting and to help keep students on track and focused on their attainment. RE commented that he did not see the attainment as a year 11 and year 13 issue, but a cross-school issue whereby they must ensure that the level is high from the start and maintain that focus throughout.</p> <p>AC extended thanks to RE and LW, commenting that their focus has certainly been in the right areas and the benefit and progress due to that is apparent.</p>	
14.	<p><b>In-year pupil movement report</b> To be discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effectiveness of transition arrangements</li> <li>• Y11 and Y13 destination data</li> </ul> <p>Beginning with the transition information for the primary schools, focused on nursery, reception and year 1, LW noted that the main challenge was surrounding the level of need of pupils coming into reception, with higher levels of speech and language needs and higher personal-social needs too. In general, LW noted that the transition into year 1 had been positive across the schools, with the schools being cognisant of the need for the pupils to transition seamlessly into year 1 so that the increase in workload did not shock them.</p> <p>LW then discussed the year 7 transition report from Becky James (BJ) which outlined how the pupils coped with their transition from primary school up to FCC. LW noted that the main issues highlighted were the complexity of the SEND seen in the cohort, as well as school readiness in terms of organisation and motivation, noting that they are not witnessing the same level of preparedness for secondary school as they were pre-covid and need to focus on improving that.</p> <p>LW informed the Board, looking at students transitioning from year 13 to higher education that, of the 90 students in year 13, 73 transitioned into higher education, with a high percentage of the remaining 17 staying at FCC to repeat year 13 to achieve the results they need.</p> <p>LW informed the Board that there had been a decrease in pupils transitioning from Year 11 into Sixth Form and that this needed monitoring as they must to retain as many pupils as possible.</p> <p><i>JN – I am interested in what happens at 16; how many of our pupils go on to college in Abingdon or Oxford and do we engage in discourse with those colleges surrounding the preparation we provide the pupils with to take that route?</i></p> <p>LW noted she was unsure of the answer and would follow up with the KS4 team at FCC to find out about the liaison they have with colleges. –</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p><i>JN – Thank you. Looking at the data for post-16, do we feel we are omitting our values as a Trust? How does this crucial data relate to the effectiveness of how we deliver our Trust values?</i></p>	<u>LW</u>

LW commented that she was reassured that all pupils are counselled as to where they could go next and what options are available to them and that the level of support provided to students is good. She further noted that the students moved on to a broad variety of places, reinforcing that the support given to them in making their choices is appreciable.

*JN – We need to interrogate that data further, as if the support is in place we need to understand why else it is that they are choosing not to stay.*  
AC concurred with JN that this needed investigating.

*MG – Of the GCSE graduates who go on to complete A-levels elsewhere, where do they go and why do you think that they are not choosing to remain at FCC where we offer A-levels? Are we not providing the subjects that they want? Is it to do with the experience they have had up to GCSEs in FCC which has been negative? A qualitative, subjective view would be useful so that we could help increase retention for sixth form.*

RE explained that there was not one definitive answer but that he felt the timetable was certainly an issue, as was the limited range of subjects on offer. A further issue, RE noted, was the reputation and the outcomes, commenting that some families would be looking for guaranteed outcomes and could feel, due to past results, that FCC was not the place to achieve them. Furthermore, some students simply do not want to remain in the same school and want to experience a college environment. Recognising these reasons, RE commented that there are still more students leaving than they would like and so working on retainment is vital.

AC commented that building the reputation of the sixth form was an issue that had been discussed on multiple occasions and requested RP action this point to be followed up on. – **Action**

RP

*AB – With regard to the transition points, what is our aspirational programme? All of our data shows that we need to be looking at pupils' aspirations in the younger years; do our schools have a programme or set of aspirations to encourage younger pupils to look further ahead?*

RE concurred with AB, noting that they need to be doing more to get secondary school into the heads of the primary school pupils and their parents, so they are prepared and start secondary school encouraged. RE noted that familial support was paramount in this.

*SF – Some of what has been discussed this evening, the work we are putting into all aspects of FCC, will help retain students in the future as they will see the ways in which it is improving.*

RE agreed with SF, noting the importance of communicating the school's vision in order to change the perception of the school amongst the wider community.

*AB – Reputation is important, and, with that, we must be conscious that where the students move on to after FCC also impacts our reputation; we need to be informing students next steps and aspirations and encouraging them to realise their potential wherever they choose to transition to.*

	<p><i>JN – Are we doing enough to portray our sixth form as a place for gifted and talented students? How do we know that the students are well supported and shown the benefit of coming to sixth form at FCC?</i> LW explained that the careers advisers work closely with the Head of Sixth Form to ensure that pupils receive the individual counselling and advice they require to make informed choices, remarking that she considered it one of FCC’s strengths.</p> <p><i>SB – My experience of careers advice has been that it can be un-aspirational, often speaking about minimum wage jobs and not necessarily inspiring students to take A-Levels or to move on to get degrees.</i></p> <p><i>LH – It would be prudent for the LGC at FCC to look at the data on transition to keep on top of it. One thing not mentioned here is some of the wonderful apprenticeships that our students go on to, such as with the F1 team and BMW; they are moving on instead of coming to sixth form, but it is to good, high-quality work.</i> LW agreed, noting that there are some incredibly successful pupils transitioning to sixth form and then onwards to higher education too, explaining that of the 73 pupils who went on to higher education last year, 35% went to a Russell-group university and 65% got into their first choice.</p> <p><i>JN – LW, are you aware of the work done by The Sutton Trust to encourage students to enter more competitive professions and how to get there? We could investigate that and see how it could support our students.</i> LW thanked JN for this information and requested he forward her the details for her to follow up. - <b>Action</b></p> <p>AC thanked the Board for the extensive and significant conversation, noting the multifaceted nature of this topic and the importance of maintaining focus on it. AC asked LW to pass on thanks, on behalf of the Board, to the whole team who actioned the transition work undertaken last year, noting its success. - <b>Action</b></p>	<p><b><u>JN / LW</u></b></p> <p><b><u>LW</u></b></p>
15.	<p><b>Report on the quality and impact of provision for Looked After Children</b></p> <p>LW informed the Board, due to the previous report only having been in March of this year, this would need deferring to the next meeting in January.</p> <p>RP to ensure it is on the next agenda. - <b>Action</b></p>	<p><b><u>RP</u></b></p>
16.	<p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss possibility of moving risk for requires improvement schools from yellow to red</li> </ul> <p>AC asked MG to comment on any updates or discussions he had had around the risk register since the previous Board meeting, with MG confirming that there had been nothing flagged in that period.</p> <p>AL commented that they would be having a resource meeting the following week and so would have an update on that aspect of the risk register after that meeting. Further to this, she noted the only element that</p>	

	<p>they need to discuss soon would be the risk around Ofsted and potential visits, though noted it could be pushed to the next meeting.  RP to add to the next agenda. - <b>Action</b></p> <p>RE added that from his perspective he felt Ofsted was the highest priority, noting that he expected The Elms and Folly View to be first for a visit. He further commented that The Elms could potentially be vulnerable due to the ongoing staffing issues they have had, though he also commended the team at the school who he felt are doing a fantastic job. Commenting on FCC, RE noted that it has its strengths but also has some areas in clear need of development that could be picked up by Ofsted, though remarked that he felt they should have another year before an Ofsted inspection and so they have time to continue to develop their weaker aspects.</p> <p>AL clarified for the Board that the Faringdon schools are currently third on the risk register and AC recommended that they are left there for now, concluding that the Board are fully cognisant of the potential risks and, due to their thorough engagement and action plans that they have in place, those risks are minimised and managed.</p> <p><i>LH – I agree that it seems reasonable to leave them where they are and to revisit their placement on the register in January’s meeting. I suggest it may be prudent to heighten the risk around local governance, particularly surrounding the challenge we face in gaining new governors; we are vulnerable should Ofsted visit due to the experience, or lack thereof, of some of the LGCs.</i></p> <p>of the LGCs. AL informed the Board that the LGCs were currently 7<sup>th</sup> on the register, questioning whether they would like them moved up to 4<sup>th</sup> to denote the higher risk.</p> <p><i>LH – I feel that we are more vulnerable than we have been for some time and therefore it needs amending. A move to 4<sup>th</sup> feels reasonable and demonstrates our awareness of the issue.</i></p> <p>AL to make amendment to the risk register as discussed. – <b>Action</b></p> <p>AC thanked everyone for their contribution, noting he agreed with this change, particularly with seeking higher quality in governance being a priority for the Board this year.</p>	<p><u>RP</u></p> <p><u>AL</u></p>
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**Financial Monitoring and Oversight**

17.	<p><b>Budget Monitoring Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion on budget monitoring report</li> </ul> <p>AL informed the Board that there was no P12 report for discussion at this meeting due to a delay from both the accountants and the auditors, however noted that it was expected imminently and that she would send the report out of committee to the Trustees the following day.</p> <p>AC requested that AL comment on any critical financial headlines that she felt the Board ought to be aware of.</p> <p>AL noted that they had done an early, initial P2 report and had also looked at some items to filter in to P3 and, as of now, P3 was looking to be a clearer reflection of the accounts and budget as all the pay awards</p>	
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	<p>will have been processed and, likewise, the indicative figures on the pay grant will have come through too.</p> <p>AC extended thanks to AL on behalf of the Board for her ongoing work on the budget monitoring report.</p>	
18.	<p><b>Visit Reports from Link Trustees:</b></p> <p>Discussion of visits undertaken since last Board meeting. Supporting documents and reports to have been pre-read on Govhub.</p> <p>AC discussed the visit he conducted with Tracy Smith (TS), the Executive Head of the Faringdon primary schools, where he received positive feedback from her regarding the onboarding and induction process she had received from the Trust, with AC extending particular thanks to LW, RE, AL and SF for their help and support in the process. He noted that TS remarked on her strong management team and how she felt embedded and content in her role.</p> <p>AC informed the Board that he has another visit planned with Callum Jaques (CJ) for the upcoming week, which he will report back on at January's Board meeting.</p> <p>It was also noted that AB, SF, LH and SB have all booked in visits with schools in the coming weeks which will be reported on at the January Board meeting.</p> <p>AC thanked the Trustees for their efforts in organising and conducting visits.</p>	
<b>Trust Board Matters</b>		
19.	<p><b>Events in hand:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>28<sup>th</sup> November meeting</b> – 6 of heads across trusts come to speak of their experiences so far and speak about governance issues</li> <li>• <b>FLT Board Meeting &amp; Members AGM 2023:</b> Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – AGM 6.00pm and Board Meeting at 7.00pm – at FCC</li> <li>• <b>Extraordinary Meeting re Merger</b> Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 via Teams 06:30pm</li> <li>• <b>Extraordinary Meeting re Merger</b> Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at FCC – 06:30pm</li> <li>• <b>January 2024 Board Meeting:</b> Thursday 18 January 2024 Via Teams at 4.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.</li> </ul>	
<b>Any Other Business</b>		
20.	<p><b>As notified to the Chair before the meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Confidential Item re Shrivenham</b></li> <li>- <b>Confidential item re JBL</b></li> <li>- <b>Trustee only Confidential agenda item</b></li> </ul> <p>See confidential minutes and Trustee only confidential minutes.</p>	
21.	<p><b>Future Board Meetings</b></p> <p><b>2023</b></p> <p><b>28<sup>th</sup> November via Teams – 6pm</b></p> <p><b>7 Dec in person 6pm – 7pm - FCC Main Hall</b></p>	

	<b>19<sup>th</sup> December via Teams – 6:30pm</b>  <b>2024</b> <b>9<sup>th</sup> January in person – 6:30pm – FCC Main Hall</b> <b>18 Jan via Teams 4.30 pm – 6.30 pm</b> <b>21 March via Teams 4.30 pm – 6.30 pm</b> <b>9 May in person 6 pm – 8 pm - FCC Main Hall</b> <b>11 July in person 6 pm –8 pm (last meeting) - FCC Main Hall</b>	
	<b>MEETING END 19:28</b>	

Signed and Approved by: